



**AP[®] Comparative
Government
and Politics**
Briefing Paper:
Mexico

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Preface

Why Study Mexico?

Mexico is one of the most intriguing and important countries in the world. Its silver mines generated enormous wealth for Spain during the colonial period. It had one of the great revolutions of world history. The forward-thinking Constitution of 1917 that emerged from the revolution provided a model for other progressive movements in the region, especially in terms of the nationalization of subsoil rights.¹ Mexico experienced the longest ruling single-party government in the history of the world. The most remarkable feature of the Mexican political system is its stability during the twentieth century, which contrasts sharply with the general instability across the rest of Latin America. The breakdown of this mighty one-party regime resulted in a fascinating process of democratization that provides significant lessons for other democratizing nations. Mexico's recent political economy offers a classic example of the challenges and prospects of the transition from state-led development to neoliberal economic policy that marked many countries' economic policies during the 1980s and 1990s.

Mexico is particularly important to the United States. Along with Canada, the United States shares membership with Mexico in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Mexico is the United States' most important trading partner after Canada. In 2002, 14 percent of United States exports went to Mexico, and 11 percent of its imports came from Mexico (*The World Factbook 2003*, available at www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mx.html). Mexico is also important to our national heritage. Over 7 percent of the United States population is of Mexican origin. A large portion of this population lives in states that were formerly part of Mexico (California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, Utah, Colorado). Thus, Mexican history is our history. Moreover, we share a 2,000-mile

border with Mexico and therefore share important concerns, including the environment, water resources, and migration. Finally, Mexico is an important oil producer, supplying oil to the United States.

Mexico in Comparative Context

Mexico provides an interesting case for comparison with the other cases studied in this course. In particular, we can learn a lot about revolutions by comparing the Mexican Revolution with the Iranian, Chinese, and Russian revolutions. All were major revolutions that fundamentally altered the social, economic, and political systems of these countries.

Mexico can be fruitfully compared with China and Russia as contrasting examples of one-party rule. While Mexico's noncommunist, one-party system was relatively unique, there are important similarities with the communist political institutions. One-party systems tend to operate with democratic window dressings, carrying on elections and maintaining legislatures, even though they are largely devoid of real political influence. This democratic facade typically leads to more stable authoritarianism and also shapes the transition to democracy in many ways. In the case of Mexico, the democratic transition did not require building new institutions from scratch, but rather breathing life into preexisting institutions that had been dormant because of one-party rule.

Russia's dual transition from a socialist economy to a market economy and from authoritarianism to democracy provides a great comparison with Mexico's dual transition from state-led development and one-party rule. While both of Russia's transitions were very quick, Mexico's transition to democracy was very slow, taking place over the course of more than a decade. The slow and gradual nature of Mexico's democratization ultimately led to a stronger, more consolidated democracy that is unlikely to regress to authoritarianism. The prospects for Russia seem less optimistic. Both Mexico and Russia's economic transitions have been

¹ In Mexico, as in many countries, everything below the soil (i.e., subsoil) belongs to the state as a whole and cannot be privately owned. Thus, the government controls access to all subsoil resources, including gas, oil, gold, silver, and so forth.

fraught with difficulties, as both countries have suffered major economic crises since the implementation of market-based reforms.

All six of the countries studied in AP Comparative Government and Politics (Great Britain, Russia, China, Mexico, Iran, Nigeria) are major producers of oil, though only Russia, Iran, Mexico, and Nigeria are major exporters of oil. China imports a large amount of oil. The United Kingdom is expected to become a net importer of oil in the next few years. Mexico contrasts with Iran and Nigeria in terms of the arguments about oil producers as rentier states. Only about 7 percent of Mexico's export earnings come from oil (as compared to 80 percent for Iran and 90–95 percent for Nigeria). Since over 80 percent of Mexico's exports go to the United States, if oil prices go up and hurt the United States economy, demand for Mexico's other exports may go down, thus offsetting the potential benefits of higher oil prices.

	OIL PRODUCTION 2003, MILLIONS OF BARRELS PER DAY	RANK AMONG TOP OIL PRODUCERS	NET OIL EXPORTS 2003, MILLIONS OF BARRELS PER DAY	RANK AMONG TOP OIL EXPORTERS	OIL AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL EXPORTS (APPROXIMATELY)
CHINA	3.54	6	N/A	N/A	N/A
IRAN	3.87	4	2.48	4	80
MEXICO	3.79	5	1.74	9	7
NIGERIA	2.25	13	1.93	8	90–95
RUSSIA	8.44	3	5.81	2	25
UNITED KINGDOM	2.39	11	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/contents.html

II. Country Overview

Map of Mexico



Source: www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia03/mexico_sm03.gif

Mexico has a population of about 100 million, a little more than one-third the population of the United States. Geographically, Mexico has about two million square kilometers, about one-fifth the size of the United States. Mexico borders California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas to the north. To the south it borders Guatemala and Belize. The geography is very diverse, including snow-capped mountains, temperate highlands, tropical lowlands, and deserts. Two mountain ranges run north and south along the length of the country: the Sierra Madre Occidental to the west and the Sierra Madre Oriental to the east. Rugged mountainous zones cover much of the country, making transportation and large-scale agriculture difficult.

Mexico is considered a middle-income country. Its gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in 2002 was \$8,900. That roughly means that were all the income in Mexico divided equally among the population, each person (including children) would have \$8,900 a year. The GDP per capita in the United States in 2002 was \$36,300. Thus, the average Mexican has less than one-quarter the economic resources of the average United States citizen. (Imagine living on just one-quarter of

the money that you spend today.) While Mexico may seem poor compared to the United States, in fact Mexico is quite wealthy compared to many other developing countries. The GDP per capita in Nigeria, for example, was just \$900 in 2002. That is one-tenth the GDP per capita of Mexico and 1/40 the GDP per capita of the United States.

These statistics, however, can be misleading, because income is never distributed evenly. If income were distributed evenly in the United States, then the average family of four would earn \$145,000 a year. Obviously, the average United States family earns much less than this because income is distributed unevenly, and some people earn extraordinary amounts of money. The same is true in Mexico, but even more so. The distribution of income is even more unequal in Mexico than it is in the United States. One way to measure income distribution is to compare the percentage of total income that the poorest 10 percent earn to that of the richest 10 percent. We can see from the chart below that the poorest tenth of Mexican society earn only 1.6 percent of total income, whereas the richest tenth earn 41 percent. The numbers for the United States are 1.8 percent for the poorest tenth and 30.5 percent for the richest. (If income were distributed equally, both the poorest 10 percent and the richest 10 percent would earn 10 percent of the total household income.) Among the countries studied, the poor of Mexico and Nigeria earn the lowest percentage of national income. Russia's wealthy earn the largest share of national income.

	GDP PER CAPITA (PPP), 2002	HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR POOREST 10%	HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR RICHEST 10%
CHINA	\$4,700	2.4%	30.4%
IRAN	\$6,800	N/A	N/A
MEXICO	\$8,900	1.6%	41%
NIGERIA	\$900	1.6%	40.8%
RUSSIA	\$9,700	5.9%	47%
UNITED KINGDOM	\$25,500	2.3%	27.7%
UNITED STATES	\$36,300	1.8%	30.5%

Source: *The World Factbook 2003*, available at www.cia.gov

III. Political History

Timeline of Mexican History

40,000 BC	First wave of migrants from Asia to America.
AD 200–900	Classic period, height of Mexican civilization, cities, monumental architecture, advancement of art, literature, science.
AD 900–1521	Post-Classic: Historical, growth of empires, expansion of commerce.
1519	Hernan Cortes sets sail.
1521	Fall of Tenochtitlán (Aztec capital, now Mexico City).
1700	Last of the Hapsburgs/War of Spanish Succession.
1713–1788	Bourbon reforms: free trade, centralized power, more bureaucratic, increased economic production, but rural people see wages drop, Spanish-born <i>peninsulares</i> replace Mexican-born <i>criollos</i> in colonial government.
1808	Invasion of Spain by Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon appoints his brother Joseph to rule Spain. Confusion over who will rule the colonies.
1810	Father Miguel Hidalgo leads uprising against Spanish.
1821	Mexico wins its independence from Spain.
1824	First constitution is written.
1835	Texas declares independence.
1845	Texas annexes into U.S.
1846–1848	U.S. invasion of Mexico: Mexico loses half its territory to U.S.
1857	Liberal constitution is written.
1864–67	Emperor Maximilian von Hapsburg.
1876–1911	Porfirio Diaz’s dictatorship.
1910–1920	Mexican Revolution.
1917	Constitution is written.
1929	PNR/PRI is formed.
1934–1940	Lázaro Cárdenas consolidates the revolution with land reform and nationalization of oil companies.
1968	Olympics in Mexico City/massacre at Tlatelolco (400 dead).
1982	Peso crash, debt default, nationalization of the banks, beginning of the debt crisis and the “lost decade.”
1983–present	Neoliberal reform.
1985	Earthquake in Mexico City (8,000–20,000 dead).
1988	Presidential elections of Salinas vs. Cárdenas, computers crash, massive fraud, postelectoral protests lead to formation of the PRD.
1989	PAN wins gubernatorial elections in Baja California—first governorship won by opposition.

January 1, 1994	NAFTA takes effect, Chiapas rebellion begins.
1994	PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio assassinated, other high-level assassinations follow.
December 1994	Peso crashes, massive economic crisis.
July 1997	Cárdenas wins Mexico City mayoral elections. PRI loses majority in Congress.
July 2000	Fox wins presidency.

Pre-Colonial Mexico

Two major civilizations and many smaller groups lived in Mexico before the Spanish arrived. The Aztec empire was centered in the central valley of Mexico. The Mayas inhabited the Yucatan Peninsula, southeastern Mexico, and into Guatemala and Belize. Both were very complex societies that developed written languages and extensive scientific knowledge. The Aztecs had widespread, long-distance trade across most of Mesoamerica. They were skilled at using metal; their artisans created beautiful jewelry from gold and silver. They built large cities with sophisticated monumental architecture.

Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec empire, had as many as 250,000 inhabitants by the year 1500. At the same time, there were only four cities in Europe with populations greater than 100,000. The Aztecs had a sophisticated barter system using cacao beans as a currency. Tenochtitlán was filled with luxurious botanical gardens and zoos. Canals and streets crisscrossed the city. Goods were brought in and garbage taken out of the city on boats. There were extensive streets for pedestrian traffic and large causeways connecting the city center island to the surrounding land. The city was exceptionally clean, with good drainage and garbage removal. Public streets were swept and washed daily.

Colonial Mexico

Hernan Cortes set sail for the new world in 1519. In 1521, he defeated the Aztecs and captured Tenochtitlán, now called Mexico City. A **viceroy**, literally a “vice-king,” ruled Mexico. The viceroy ruled as the personal representative for the king of Spain with very few constraints on his power. In contrast to the experience of the British colonies to the north, the Spanish allowed almost no local autonomy,

and there was no experimentation with democracy. Catholicism was the only religion tolerated in colonial Mexico, and the Catholic Church had vast wealth and power.

Spanish colonization was marked by *mestizaje*—meaning racial mixing. Unlike British colonists, the Spanish conquistadors did not bring women with them, so they carried off indigenous women and created a new race of mestizos, or mixed-blood people, who are now the majority of Mexicans.

During colonization, the silver mines created great wealth for Spain. Agricultural production was also a vital part of the colonial economy. The land was divided into haciendas, large extensions of land that were given or sold at very low prices to Spanish colonists. Meanwhile, the indigenous people gradually lost control of most of the land. Strict racial hierarchies were enforced, with Europeans on top and indigenous people on the bottom. Racial discrimination together with the enormously unequal distribution of land resulted in great inequality in Mexican society.

Independence/Postindependence Disorder

In 1808, Napoleon invaded Spain, imprisoned the king of Spain, and appointed his own brother Joseph to rule. There was confusion over who would rule the colonies. Movements for independence began across Latin America. Most were essentially conservative movements intended to secure power for the Spanish-blooded elite. Father Miguel Hidalgo's movement in Mexico in 1810 was an exception. It was not conservative and included poor peasants. This uprising began the revolution but was taken over by conservative elements within the Mexican elite. Mexico finally won its independence from Spain in 1821. The postindependence period was marked by instability and conflicts between liberals and conservatives. The liberals wanted to restrain the power of the church and follow the United States' model toward democracy and capitalism. The conservatives longed for a European monarch to rule over them and reestablish the dominance of the Catholic Church.

Postindependence Mexico was also plagued by foreign intervention, first by the United States and then by France. With the aid and encouragement of the

United States, Texas declared independence from Mexico in 1835. The United States invaded Mexico in 1846, occupied with its military much of the country including Mexico City by 1847, and took half of Mexico's territory in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. In 1864, the French, with the support of Mexican conservatives and church officials, invaded Mexico and installed Maximilian von Hapsburg as emperor. In 1867, the liberals pushed the French out, defeated the conservatives, and executed Maximilian.

Porfiriato

Porfirio Díaz, a war hero on the side of the liberals during the French intervention, became dictator of Mexico in 1876. He ushered in a long period of peace and economic growth. He promoted modernization at the expense of the poor. During his rule, there were huge investments in infrastructure projects such as the railroads, a 30-mile canal through Mexico City to reduce flooding, and improved ports. He revived the mining and oil industries and began industrialization. The government followed the liberal policies of free trade and defended the interests of foreign investors. Inequality increased dramatically. New land laws allowed land companies to take land from peasants who had lived and worked the land for generations but had no formal title to the land, thus forcing the rural poor to work on haciendas. During the Díaz dictatorship, the rural poor lived at a lower standard than their ancestors had 100 years earlier.

Revolution

Francisco Madero called for a revolution to overthrow Díaz in 1910. Emiliano Zapata led rebel armies in the south. Pancho Villa led rebel armies in the north. Porfirio Díaz resigned in 1911. Madero was elected president in 1911 and attempted to establish a democracy, but he could not quell the ongoing peasant rebellions led by Zapata and Villa. Madero was overthrown in 1913 by Victoriano Huerta in a plot organized by the United States' ambassador Henry Lane Wilson in what was known as the "Pact of the Embassy." Wilson wanted Madero out of power to protect United States business interests in Mexico. Unfortunately, Huerta did not meet United States expectations either, so in 1914 the United States Navy occupied Veracruz in

the hopes of overthrowing Huerta. The revolution was incredibly bloody, decimating the population and leaving more than one million people dead. The revolution continued until the early 1920s.

Scholarly research on revolutions points to three important factors as causes of revolutions: (1) potential revolutionaries must perceive injustice, (2) they must have access to basic resources needed to carry out a revolution, and (3) the state must be weak. Various factors might lead people to perceive injustice. Scholars have pointed both to relative deprivation—that is, the poor are getting poorer while others are getting richer—and threats to the poor’s ability to subsist—that is, survive (feed, clothe, and house their families). Of course, poor people feeling aggrieved in and of itself is not enough to bring about a revolution. There are lots of poor people all over the world who are angry with their lot in life, but not all start revolutions. The potential revolutionaries must be able to mobilize resources to carry out a revolution. At a very basic level, they need weapons to fight, and their movement also requires leadership and organization. The poorest of the poor rarely rebel because they do not have access to these resources. But even if the poor are ready to rebel and have strong leadership and organization, they are only likely to be successful if the state’s coercive capacity is weakened. States are often weakened by splits among elites.

All of these factors were present in the case of the Mexican Revolution. There was clearly a sense of injustice among many of the poor in Mexico. The standard of living for the poor had decreased during Díaz’s dictatorship, even though the economy was strong and some people were becoming enormously wealthy. Economic policies protected foreign investors at the expense of average Mexicans. New laws requiring extensive documentation to prove ownership of land allowed large landowners and foreign corporations to take land from the poor. The peasants had strong leaders with Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa, and they were well organized. Moreover, the Díaz dictatorship was weakening. Porfirio Díaz was getting old, and he had said he would step down in 1908. Madero was a member of the elite who was angry with Díaz’s hold on power. The split in the elite symbolized by Madero’s call to overthrow Díaz emboldened the peasants to rebel against the government.

One-Party Authoritarianism

The **Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)**, originally called the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR), was formed in 1929 and became the most powerful institution in Mexican politics. It was strengthened dramatically during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas from 1934 to 1940. Cárdenas redistributed land to the poor, nationalized the oil companies in 1938, and set up the **corporatist** system based on four sectors of society: military, workers, peasants, and popular groups (the middle class). Following the revolution, the government adopted a policy of **Mexicanization**, meaning a devotion to all things Mexican. This contrasts with the earlier cultural tendency of looking to Europe and North America for inspiration. Artists such as Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Jose Clemente Orozco vividly illustrated this policy of Mexicanization in their murals glorifying Mexican history and Mexico's indigenous population.² The murals, along with a wide variety of artistic and intellectual creations glorifying Mexico, were done during the postrevolutionary period with support from the government. The period of **one-party rule** was also characterized by state-led development and strong economic growth until the late 1970s. The system was considered authoritarian because even though the opposition could legally exist and run candidates in elections, the PRI always won all of the important elections. The state and the party were merged into one. Elections were not always fair, and there were no checks on the power of the president. He could rule as a virtual dictator.

Democratization

Some date the process of Mexican **democratization** back to 1968. In 1968, Mexico hosted the Summer Olympics. In an effort to show the world that Mexico was an advanced country on the cusp of full modernization, the Mexican government spent enormous sums of money on construction projects for the Olympics. Students at the National University organized massive protests against

² To view one of Diego Rivera's murals online, go to www.arts-history.mx/museos/mu/index.html. To view Jose Clemente Orozco's mural at Dartmouth, go to www.dartmouth.edu/~library/Orozco/.

what they considered frivolous expenditures in the context of the suffering of the majority of Mexicans who lived in poverty. In order to put down the protests before the Olympics began, the Mexican army fired into a peaceful student protest, killing about 400 people. The massacre made clear just how brutal the regime could be if pushed too far. Many students from the generation of 1968 became committed to reforming the authoritarian institutions of the PRI.

While the massacre of 1968 was certainly a watershed event in Mexican politics, the first significant victories of opposition forces in the 1983 municipal elections may be a better “starting date” for the process of democratization. The earthquake in Mexico City in 1985 was also an important factor in the democratization process. The government’s incompetent response to the earthquake led to the formation of many autonomous “self-help” organizations among poor residents of Mexico City. These groups formed an important base of support for Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and the new leftist party, the PRD.

Many scholars would date the beginning of democratization to the presidential elections of 1988. In the mid-1980s, a group of leftists within the PRI organized to influence the next presidential succession. They were concerned about the growing influence of the right-wing factions within the PRI. When they were unsuccessful in persuading President de la Madrid to choose a left-leaning candidate for president, they abandoned the party and supported Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of Lázaro Cárdenas, beloved former president and champion of land reform, to challenge the official candidate Carlos Salinas. Cárdenas did surprisingly well, and the elections were marred by allegations of fraud. Even though the PRI’s candidate was declared the winner, he came to power with very little popular legitimacy.

In 1989, the PRI lost its first gubernatorial elections in Baja California, and throughout the 1990s there were more gubernatorial victories by opposition parties. In 1997, a diverse opposition gained control of the Chamber of Deputies, and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, from the opposition party PRD, was elected mayor of Mexico City. Mexico was clearly considered democratic once Vicente Fox from the opposition party PAN took over the presidency in 2000.

The democratization process was caused by a complex interplay among citizens, opposition parties, and reformers within the government. Perhaps the most important agents of democratization were the opposition parties who contested elections, organized protests against alleged electoral fraud, and pressured the government to gradually reform electoral laws and institutions until they were eventually fair. The economic crises of 1982 and 1994 also contributed to the democratization process. Mexicans had supported the PRI for so long because the PRI had provided strong economic growth. With continued economic problems throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the people turned against the PRI and began to vote increasingly for opposition parties, hoping that they would better manage the economy. The government's response to the economic problems with neoliberal reform also helped democratize the country because it starved the government of money it needed for patronage to buy off opposition forces.

IV. Political Institutions

Federalism

The Mexican political system is formally federal, with national, state, and municipal levels of government. Each state has its own constitution and an elected governor and unicameral legislature. Municipalities also elect an executive and a legislative council. There are 31 states and a Federal District, also known as Mexico City (or Mexico D.F.). Mexico City is similar to Washington, D.C., in that it is not a part of any state. In contrast to Washington, D.C., however, Mexico City is not only the political capital of the country, it is also the financial, industrial, cultural, and educational capital of the country. Mexico is a very centralized country. It is as if all of the political institutions of Washington, D.C., the financial and industrial centers of New York City, the popular culture and entertainment industries of Los Angeles, and the educational institutions of Boston were all concentrated in one megacity. Almost one-quarter of the country's population lives in the greater Mexico City area. Also unlike Washington, D.C., the residents of Mexico City do have representation in Congress and can vote for the president. Until 1997, however, the president appointed the mayor of Mexico City.

Mexico's centralization dates back to colonial and even precolonial times. Though Mexico has been formally federal since the Constitution of 1824, in reality, power has been very highly centralized, and authoritarian leaders have undermined the federal institutions. Under the PRI, politics and economics were very centralized. Because the state was so important for industrial development, most major industries were centered in Mexico City. Though governors were formally elected by local voters, in practice, the president, as de facto leader of the ruling party, named the ruling party candidates for governorships. Until 1989, all gubernatorial elections were won by the PRI, thus the president essentially appointed the governors. Governors usually came from the president's inner circle, and therefore had many years of experience working in the federal government in Mexico City. Many new governors had almost no experience in or knowledge of the states they governed prior to taking the job. The president had informal powers to dismiss governors if he disapproved of their performance. This power came from the president's control of the Senate, which could impeach governors. Therefore, governors served at the pleasure of the president and rarely disobeyed directives from Mexico City.

Since the 1980s, there have been important moves toward decentralization. As opposition parties began to win control first of municipalities and then of states, these new opposition leaders did not owe their positions to the president and the leaders of the PRI as their predecessors had. Therefore, they began to exercise their formal powers and demand new powers from the federal government. In the context of economic crisis in the 1980s and 1990s, the government decentralized much of the education and healthcare systems to the states in order to reduce the financial burden on the national government. Since Vicente Fox took power in 2000, there has been a clear breakdown of the president's "extra-constitutional" control over governors. Now that democracy is firmly in place in Mexico, federalism is stronger and more vibrant both formally and in reality.

Branches of Government

The Mexican constitution outlines a system of checks and balances and a separation of powers that closely resembles the United States. Nevertheless, during

one-party rule these formal institutions were meaningless, and power was heavily concentrated in the hands of the president and in the executive branch. The legislative and judicial branches did not serve as an effective check on executive power. Because of the one-party system, the president had extensive informal or “extra-constitutional” powers that were derived from his control of the ruling party. The most important of these informal powers was control of the ruling party’s nomination process. The president was de facto leader of the PRI and therefore could choose all the PRI’s candidates for public office. Since the PRI won almost all the elections, in practice the president essentially appointed the governors, the legislators, and even his successor to the presidency.

As opposition parties began to win elections, the president began to lose many of his informal powers. For the first time in history, the PRI chose its candidate for the 2000 presidential elections in a democratic open primary, thus stripping the president of this traditional informal power. Moreover, as opposition parties gained a foothold in the national legislature, a separation of powers began to emerge. This happened in 1988 when the PRI lost its “super-majority” that allowed it to pass constitutional reforms without consulting other parties, and then in 1997 when the PRI lost its simple majority and a diverse opposition coalition took control. During Vicente Fox’s administration, a true system of checks and balances developed.

At the national level, the legislature has two chambers. The upper house is called the Senate, and the lower house is called the Chamber of Deputies. Seats in both houses are distributed in a complicated mixed-proportional system. There are 500 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Three hundred are allocated through single-member districts, the other 200 through proportional representation. In the Senate, each state and the federal district have three senators, and another 32 seats are distributed through proportional representation. This mixed system provides a good balance between single-member districts and proportional representation, allowing for both local representation through districts and also a fairer distribution of the seats among parties, thereby incorporating some of the benefits of both systems.

During one-party rule, the legislative branch functioned as a rubberstamp to merely approve executive initiatives. The president was able to dominate the

legislature, because as leader of the ruling party, he chose the PRI's candidates for legislative office, and the vast majority of these candidates were then elected in uncompetitive elections. Therefore, the legislators owed their positions to the president, not the voters. Further cementing the president's control over the legislature was the fact that members of congress cannot be reelected to consecutive terms. Each deputy in the lower house serves for only three years and then must find another job. Senators serve for six years. The best job opportunities for former legislators were in the executive branch. As these jobs were controlled by the president, the legislators had strong incentives to please the president while they served in the congress. Since democratization has taken place in Mexico, the president no longer controls the legislature, and it has become an important force in politics.

Similar to the legislature, the judicial branch was also subordinate to the executive during one-party rule. The court never ruled against the president in an important case, and being a judge was not considered a particularly prestigious position, so there was a lot of turnover in the judiciary. Since many judges were angling for a better position in the executive branch, the president exerted influence over them. Until the reforms of 1994, the Supreme Court did not have any formal powers of judicial review; therefore, it could declare legislation unconstitutional. President Zedillo initiated wide-ranging reforms to the judiciary in 1994, and President Fox further strengthened the judicial branch during his administration. Now there is more balance between the executive and the judiciary.

Parties

There are three main parties in Mexico. The **Partido Revolucionario Institucional/Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)** is the former ruling party. It controlled Mexican politics from its founding in 1929 until 2000. The PRI is an inclusive party that occupies the broad center of the Mexican political spectrum. It has no clear ideology. During one-party rule, anyone who wanted to participate in politics joined the PRI. There were many factions within the PRI, representing a multitude of ideological positions. The PRI served as the backbone of the Mexican corporatist system, encompassing the main peasant organization **Confederación**

Nacional de Campesinos/National Peasant Confederation (CNC) and the main labor union **Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos/Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM)**. The PRI integrated peasants and workers into the political system, provided patronage to loyal groups, and repressed groups who were not loyal. The PRI also constructed the state-led development strategy that resulted in high growth rates until the late 1970s. In the 1980s, the PRI changed course and adopted neoliberal economic policies.

The **Partido Acción Nacional/National Action Party (PAN)** is the party of the current president Vicente Fox. Founded in 1939, it is the oldest opposition party in Mexico and represents the right/conservative side of the political spectrum. Its founders were middle-class Catholics who opposed the anticlerical elements and populist economic policies of the postrevolutionary government. It is similar to Christian Democratic parties in other countries. Initially, the PAN did not try to win elections, but rather served as a vocal critic to the ruling party. It appealed only to a small segment of middle-class Catholics and some businesspersons. The PAN gained influence in the 1980s as the only viable alternative to the PRI. Many businessmen who had been loyal to the PRI began to support the PAN after Lopez Portillo nationalized the banks in 1982. Voters disenchanted with the PRI after the economic crisis of the early 1980s began to vote for the PAN, and the PAN began to win some local elections. Since the PRI adopted neoliberal economic policies in the 1980s, the PAN's economic program has been very similar to that of the PRI. Therefore, during the 1990s the PAN began to stress anticorruption and democratic reform. This appealed to many Mexicans who were fed up with the PRI. The PAN has been especially popular in the northern border states and the north central states such as Guanajuato and Jalisco.

The third major party in Mexico is the **Partido de la Revolución Democrática/Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)**. The PRD represents the left and was founded in 1989 by a diverse coalition of members of leftist factions from within the PRI and grass roots social movements that had previously stayed out of party politics. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' presidential run in 1988 was the impetus for the party's formation. He was the party's presidential candidate in 1994

and 2000, and won the mayoral elections in Mexico City for the PRD in 1997. The party supports economic nationalism, opposing free trade and privatization. The PRD is strongest in Mexico City and the poorer states of southern Mexico.

Elections

Elections have been an important part of Mexican politics since the revolution. Although elections did not function as a means of choosing political leaders as in a democracy, they nonetheless served an important role in legitimizing the PRI's rule. Often the PRI manipulated electoral results even when they would have won by a comfortable majority. The PRI wanted to win elections by huge majorities to demonstrate that they had the support of the country. Throughout one-party rule, elections took place on a regular basis, and all major political offices (with the important exception of mayor of Mexico City) were filled by means of elections. Until recently, however, these elections were not competitive, and the president made the real decisions about who would rule when he chose the PRI's candidates. Other parties were allowed to run candidates and in some cases encouraged, but as soon as a party seemed likely to win an election, the PRI would mobilize against it.

During the period of democratization (1982–2000), elections became the focal point of oppositional politics. Opposition parties would run candidates and campaign vigorously. If their candidate did not win, they would organize protests against the PRI, accusing the government of fraud and demanding electoral reform. In response to these protests, the PRI slowly reformed the electoral institutions until they were much more democratic. By 1994, the elections were mostly democratic, but it was not until the PRI actually gave up power in 2000 that political observers felt confident in Mexico's new democracy.

Constitution

Mexico's first constitution was written in 1824. This constitution adopted most of the principles supported by the liberals, such as a federal system and a separation of powers. It was modeled after the United States Constitution. The conservative position prevailed in terms of granting extensive powers to the Catholic Church. A new constitution was written in 1857 that maintained many

elements of the 1824 Constitution, but represented even more of a victory for the liberals, including a bill of rights and substantial reduction of the power of the Catholic Church. The Constitution of 1917, written during the revolution, remains the current constitution, though it has been reformed substantially since its adoption. The new constitution was more radical than the earlier ones, including many anticlerical articles severely limiting the power of the church. The constitution called for land reform and declared that all subsoil rights were the property of the nation. It limited foreigners' rights to own land and exploit natural resources. It also provided important protections for workers, such as the right to collective bargaining and to go on strike.

Military

Mexico is unique among its Latin American neighbors in that it was not plagued by military coups during the twentieth century. One great success of the PRI was to subordinate the military to civilian control. Since the 1930s, each government gradually reduced military spending as a percentage of government spending and reduced the size and power of the military. The military was very small and completely loyal to civilian leaders, making it unusual in the coup-prone region of Latin America.

Since the 1990s, the military has grown and taken on new responsibilities in curbing the drug trade and putting down indigenous uprisings. While the United States government was relatively successful in restricting its inflow of drugs from the Caribbean, it was not successful in reducing the demand for drugs within its own borders. As a result, in the 1990s, Mexico became the main transshipment area for drugs from South America into the United States. Consequently, drug money has flowed into Mexico and corrupted many institutions. As the United States has put pressure on Mexico to stop drug flow through Mexico, the army has been called upon to stem the flow of drugs, and the government has spent more on the military. The military has also been called on increasingly to repress indigenous movements since the Zapatista uprising began in 1994.

V. Citizens, Society, and the State

Corporatism

Civil society was very weak in Mexico during most of the twentieth century, because citizen participation in government was controlled through a system called corporatism. **Corporatism** is system of representing citizen's interests in the government that contrasts sharply with pluralism. Under **pluralism**, a word often used to describe the United States system of interest representation, people form interest groups to represent their interests to the government. Theoretically, these interest groups compete on an even playing field to lobby for their policy preferences, while the government is supposed to act as an unbiased arbitrator to sort out the demands of the various competing groups. In reality, however, interest groups do not compete on an even playing field. Some groups, such as the business community, have much greater resources than other groups such as welfare moms. Therefore, under pluralism, we would expect to find that policy systematically favors those groups, such as business, that have more resources to lobby the government.

Under corporatism, there is no pretense that the government is an unbiased arbiter of social conflict. Rather, the government allows certain groups privileged access in exchange for their loyalty. When corporatism is accompanied by democracy, as in many European countries, this system of interest representation can bring extraordinary benefits to the working class. In Mexico, however, corporatism was accompanied by authoritarianism, and while it did bring some benefits to the poor, it was used more as a mechanism for the government to control the poor rather than improve their economic situation. The corporatist system in Mexico was administered through the ruling party (the PRI). The PRI provided privileged access to the main peasant organization Confederación Nacional de Campesinos/National Peasant Confederation (CNC), the main labor union Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos/Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), as well as a diverse organization of middle-class professionals known as the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares/National Confederation of

Popular Organizations (CNOP). These groups received certain benefits from the government, such as a seat at the table during policy negotiations, government subsidies, and a guaranteed number of government positions for their leaders. People who were not members of any of these three organizations had virtually no official representation in government. The government also controlled these groups by buying off the leadership and repressing factions that did not cooperate with government demands. As a result, instead of strengthening working class groups, as corporatism had done in many European countries, Mexican corporatism undermined working class organizations and civil society more generally, leaving them weak and dependent on the state.

Throughout the 1990s as electoral competition increased, the corporatist system began to break down, and independent civil society organizations grew stronger. The economic crises of the 1980s and 1990s meant that the government had fewer resources for patronage to the corporatist groups, thus reducing incentives for membership. At the same time, opposition parties began to provide an alternative forum for making demands on the system. Once opposition parties began winning elections, the PRI could not guarantee government positions to the leaders of the corporatist organizations and had less capacity to repress disloyal groups. The final blow to the corporatist system was the election of Vicente Fox of the opposition PAN in 2000. Since then, state-society relations have been characterized increasingly by autonomous organizations and interest groups competing for influence in the political system in a more pluralistic fashion.

Cleavages

The main cleavages in Mexican society are ethnicity, class, and region. Religion has not created important divisions within society because the vast majority of Mexicans are Catholic. As evangelical Protestant groups expand their presence in Mexico, however, conflict between them and Catholics has grown. The main ethnic division is between mestizos and indigenous people. While less than 10 percent of Mexicans actually speak an indigenous language, as many as 30 percent of Mexicans think of themselves as Indians. The indigenous people tend to live in marginalized rural areas and are much more likely to live in poverty than other

Mexicans. They are discriminated against in many ways. The uprising of the Zapatistas in 1994 dramatically highlighted the importance of ethnic cleavage. The Zapatistas are a group of indigenous Mexicans who took up arms to fight for equal rights. They have demanded true democracy and respect for indigenous cultures.

Class is also an important cleavage given the extraordinary levels of economic inequality in Mexico. During the rule of the PRI, class divisions were attenuated to a large extent by the corporatist system and the inclusive nature of the PRI that did allow for some upward mobility. Peasants and members of the urban working class who were loyal to the PRI were able to move up through their respective corporatist institutions and gain well-paid jobs in the public sector. The PRI's claim to revolutionary legitimacy and populist rhetoric also worked to downplay class divisions. Nevertheless, income inequality worsened under the PRI's watch, and class divisions have become quite potent. The rise of the left in electoral politics may portend the increasing relevance of class conflict.

Regional differences have also been a source of conflict in the political system. There are divisions between Mexico City and the rest of the country as well as divisions between the north and the south. The north of the country is wealthier and more industrialized than the rest of the country. It was on the leading edge of the movement toward democracy, electing opposition local governments long before other regions were. The south, in contrast, is poorer and more rural, and has a much larger indigenous population. Until the late 1990s, the south voted heavily for the PRI, but since then has turned increasingly toward the PRD.

Gender

While women are severely underrepresented in almost all political systems, women have made some progress in Mexico. Forty-seven percent of the students enrolled in universities are female. Women are more proportionally represented in the Mexican Congress than they are in the United States Congress. While 14 percent of the United States Congress was female in 2000, 16 percent of the Mexican Congress was female. Women have also served as governors, party presidents, and in the president's cabinet. Women are influential in informal politics. Since the 1970s, women have been the major participants in urban popular

movements and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As democracy takes root, it is likely that women participating in informal politics will enter the formal political arena in greater numbers.

Notwithstanding their relative success in politics, a united women's movement is difficult to attain because of class divisions. The obstacles facing middle- and upper-class women are strikingly different than those facing poor women. Women serving as maids and nannies to middle- and upper-class families likely see themselves as having more in common with working-class men than with the women they work for.

Largely as a result of the economic crises of the 1980s and 1990s, women's participation in the labor force has increased dramatically, as most men's salaries are no longer sufficient to support a family. Women make up the majority of labor in many foreign-owned factories, because many multinational corporations prefer to employ women, seeing them as more detail oriented, more reliable, and less likely to protest unfair working conditions.

Media

The role of the media has changed remarkably in Mexico with the transition to democracy. During one-party rule, the media was heavily dependent on the ruling party. Government subsidies, bribes, and occasional repression of independent journalists kept the media weak and loyal to the regime. During the 1980s and 1990s, however, the number and influence of independent media sources grew dramatically. As the popularity of the new independent sources grew, the more traditional sources were forced to cover government scandals and opposition movements more critically in order to sell copies. Thus the media played an important role in pushing forward the process of democratization in Mexico.

VI. Political Economy

After the upheavals of the revolution, the PRI followed a strategy of state-led development often referred to as **Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI)**. ISI refers to a strategy for economic development that employs high tariffs (import taxes) to protect locally produced goods from foreign competition, government

ownership of key industries, and government subsidies to domestic industries. Typically, government investment in industry is financed by taxing the export market. ISI policies were implemented in many developing countries following the Great Depression of the 1930s. Economies that were dependent on the export of primary goods found themselves particularly vulnerable during the economic crises of the 1930s as industrialized countries simply stopped buying their exports. Industrialization seemed to be the only way for poor countries to improve their economies. Since there was relatively little capital in private hands to finance industrialization, the state took the lead role in promoting industrialization.

In Mexico, the government nationalized the oil industry and all subsoil rights. The government also owned banks, airlines, railroads, telecommunications, and other businesses such as steel and sugar mills. The government provided subsidized housing, healthcare, and food to urban workers in order to keep the price of labor down for domestic industries. From 1940 through the 1970s, the Mexican economy grew at an impressive rate. The middle class grew, and the health and welfare of the population improved dramatically. In the late 1970s, vast oil reserves were discovered, and Mexico became an important oil producer. President Lopez Portillo spent heavily on large-scale investment projects. While much of the money came from the new oil industry, the government also borrowed heavily to finance the development, mistakenly believing that the debts would be easily paid by future profits from the oil industry. When oil prices fell in 1982, the government announced that it would be unable to pay back its foreign debt, leading to an international debt crisis and a dramatic downturn in the Mexican economy.

President Lopez Portillo's initial reaction was to blame the bankers, and he proceeded to nationalize the banks. This exacerbated the problem, and when Miguel de la Madrid came to power, he implemented neoliberal reforms.

Neoliberalism is a strategy for economic development that contrasts sharply with ISI. Neoliberalism calls for free markets, balanced budgets, privatization, free trade, and minimal government intervention in the economy. President Carlos Salinas furthered the neoliberal reform, and by the end of his presidency in 1994, had completely dismantled the ISI policies. Most of the state-owned industries were privatized. Food and housing subsidies for the poor were

abolished. Protective tariffs were abandoned in favor of free trade. As a result, many domestic industries went out of business, unemployment soared, and inequality increased. The high point of this reform process was the signing of the **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**, which symbolized the end of state-led development and Mexico's long-term commitment to free trade and free markets.

NAFTA is a trade agreement between Mexico, Canada, and the United States. It became effective on January 1, 1994. NAFTA was proposed by Carlos Salinas, president of Mexico from 1988 to 1994. Salinas favored a trade agreement in order to keep future leaders from reversing his neoliberal reforms, to guarantee Mexican access to the U.S. market in the future, and to reassure foreign investors of the stability of the Mexican economy. The agreement required all three countries to reduce their tariffs (taxes of imports). It also established rules of origin to keep foreign companies from investing in Mexico so as to export tax-free into the United States and mechanisms for dispute resolution between the countries. The agreement also provided significant protections for foreign investors. From 1993 to 1998, Mexico's average tariff rate on U.S. imports fell from 10 percent to 2 percent. The United State's average tariff rate on Mexican imports fell from 2 percent to 1 percent. Total trade between the three countries increased significantly after NAFTA took effect. In the years since NAFTA took effect, Mexico's exports have become more diversified and less dependent on oil. Mexico has become more dependent on the U.S., however, with the percentage of Mexican exports going to the United States increasing. NAFTA stands in sharp contrast to the European Union as a model of economic integration. While the EU allows labor to move freely throughout the union, Mexico's most important export (immigrants) was completely excluded from the agreement. Also, the wealthy members of the EU provide extensive subsidies and supports to the poorer members. No such subsidies were included in NAFTA. The European Union has reached a much higher level of integration than North America.

As a result of the liberalization of Mexico's economy, Mexico became much more vulnerable to the whim of international markets. In particular, the deregulation of financial markets allowed foreign investors to invest heavily in the stock market.

Previously, most foreign investment had been in factories and other things that could not be easily taken from the country, thus providing more stability to the economy. When foreign investors became nervous about the Mexican economy in 1994 because of an indigenous uprising in Chiapas and a number of high-level political assassinations, they took their money out of the country very quickly by simply selling their stock. When foreign investors rushed to sell their assets in Mexico, the value of the peso dropped dramatically and ushered in a terrible economic crisis. With a large loan from the United States, Mexico managed to stabilize its currency and persevere with the neoliberal reforms. Because of NAFTA, Mexico's economy is increasingly tied to the United States economy. Mexico's economy stagnated in the early 2000s because of the recession in the United States.

VII. Key Issues and Public Policy

Human Rights

The lack of respect for basic human rights was a serious problem during one-party authoritarian rule. While government-sponsored political violence was not as systematic or widespread as in the military dictatorships of South America, it was clearly an important component of the regime's policy to maintain control. In the words of Jorge Castañeda, the Mexican one-party system was "benignly authoritarian when possible, selectively and sporadically brutal when necessary."³ Throughout the 1990s, there was widespread use of torture, as well as summary executions and disappearances carried out by the police and military. Those most vulnerable to government-sponsored violence were opposition party activists, independent labor leaders, independent journalists, and indigenous people.

Vicente Fox came to power promising to reduce police abuse and investigate past human rights violations. Fox has made some important advances, including the creation of an undersecretary of human rights and democracy and increased cooperation with international human rights groups. A new freedom of information act promoted by Fox has opened up the secret archives on past human

³Jorge Castañeda, *Perpetuating Power* (New York: The New Press, 2000): x.

rights cases. Nevertheless, human rights remain a problem, especially in poor, rural areas. In its 2003 Annual Report on Mexico, Amnesty International documents widespread reports of arbitrary detention, torture, and ill-treatment throughout Mexico. Amnesty International also cites reports of summary executions and at least one disappearance in 2003.⁴

Corruption

Like human rights violations, corruption signifies a weakness in the judicial system. Corruption flourished under authoritarian rule. Without a free press to publicize corruption scandals and strong opposition parties to push for official investigations and punishment, there was little hope that powerful leaders would be able to resist the temptation to abuse their power. Moreover, corruption and graft greased the wheels of the PRI's political machine. The PRI's leaders used public funds to finance election campaigns, buy off regime opponents, and improve their own financial standing. Democratization appears to be strengthening the judicial system and should begin to reduce corruption. However, the huge amounts of money entering Mexico as illegal drugs pass through on their way to the United States will continue to be a factor corrupting the Mexican political system. Because of its illicit nature, it is difficult to measure corruption and thus understand whether it is increasing or decreasing. An increase in political scandals involving corruption may actually indicate an improvement, since it shows an active press publicizing abuse of power by politicians.

Transparency International, an international NGO devoted to combating corruption, has attempted to measure corruption around the world by surveying business people about their experiences with corruption in different countries. Transparency International publishes an index on the perception of corruption in countries around the world. Mexico ranked as the sixty-fourth least-corrupt country in the world in 2003. For comparison, I have included the ranks of the other five

⁴ For more human rights information, see www.amnesty.org, then click on "Human Rights Information by Country and Region." The United States State Department also provides in-depth reports on human rights. See www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/ and click on "Country Reports."

countries studied in this AP course.⁵ As you can see from the table, Mexico is less corrupt than any of the other countries studied except the United Kingdom. Nigeria scores the worst of the five countries studied.

	RANK IN TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL'S CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX (1 = LEAST CORRUPT)
UNITED KINGDOM	11
UNITED STATES	18
MEXICO	64
CHINA	66
IRAN	78
RUSSIA	86
NIGERIA	132

Source: www.transparency.org/cpi/2003/cpi2003.en.html

Social Welfare

Mexico's high level of income inequality manifests itself in unequal access to health and education. Wealthy Mexicans who live in major cities have access to quality educational opportunities and healthcare. Poor people who rely on government-provided healthcare and public schools do not fare as well. Concurrent with its shift from state-led development to neoliberalism, the Mexican government has replaced more interventionist social welfare policies with market-driven and targeted antipoverty policies. Before the shift to neoliberalism, the government addressed poverty by subsidizing food and housing and providing price supports for basic agricultural products. These types of policies are not economically efficient because the government spends money subsidizing the rich as well as the poor. With the introduction of neoliberal reforms, the government has tried to target social spending to the poorest and most needy. The antipoverty policy PROGRESA is a good example of a targeted poverty alleviation program. It pays poor families small amounts of money (starting at about US\$8 a month) to keep their children in school. The idea is to help families pay for their basic needs so that the children can go to school instead of work. This program seems to have been successful and has been expanded by the Fox administration. Fox has also championed microcredits to

⁵ For more on corruption, see www.transparency.org.

promote entrepreneurship among the poor. The idea is to provide very small government loans to people to start up small businesses. For example, the government might loan a woman \$100 to buy basic equipment needed to make cheese for her to sell at market.

Environment

Mexico faces severe problems of environmental degradation. Environmental problems result from industrialization, and like many developing countries where public resources are scarce, the Mexican government faces a trade-off between spending to protect the environment and spending to lift the population out of poverty. It is often difficult politically to convince Mexico's poor that cleaning up the environment is more important than meeting their basic needs. Thus the government's inability to solve many of the environmental problems may not necessarily reflect incompetence as much as it reflects the priorities of a poor developing country.

Nevertheless, some problems have reached crisis proportions. The most notable problem is air pollution in Mexico City. Mexico City is said to have the worst air pollution in the world. Partly this is a result of Mexico City's geographic location in a valley surrounded by mountains. Large industries and cars create most of the pollution. As many as 88 percent of the days are above acceptable pollution levels for humans. As the consequences of such high levels of pollution have become apparent in dramatic increases in pollution-related illnesses, the government has begun to take action. Many industries were shut down and forced to move out of the central valley. The government introduced unleaded gas and restricted private cars from driving one day a week. Other important environmental problems include water shortages and deforestation.

Migration

Internally, there has been large migration from rural to urban areas within Mexico. While only about 40 percent of Mexicans lived in urban areas in 1950, by 2000 more than 75 percent of Mexicans lived in urban areas. Since the industrialization of the northern border with *maquiladoras* (foreign-owned

assembly plants) in the 1980s, there has also been internal migration from the south to the north of the country because there are more economic opportunities in the north. As discussed above, many of these new factories preferred to hire women, and so the unemployment rate among men in the northern border area soared. Many of the unemployed men immigrated to the United States, where wages were as much as six times higher than in Mexico.

The current flows of Mexican immigrants date back to the **Bracero Program** that brought Mexican agricultural workers to the United States during World War II. The policy was abandoned in 1964, but the tradition of young Mexican men coming to the United States to earn some money before settling down became established. In the 1990s, the United States began to crack down on undocumented workers and increased border control. As a result, immigrants began crossing through unpopulated desert areas. In 2000, 491 undocumented immigrants died while trying to cross the border.

The consequences of immigration for Mexico are mixed. Immigration has clearly increased stability for the Mexican political system by providing an escape valve as young people frustrated with the lack of economic opportunities moved north rather than try to change the political system. Also, Mexico receives about \$9 billion a year in remittances sent back home by immigrants. This is the third-most important source of foreign exchange after oil and tourism. On the other hand, those who immigrate usually have higher-than-average education, are hardworking, and are ambitious. Thus, losing them is a cost to the Mexican economy. The poorest of the poor do not have the money to immigrate—just a bus ticket to the northern border is far more than a poor Mexican could afford. Immigration was an important issue in the 2000 elections, as Vicente Fox embraced Mexicans living abroad and asked them to come home. He promised to fight for the rights of Mexicans living in the United States, and in the first year of his administration there were high hopes that he and President Bush would come up with comprehensive immigration reform. Because of increased security concerns resulting from September 11, however, no new immigration policy has been adopted as of the writing of this briefing paper.

Glossary

Bracero Program. A U.S. government policy to bring Mexican workers to the United States during World War II.

CNC—Confederacion Nacional de Campesinos/National Peasant Confederation. One of the main corporatist groups that made up the PRI.

corporatism. A system of interest representation in which the government allows certain groups privileged access to the policy-making decisions in exchange for loyalty.

CTM—Confederacion de Trabajadores Mexicanos/Confederation of Mexican Workers. One of the main corporatist groups that made up the PRI.

democratization. The process of transition from authoritarian rule to democratic rule.

Import Substitution Industrialization. A strategy for economic development that employs high tariffs to protect locally produced goods from foreign competition, government ownership of key industries, and government subsidies to domestic industries.

maquiladoras. Foreign-owned assembly plants that operated in tax-free zones along the northern border.

mestizaje. The process of racial mixing between Europeans and indigenous people.

Mexicanization. A government policy after the revolution devoted to all things Mexican.

NAFTA—North American Free Trade Agreement. A trade agreement between Mexico, Canada, and the United States to reduce tariffs among the countries and provide investor protections for foreign investors.

neoliberalism. A strategy for economic development that calls for free markets, balanced budgets, privatization, free trade, and minimal government intervention in the economy.

one-party rule. An authoritarian political system in which only one political party governs.

PAN—Partido Accion Nacional/National Action Party. The center-right party that was the first party to win the presidential elections after the breakdown of one-party rule.

pluralism. A system of interest representation in which all groups compete on a theoretically level playing field.

PRD—Partido de la Revolucion Democratica/Party of the Democratic Revolution. The center-left party that emerged after the 1988 elections from splits within the PRI.

PRI—Partido Revolucionario Institucional. The former ruling party in Mexico.

viceroy. Literally a “vice king,” the king’s representative to the colonies.

Suggested Readings

Bruhn, Kathleen. *Taking on Goliath: The Emergence of the New Left Party and the Struggle for Democracy in Mexico*. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 1997. A good study of the PRD and its rise to prominence in Mexican politics.

Camp, Roderic Ai. *Politics in Mexico: The Democratic Transformation*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. The classic introduction to Mexican politics.

Dillon, Samuel, and Julia Preston. *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2004. New journalistic book on democratization in Mexico by *New York Times* correspondents.

Hellman, Judith Alder. *Mexican Lives*. New York: The New Press, 1994. Terrific book by a political scientist. Based on interviews with hundreds of Mexicans, she distills them into various vignettes of the daily lives of Mexicans from all walks of life.

Joseph, Gilbert M., and Timothy J. Henderson, eds. *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002. A wonderful anthology of Mexican history, culture, politics, and society. It has excerpts from important historical documents, influential political analysts, fictional accounts of life in Mexico, and more.

Levy, Daniel C., and Kathleen Bruhn. *Mexico: The Struggle for Development*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. A good basic introduction to Mexican politics. A bit denser and more difficult than Camp.

Meyer, Michael C., William L. Sherman, and Susan M. Deeds. *The Course of Mexican History*. 7th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Great reference for history of Mexico.

Mizrachi, Yemile. *From Martyrdom to Power: The Partido Accion Nacional in Mexico*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004. A good book about the rise of the PAN in Mexican politics.

Quinones, Sam. *True Tales from Another Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001. Great stories from an AP reporter's years in Mexico. Short vignettes about the diversity of life in Mexico.

Internet Resources

University of Texas Latin American Network Information Center

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/>

Best overall site for all types of Internet resources about Latin America.

Internet Public Library, Mexican newspapers

www.ipl.org/div/news/browse/MX/

List of all Internet-accessible newspapers from Mexico.

CIA World Fact Book, Mexico

www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mx.html

Basic information on Mexico.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía y Informática (Mexican government statistics agency)

www.inegi.gob.mx

All types of statistical data on Mexico.

Instituto Federal Electoral (Mexican Electoral Institute)

www.ife.org.mx

Electoral data from Mexico.

Amnesty International Report on Mexico

<http://web.amnesty.org/report2004/mex-summary-eng>

Aerial photos of Mexico City

<http://homepage.mac.com/helipilot/PhotoAlbum20.html>

Interesting photos of Mexico.