Foundations of Mexico’s Government
Mexico Overview

• Primarily one party system
• Federal Representative Republic
• Presidential Executive Branch, Bicameral Legislature, weak Judicial Branch
  • Legislative - Senate and Chamber of Deputies
• Fairly elitist – Large gap in power and wealth between wealthy and poor
Mexico’s Foundations

• Mexican War of Independence
  • Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla called for independence from Spain beginning 1810
  • Official date of Independence September 16, 1810
  • Established government ruled by Viceroy

• Early Stages – Military Authoritarianism
  • The Porfiriato (1876-1910)
    • Established by Porfiriato Diaz
    • Process of Modernization at the expense of the poor
  • 1911-1934 – Warlordism and Populists uprisings
    • Intervention by United States
    • Influential uprisings led by Francisco Madero, Victoriano Huerta, Emiliano Zapata, and Pancho Villa
  • Conflicting interest with Catholic Church
The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)

• Founded in 1929 and maintained almost complete control until 2000
  • One-Party system with very little real opposition from elsewhere

• Mexicanization of Government under Lazaro Cardenas (1934-1940)
  • Nationalized Mexican Industries
  • Redistributed land (ejidos)
  • Unionization of peasantry
  • Investment in public works and infrastructure
  • Corporatist System
    • Military, Workers, Peasants, Middle Class
One-Party Authoritarian Rule

• Mexico a *de facto* one-party state run by PRI till mid-1980s
  • Presidents were more determined by party leadership than elections
    • No real opposition allowed
    • Corruption and fraud helped limit rise of other parties
  • Similar to China, Russia, and Iran

• President had almost dictator-like power
  • Limited checks on power of the president by legislative and judicial branches

• Party increasingly right leaning
Declining Support for PRI

• The 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City
  • Government using Olympics as a way to showcase modern Mexico
    • Spent large amounts of money preparing for games
  • Popular uprising against spending
    • 400 killed at protest at National University
    • Led to renewed commitment to reform PRI

• The 1985 earthquake in Mexico City
  • Ineffective response by Government
    • Further led people to question PRI

• People increasingly supported left leaning Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)
  • First PRD governor elected in 1989 in Baja California
Process of Democratization

• Marked beginning of democratization process in 1968
• Increasingly right-leaning PRI increasingly contested by left-leaning PRD and National Action Party (PAN)
  • Organized protests, contested elections, pressured government to reform electoral laws and institutions
  • Economic crisis of 1982 and 1994 contributed to citizens losing faith in PRI
• Vincent Fox (PAN) elected in 2000
  • Marks substantial shift to left
  • Enrique Nena Pieto (PRI) elected in 2012