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Balancing the Process of Democratization and the Continuation of State Stability: The Case of Mexico

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Balancing the Process of Democratization and the Continuation of State Stability

The Case of Mexico

By

Elise Hope Dunn

ABSTRACT

Through an empirical analysis of the state of Mexico, this thesis examines the transition to democracy from a previously consolidated, stable authoritarian system in order to make conclusions regarding the challenges inherent in such a transition for the maintenance of stability. Previously, Mexico was ruled under the hegemonic party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) from 1929-2000.

This research finds that the PRI's hegemonic structure relied on unsustainable corporatist institutions that were built, not to strengthen the state, but rather to strengthen the party; as such, Mexico's nascent democracy is left vulnerable with ineffective institutions with which to deal with crises such as the current war on cartel eradication.

Furthermore, the state that the PRI's hegemonic system had created has ceased to exist and with it the stability of the state and the legitimacy of its institutions. The importance of establishing legitimacy in the electoral institutions of a state entering democracy has been overemphasized within literature on transitions to democracy and it has done so at the expense of state stability.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Within the Western world, the process of democratization is generally recognized as a necessary step in the trajectory of all sovereign states. The persistence of non-democratic regimes and the failures of many nascent democracies throughout the non-Western regions of the world force us to question this assumption. Mexico's current burgeoning drug war and the challenge to state security that has arisen since its long-delayed transition to democracy nearly twelve years ago, combined with a sustained legacy of 70 years of autocratic rule, present analysts with a unique chance to revisit the logic behind the aforementioned assumption.

Since the early part of the twentieth century, Mexico has not experienced a single military coup. But Mexico has not been governed by a democratic political system during much of that period. Instead, the non-democratic Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) acted as the sole ruling party until the year 2000. The presidential election of opposition leader Vicente Fox represented the culmination of important democratic reforms undertaken by the PRI, but it also signified a breakdown of the institutionalized stability obtained by the PRI regime.

Since 2000, the Mexican state has faced greater difficulty in maintaining a stable state, despite the democratic reforms.¹ The precipitate decrease in stability has come largely as a result of the rising security crisis involving the increase in drug cartel violence. Such a decrease in stability does not correspond to the general assumption that

¹ Friedman, George. "Mexico: On the way to a Failed State?" STRATFOR (2008): Web. 13 Apr 2011.

democracy will necessarily support the consolidation of state institutions and help further stabilize the state. This thesis seeks to identify the core issues as to how the movement towards open, participatory democracies affects previously established state stability. I use Mexico's entrance to the new millennium as a politically and economically open democratic system and the the decrease in state security as a result of the increase in drug cartel violence, as a case study on the challenges inherent in transitions to democracy. I argue that the case of Mexico shows that transitions from a hegemonic one-party system where state institutions are built under non-democratic regimes often lose relevance and effectiveness in the process of transitioning to competitive, democratic systems.

This thesis will seek to fill a gap in knowledge that currently exists within academic research on Mexican politics. In Latin American area studies works, as well as in contemporary popular media, there is discussion of the possibility of Mexico becoming a failed state.² This discussion is often presented through the lens of the international drug trade and its relationship to drug smuggling, especially to and from the U.S. Within political science literature on the region, there is a separate and significant body of literature on the evolution of the fall of the PRI and its causes. However there has been little literature exploring the connection between these two consecutive phenomena depicting Mexico's transition to democracy to the accompaniment of a decrease in state security. Furthermore, Mexico's challenges of its post-transition democracy to state legitimacy will serve to further inform the debate surrounding the best strategy for implementing a smooth, stable transition.³

² Friedman.

³ Diamond, Larry. "The Democratic Rollback." *Foreign Affairs*. 87.2 (2008): n. page. Web. 2 May. 2012.

Mexico's experience in the past 25 years demonstrates that development and modernization can sometimes have destabilizing results.⁴ The decade of the 1990s saw two interrelated events that helped destabilize Mexico. In 1995, the negotiation and implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) ignited intense debate within the country over issues related to the agreement, ranging from U.S. economic hegemony in the region to ongoing socioeconomic inequality within Mexico. In response to the establishment of this trade agreement, a violent uprising sprang up in the state of Chiapas.⁵ The continued hegemony of the PRI at this time served to pressure the Party and mobilize the opposition to an unprecedented level by the end of the decade.

While the specific destabilizing events of 1995 have simmered down, the underlying pressures of modernization and development remain central to the challenges facing the country today. As noted in a recent article on the subject of immigration to the U.S., Mexican migration has slowed to a 'trickle,' reportedly in part as a result of the broadening economic opportunities within Mexico's borders.⁶

Though such reports reflect the positive effect that political and economic progress in Mexico has had on the legitimacy of the Mexican state, reports concerning the escalation of violence and the effect it is having on Mexicans at large reveal a conflicting picture. President Felipe Calderon came to office in 2006 making an unprecedented declaration of war with the aim of eradicating the drug cartels. In the final year of his *sexenio*, the war on the drug cartels is regarded today as a near complete

⁴ Schulz, Donald, and Edward Williams. *Mexico Faces the 21st Century*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995. 189. Print.

⁵ Camp, Roderic. *Politics in Mexico: The Democratic Consolidation*. 5th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 26-7 Print.

⁶ Cave, Damien. "Better Lives for Mexicans Cut the Allure of Going North." *New York Times*. N.p., 06 Jun 2011. Web. 24 Apr 2012.

failure, with the death count amounting to between 34,000 and 47,000 since 2006 and few discernable victories on the part of the state.⁷ Recent news on Mexico has highlighted a growing number of Mexicans moving to the United States as refuge from the violence. These recent immigrants to southern U.S. states highlight a new dichotomy between the desire of Mexicans to commit to the new democratic system in Mexico and the violence of the escalating drug war that has begun to prevent its citizens from remaining in the country.⁸

The opposition victory of the millennial year 2000 was acclaimed as a successful transition to a democratic system and was remarkable, not only that it happened, but also that it was nonviolent. This apparent transformation of a hegemonic party system into a “democratic” system seemed to support the most basic tenants of the Liberal paradigm, that economic progress and general modernization provide the groundwork upon which, a non-democratic state will necessarily transition to a consolidated democratic system—a system that will impart stability and new legitimacy to the state. But the increasing violence, and inability of the democratically elected administrations to produce effective results for Mexican human and state security in the face of illegal drug trafficking, and the violence surrounding it, belies those theories.

There has been a resurgence of PRI support for nearly 12 years following the supposed establishment of democracy in 2000. In fact, the current head of the Federal District, a member of the PRI, has long been pegged as the favored candidate for the

⁷ Rawlins, Aimee. "Mexico's Drug War." *Backgrounder*. Council on Foreign Relations, 13 Dec 2011. Web. 24 Apr 2012.; Yost, Pete. "U.S.: Mexico seized 68,000 guns from the U.S. since 2006." *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. N.p., 26 Apr 2012. Web. 29 Apr 2012.

⁸ Aguilar, Julian. "Forced North by Mexican Drug Wars, but United in Exile." *New York Times*, 12 April 2012. Web. 15 Apr 2012.

upcoming elections.⁹ The resurgent strength of the PRI further represents a reality in contrast to these assumptions about the consolidation of democracy and the legitimacy and stability that such a transition should guarantee.

This thesis analyzes why the PRI, which had for so long delayed Mexico's transition toward democracy, finally rationalized the institutionalization of a competitive system. Mexico's transition to an electorally competitive democracy nearly twelve years ago was the result of over twenty years of institutional reforms regarding both the electoral process and the organization of opposition parties in Mexico. The transition was a direct result of strategic policy choices of the once hegemonic party.

Through an empirical examination of the transition and evolution of the Mexican state, this thesis attempts to contribute to literature on state and democracy consolidation through a detailed analysis of the case study of Mexico. In Chapter 2 I present literature on the many concepts related to the stability-representation tradeoff. I present the literature on state creation and consolidation and the indicators for weak, strong and failed states. These indicators provide a guideline within which to categorize the relative strength and stability of the Mexican state in the course of its evolution. I then outline literature on state stability, state legitimacy and the crucial functions party systems and opposition in the development of democracy followed by a conceptualization of democracy.

Chapter 3 presents the case study of Mexico. The chapter begins by presenting the legacies of pre-colonial and colonial society and the impact those experiences would have

⁹ "Mexico's Pena Nieto extends lead over main rival." Reuters Canada, 15 Apr 2012. Web. 16 Apr 2012.

on the new state. I present the various challenges and tensions that existed in the period immediately following independence and how those factors contributed to the establishment of Mexico's longest authoritarian rule known as Porfiriato. After extrapolating on the various causes and implications of Mexico's Revolution, the creation of the hegemonic party system of the PRI, and the slow decline of that system, I explain the current condition of the Mexican state today following its transition to democracy in 2000.

Finally in Chapter 4 I bring together the literature and case study presented in an analysis of the development of the Mexican state. I begin with my own analysis on the core experiences that contributed to the creation of the unique PRI system, followed by the reasons behind the strength and longevity of the PRI machine and an explanation of the long decline of the PRI and its transition to democracy. I then present my findings on how the case of Mexico informs the discussion on the challenge of maintaining state stability in transitions to democracy. I explain how one-party systems can affect the stability-development tradeoff and how party systems and transitions to democracy as a whole can impact the tradeoff.

I guide my analysis of the case study with the following questions:

1. What characteristics of the PRI state structure created such a stable and 'legitimized' regime and what happened to the state following the fall of the PRI machine?
2. What changed between the mid 1960s and 1996 to bring about Mexico's delayed transition to democracy?

3. If political legitimacy has diminished within the Mexican state since the fall of the PRI, why has it diminished?
4. What has been the relationship between these two factors (1) the decrease in state security as a result of the increase in drug cartel violence, and (2) the entrance of Mexico to the new millennium as a politically and economically open democratic system?
5. Do the security challenges, which have arisen since the first democratically elected opposition candidate in 2000, signify evidence that transitions to democracy necessarily result or often result in a decrease in state stability and rise of state vulnerability?

I guide my conclusions as to how the case of Mexico informs literature on state development and transitions to democracy with the following questions:

1. What is the particular effect of hegemonic one-party systems on these issues of stability and democratization?
2. What effects can political parties and party systems have on state development and state stability?
3. What is the significance of this phenomenon within comparative studies of transition to democracy literature?
4. Are there certain conditions within sectors of society, the regime, the method of the transition, the electoral process, the opposition etc. that could serve as a warning of the possibility of state failure or instability?

In regard to the paradox of Mexico's transition to democracy and the corresponding fall of state stability, I conclude that it was the state system and the institutions that had made the PRI so strong that ended up creating instability once the state was opened up to opposition party leadership. The PRI's corporatist structure relied on unsustainable corporatist institutions that were built not to strengthen the state but rather to strengthen the party. The state that the PRI's hegemonic system had created has ceased to exist, and with it the stability of the state and the legitimacy of its institutions.

I find that the legitimacy of the PRI was maintained due to (1) the assurance of minimal public services, (2) relatively dependable economic progress and (3) the effectiveness by which their policies were implemented and disputes were adjudicated—however outside the realm of democratic norms the implementation was carried out. Today, the Mexican state faces a legitimacy crisis by which it has failed to continue to effectively create and implement policies assuring the human and state security. This has been due to the fact that Mexico's transition to democracy was fundamentally incomplete, lacking the broad structural transformations necessary of a complete transition from hegemonic party rule to a competitive democracy.

The importance of establishing legitimacy in the electoral institutions of a state entering democracy has been overemphasized within literature on transitions to democracy and it has done so at the expense of state stability. As will become clear in the analysis of the case of Mexico and its transition from a hegemonic one-party system, state institutions built under non-democratic regimes often lose relevance and effectiveness, and with those, legitimacy, in the self-directed top-down transitions from hegemonic to competitive party systems. It is often the most stabilizing state institutions

– those that implement the deliverance of key public goods to society – that breakdown during the transition thereby weakening the strength of the state and placing the nascent democracy in a compromising, vulnerable position.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This section seeks first to review the current theories on state building, state strength and state stability with the goal of understanding the particular way in which Mexico grew in strength as a “state.” Next I will present the various permutations of limits on states’ strength and stability depicted within scholarly literature and the debate on the impact and precise definition of state legitimacy. I will then present useful definition of democracy for my purposes.

State building, State Strength and Stability

State formation is a highly complex process and the result of innumerable causal factors hence it is useful to break down the process in order to understand its evolution. Stein Rokkan presents such conceptualization in “Dimensions of State Formation.”

Rokkan describes the process of state development in four distinct processes. These processes fall within four channels: the military, legal, cultural and economic channels of society.¹ In the legal channel he lists the establishment of regular institutions and rules for the settlement of disputes. The military channel involves the growth of a militarily powerful center of physical control over peripheries. The third channel is the process of culture, which, in the case of European state formation, involved the differentiation of religious orders and the growth of world religions rather than localized religion. The fourth channel involves the differentiation of technical skills and specialization of crafts, eventually industries, within the economic channel.

¹ Rokkan, Stein. *State Formation, Nation-Building, and Mass Politics in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 565. Print.

In the struggle for consolidation of a young state, the creation of a center or core is an essential ingredient in jump-starting statehood development.² It becomes the responsibility of this “central core” to connect and consolidate the periphery or outlying regions with the actors of influence from the core. Four indicators—cities, landholding structures, churches and linguistic elites – all contribute to the relative connectedness of center-periphery integration, which in turn involve the four channels discussed above.³

From the four channels -- military, legal, cultural and economic -- and four indicators cities -- landholding structures, churches and linguistic elites -- come the most useful categorization: Rokkan’s four phases of the state-building process. The first phase is characterized by political, economic and cultural unification at the elite level. Completion of this phase, known as the “penetration” phase, is the point at which the central administrative machineries have penetrated the periphery through the striking of bargains, establishment of bonds across the four channels of networks, and a few institutions are created for the extraction (usually by taxation) of resources for common defense, order and protection of rights.⁴

The second phase, the “standardization phase” of state formation, includes the incorporation of more sectors of society into the system. The institutions built in the standardization phase in Europe include armies, compulsory schools, and mass media outlets. All these help generate feelings of identity.⁵ The role of the military, as well as the education system and the media varied depending on the particular type of regime that was initially created.

² Ibid.

³ Rokkan 568.

⁴ Rokkan 572-573.

⁵ Rokkan 572.

Phase III, or the “participation” phase, incorporates the greater mass of the population through active participation in the political system. The institutions of the participation phase include the mobilization and organization of political parties for representation, and the formation of opposition outlets.⁶ Greater participation is often associated with a transition towards democratic rule.

Phase IV involves the creation of agencies of redistribution. In Europe this represented the development of the social entitlements. Phase IV represents Rokkan’s acknowledgment and ascription to the economic development theory that unequal distribution of wealth often, or even necessarily, characterizes the development and growth of the economy of a state. Rokkan also suggests for latecomers to state development, the amount of time spent in each phase correlates with the relative difficulties and challenges faced in the successful completion of each phase – longer is better – a shorter phase means a rockier succeeding phase. Rokkan suggests that latecomers to state formation are faced with more challenges in each phase due to the minimum time left to build up their institutions before they were faced with “disruptive pressures from outside as well as from inside.”⁷

Defining and Categorizing the State

In considering state consolidation and the development of strong, stable and democratic states, it is important to identify a working definition of a “state.” Charles Tilly offered the notion of the state as an organization which controls the population within its territory in so far as “(i) it is differentiated from other organizations operating

⁶ Rokkan 573.

⁷ Rokkan 574.

in the same territory; (ii) it is autonomous, (iii) it is centralized and (iv) its divisions are formally coordinated with one another.”⁸ Tilly applied this conceptualization for the case of European statehood. He concluded that the key processes that brought about state formation in Europe were the consolidation of territorial control, the differentiation of governments from other organizations the acquisition of autonomy, and the reciprocal recognition of other states’ autonomy by some governments, centralization and coordination.⁹ The differentiation of the state from other organizations and autonomy in particular represent important additions to the standardization phase depicted by Rokkan’s model.

A more specific categorization of the state is necessary before moving onto limitations of state power and further into transition to democracy literature and will later help to qualify the particular state that emerged in Mexico. In the development of the state within the first two phases of state consolidation as delineated by Stein Rokkan and Charles Tilly, the particular capabilities and relationship of the state and of society can have an important impact on the strength of the state that develops. The relative strength of the state in relation to society and actors within its society in turn impacts the kind of regime that develops.

This strength is categorized along a continuum between a strong and weak state and further to a dominant, moderate and failed or even collapsed state. The weakest of states is one where the interests of various pressure groups pervade over those of the

⁸ Tilly 70.

⁹ Ibid.

‘state’ and where government institutions exist to serve those interests specifically.¹⁰ At the opposite end of the spectrum is a state that is uniquely capable of molding the society and culture in which it exists. The extreme case of a strong state is able to change economic institutions, values, and patterns of interaction among various sectors of society.¹¹ Between the two extremes exists a ‘moderate’ state. Such a state is able to maintain some autonomy from the society but cannot impose radical transformation on economic or cultural systems, it may be able to resist societal pressure but unable to change the actions of private actors.¹²

Failed states are characterized by intense, enduring, consuming violence that overwhelms large swaths of the state.¹³ There are a number of important indicators of failed states. They often undergo civil wars stemming from ethnic, religious, linguistic or class issues. It is common for failed states to victimize their citizens. The line between weak and failed states is crossed when state-led oppression provokes a counter reaction by its constituents. Failed states cannot control the regions that are consumed by violence. Further indicators include the growth of criminal violence, flawed, often totally absent institutions, deteriorating or destroyed infrastructures, high levels of corruption, and declining GDP. Failed states often allow for exceptional economic opportunity for the elites that align themselves with the interests of the aggressor government or non-

¹⁰ Krasner, Stephan D. *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investment and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978. 55-6. Print.

¹¹ Krasner 56.

¹² Krasner 56-7.

¹³ Rotberg, Robert. *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. 5. Print.

state actor. A collapsed state is an extreme of a failed state, whereby political goods are sought outside the state.¹⁴

Hierarchy of Public Goods and State Strength

In considering the relative weakness or strength of a state and the qualifications for a society to defect from the previous rules of the game, some scholars have identified a hierarchy of public goods that help to anticipate the expectations of citizens for their government. It is the duty of states to provide a de-centralized method of delivering public goods to its citizenry, serve as a channel for organizing the interests of society, mediate disputes within society and serve as a buffer towards external forces and influences.¹⁵ The ability of the state to ensure the delivery of these public goods, or the states' performance, determines the strength of the state, and within these public goods exists a hierarchy from which state failure or survival often hinges. At the top of the pyramid of public goods is that of the supply of security, particularly human security.¹⁶ Security can include the prevention of cross-border invasions and infiltrations and any loss of territory, the elimination of domestic threats to national order and social structure, the prevention of crime, and the facilitating of disputes between citizens without recourse to arms.¹⁷

Secondary public goods include the provision of such expectations such as systematized methods of adjudicating disputes and the creation and regulation of societal norms. It generally implies a body of law, security of property and contracts, a functional

¹⁴ Rotberg 9.

¹⁵ Rotberg 2.

¹⁶ Rotberg 3.

¹⁷ Ibid.

judicial system and a legitimizing set of values that are embodied by rule of law.¹⁸

Tertiary goods involve the free, open and full participation of citizens in politics and the political process.¹⁹ Clearly, this public good relates directly to the participation phase elaborated by state consolidation scholars, and by democracy scholars on the essential ingredients for democracy. Other public goods include deliverables involving health care, education, various forms of physical infrastructure, channels of commerce, communication networks, money and banking systems, fiscal institutions, and space for civil society and methods for regulating the environmental commons.²⁰

Limitations on and Challenges to State Strength and Development

Before moving into transition to democracy literature it is first important to introduce a few challenges that states face in consolidating their rule. In the case of state development anywhere in the world, there are a number of limitations and challenges that face the state as it gains strength. As portrayed in Rokkan's model, as the state moves into the latter two phases of its development, the state undergoes tremendous growth in power capabilities. After obtaining a secure method by which to collect resources from its constituents, the state often reinvests money into securing great control over its citizenry—often by way of a strong federal military. This is where the limitations of the state come into play.

The state is limited in the extent to which society will permit the growth of state power. In the creation of extreme or ideal 'stateness' or a highly controlled society by the

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

bureaucracy apparatus many scholars emphasize the importance of avoiding unrestrained stateness to prevent revolts.²¹ According to the experiences of state building in Europe, scholars have found that often the short-run cost of an increase in stateness results in the parallel increase in the likelihood of resistance and revolt.²²

Others go further with this concept of the limitations of state strength by pointing out the limitations that exist in the dynamic relationship that exists between exit and voice options permitted by the state during state creation and the relative consolidation and integration of the center-core in question. Due to the necessary interaction of men, commodities and ideas across borders, “You cannot build states without controlling borders.”²³ Basing his argument on the assumption that young states must maintain a degree of control over its territory, Stein Rokkan argues that states must *either* reduce exit options *or* voice options of its subjects.²⁴ Rokkan reasons, “You cannot reduce both *exit* and *voice* options at the same time without endangering the balance of the system...during the crucial phases of state-building.”²⁵ He further suggests that low levels of overall mobilization during state-building corresponded to greater instances of success in that it gave the national elites time to build up the needed institutional base on which to enter later phases of participation.²⁶

²¹ Extreme ‘stateness’ here is in reference to Charles Tilly’s notion of the state as measured by formal autonomy, differentiation from non governmental organizations, centralization, and internal coordination. See Tilly, Charles. *Coercion, Capital and European States: AD 990 - 1992*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992. 34-5. Print.

²² Tilly 35.

²³ Rokkan 589.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Rokkan 597.

Legitimacy and its effect on state stability

Closely related to the limitations of extreme stateness are the limitations associated with the legitimacy of a state. Juan Linz's work, "Elements of Breakdown" regarding the breakdown of democratic regimes, includes an important conceptualization of the impact and importance of legitimacy, efficacy and effectiveness in maintaining regime stability.

Legitimacy is defined as a belief that in spite of all shortcomings and failures, the "existing political institutions are better than any other that might be established and that they therefore can demand obedience."²⁷ While this definition of legitimacy rests on the presumption of democracy, the basic tenants of his argument can be applied to other non-democratic regimes. A legitimate *government* is defined as a government that is considered to be the least evil of the forms of government. Ultimately, democratic legitimacy is based on the belief that for the particular country at that particular historical juncture no other type of regime could assume a more successful pursuit of collective goals.²⁸ Furthermore political socialization plays a decisive role in state legitimacy and in the case of democratic legitimacy, tradition reinforces legitimacy.

Legitimacy is connected to the concepts of efficacy and effectiveness in that

"Legitimacy... operates as a positive constant that multiplies whatever positive value the efficacy and effectiveness of the regime might achieve.

It insures effectiveness even in the absence of desirable efficacy, and

²⁷ Linz, Juan. "Elements of a Breakdown." *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown & Reequilibrium*. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Univeristy Press, 1978. 17-8. Print.

²⁸ Ibid 18.

contributes to the ultimate outcome: persistence and relative stability of the regime.”²⁹

In order to gain legitimacy for itself by fulfilling its duty to serve the collective goals of a society, the state must prove its efficacy and effectiveness in governing. Efficacy is defined as the capacity of a regime to solve the basic problems facing any political system that are perceived as satisfactory by its citizens.³⁰ Linz points out that efficacy is judged in the long term rather than in the short term, presumably to overlook short-term failures to favor overall long-term success in providing basic services and solving basic problems. This can become a problem for new regimes that suffer from temporary failures, which can lead to a strengthening of supporters for the old regime. From this comes the conclusion of the high importance and lasting impact of the formulation of the initial agenda of a new regime for sectors of society but also for the amount of legitimacy granted to the new regime.

Effectiveness is intimately linked to the concepts of efficacy and legitimacy yet analytically distinguishable. Effectiveness, in contrast, is defined as the capacity to implement the policies formulated with the desired results.³¹ Effectiveness therefore is linked to the implementation stage of policy making while efficacy is linked to the actual policy formulation. Linz elaborates on one important kind of ineffectiveness, the inability to impose order and punish those turning to private violence for political ends.³² The

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Linz 21.

³¹ Linz 22.

³² Linz 23.

efficacy and effectiveness of the initial agenda of a new regime if successful reinforces the legitimacy of the regime, if unsuccessful triggers the mobilization of opposition.³³

The relationship between effectiveness and legitimacy is such that ineffectiveness weakens the authority of the state, which in turn weakens legitimacy of the government.³⁴ In this sense, the effectiveness, and therefore legitimacy, of a regime is closely linked with the stability of a regime. Since ineffectiveness can include the inability to impose order or legal sanctions against private violence, an ineffective regime often leads to a failed state.

Defining Democracy

As the elaboration on state consolidation shows us, after a certain degree of consolidation among the elites and the ‘penetration’ of Phase I, it is important to slowly bring larger and larger sectors of the masses into the system and then into active participation in Phases II and III, and finally, allow for the agencies of redistribution of Phase IV. The need for an ‘opening up’ of government and increasing the inclusiveness of sectors of society outside elite circles often come in reaction to some of the breaches of the limitations on stateness as depicted in the previous section.

There are many definitions of democracy that approach the concept from different angles. For the purpose of this thesis, I will depend on a minimalist definition of democracy by perhaps the most often-cited democracy scholar.

Robert Dahl’s “Polyarchy” makes an important contribution to democracy theory in his attempt to define democracy. In any regime theory, theorists generally define

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Linz 22.

regime types and paradigms through extreme ideals. Dahl moves beyond the ideal typology of democracy by defining a new realistic and more easily quantified regime type in his definition of ‘polyarchy.’

The ideal type of democracy is defined as a political system that is completely or almost completely responsive to all its citizens.³⁵ The conditions necessary for this kind of democracy include the unimpaired opportunities to (1) formulate their preferences, (2) signify their preferences to their fellow citizens and the government by individual and collective action, and (3) to have their preferences weighed equally in the conduct of the government, that is, weighed with no discrimination because of the content or source of the preference.³⁶ In order for the above three opportunities to exist among a populous state, the institutions of the society must provide at least eight Institutional Guarantees:

1. Freedom to form and join organizations
2. Freedom of expression
3. Right to vote
4. Eligibility for public office
5. Right of political leaders to compete for support
6. Alternative sources of information
7. Free and fair elections
8. Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference³⁷

³⁵ Dahl, Robert. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971. Print.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Dahl 3.

Dahl, like other democracy scholars, was not satisfied with this narrow definition of democracy. In order to broaden the conceptualization of democracy from these conditions and guarantees, Dahl poses two theoretical dimensions of democratization as part of his new categorization of polyarchy. The first is the extent of opposition, public contestation, or political competition permitted by the state. The second involves the breadth of public contestation or participation permitted by the state.³⁸ While relative 'suffrage' permitted and afforded by the state in elections is considered to be an important indicator by many democracy scholars, Dahl points out that the degree of inclusiveness of the regime is a better overall indicator of democratic governance.

Dahl elaborates on four regime types based on these two dimensions of democracy. The extremes of the dimensions of competition and participation amount not to democracy per se, but rather to Dahl's new regime type, polyarchy. While *polyarchies* represent a full support of the two dimensions, *inclusive hegemonies* are regimes in which full participation is allowed but not public contestation. *Competitive oligarchies* represent the opposite regime type where full participation is not permitted but public contestation is permitted. Lastly, *closed hegemonies* represent regimes that allow neither public contestation nor inclusiveness of participation.³⁹ Dahl avoids recognizing all possible defining characteristics of democracy by using the term Polyarchy to describe real world systems that most allow both dimensions. Meanwhile, movements along the path towards polyarchy can be said to represent some degree of democratization. Dahl allows for approximation in his terminology in recognizing the existence of near-types.

³⁸ Dahl 4.

³⁹ Dahl 7.

Transitions to Democracy

In consideration of the above elaboration on democracy, it is important to underscore literature on the interlocking challenges of maintaining stability while transitioning to a more democratic regime. Many of the models and categorizations presented so far depict democracy as simply the next step in state consolidation or the likely consequence of the overstepping limitations to state strength in the event of a consolidated authoritarian regime. Transitions to democracy, as history tells us, are far more complicated than such an oversimplified depiction suggests. This section will elaborate on the contributions within literature regarding factors contributing to the smoothness of transitions and common challenges for transitions to democracy.

Robert Dahl suggests several broad historical transformations that are possible for democratization within the regime framework described above. The first is the transformation of inclusive hegemonies and competitive oligarchies into near-polyarchies. From a near-polyarchy, a regime can move towards full polyarchy and from full polyarchy further democratization can be implemented through the creation of welfare-state type systems.⁴⁰ Dahl based his theoretical proposition on the assumption that the dimensions of competition and participation are the primary steps towards transitioning towards democracy before any other kind of opening up of control.

Tilly complicates the idea of political change in state development by underscoring two partly independent processes—state stability and suffrage. He argues that governments whose relative level of stateness was highest in the 19th century extended the suffrage faster and faster, but that extensions of the suffrage were more

⁴⁰ Dahl 12.

durable and supported by surer guarantees in the less state-like governments.⁴¹ This proposal suggests further evidence to the theoretical correlation between high levels of ‘stateness’ with high propensity for revolt.

Not all transitions to democracy happen as a result of a coup d’etats of non-democratic regimes. Such a move is the result of a sequence of decisions and rationalizations by the ruling coalition—such was the case of Mexico’s recent transition to democracy. Robert Dahl contributes a number of axioms under which non-democratic regimes can voluntarily transition themselves to a democratic system.

Dahl’s axioms seek to present the conditions under which non-democratic regimes rationalize steps towards polyarchy.

Axiom 1: The likelihood that a government will tolerate an opposition increases as the expected costs of toleration decrease, (tolerance goes up as costs of toleration goes down).

Axiom 2: The likelihood that a government will tolerate an opposition increases as the expected costs of suppression increase.

Axiom 3: The more the costs of suppression exceed the costs of toleration, the greater the chance for a competitive regime.⁴²

Dahl adds the variable of available resources to the government:

Axiom 4: The likelihood that a government will tolerate an opposition increases as the resources available to the government for suppression decline relative to the resources of an opposition.⁴³

⁴¹ Tilly 36.

⁴² Dahl 15.

⁴³ Dahl 48.

Axiom 5: The likelihood that a government will tolerate an opposition increases with a reduction in the capacity of the government to use violence or socioeconomic sanctions to suppress an opposition.⁴⁴

Dahl makes a key point here in recognizing the impact that resources, including brute force and socioeconomic sanctions, of both the state and, importantly, of the opposition can have on the political structure of the state and the rationalization of the ruling coalition.

Opposition, Parties and Plurality in Governance

Building on the conceptualization of democracy and polyarchy made by Robert Dahl, the relative tolerance of and the organization within the opposition becomes a crucial factor in the consolidation of democracies. Rokkan's model of four phases of state consolidation allows for the consolidation of elite interests in the initial formulation of the state and for the opening up of the state towards greater portions of society without treating the plurality and disunity that such an opening can create. The relative incorporation of any opposition that develops impacts the regime type of a state. As elaborated on in Dahl's five Axioms, there are certain conditions under which non-democratic regimes justify tolerance towards opposition. With the entrance of the opposition into the official political sphere of a state, formal organization generally leads to the creation of opposition parties. Giovanni Sartori contributes important insights on the establishment of parties and the impact parties have on the development of democracy.

⁴⁴ Dahl 49.

While during the initial stages of state consolidation, elite consolidation is, generally speaking, a necessary phenomenon; unity within the ruling coalition becomes less urgent as the state stabilizes its rule. As the state becomes more and more complex, disunity is nearly inevitable and factions within the ruling party result.⁴⁵

The rise of pluralism and the parallel development of parties and party systems are conceptualized by Giovanni Sartori. Sartori builds directly on the proposals in Dahl's Axioms in suggesting that pluralism in government arises from the parallel process of intolerance to toleration, from toleration to dissent, and, with dissent to believing in diversity.⁴⁶

In defining pluralism Sartori conceptualizes the notion at three levels—cultural pluralism (heterogeneousness of culture), societal pluralism (societal differentiation), and political pluralism (political dissent).⁴⁷ The presence of political dissent is said neither to translate directly from the opposite of consensus nor directly from conflict. Plurality requires a careful balance and ongoing presence of both dissent and consensus, whereby consensus should not convey uniform unanimity but rather invoke a sense of cooperation and compromise. Sartori posits a very apt interpretation of the development of party systems in relations to the development of the state,

“Perhaps the polity must exit first, perhaps unification has to precede party
“partition,” and perhaps this is the condition that makes parties a
subdivision compatible with unity rather than a division that disrupts it.

⁴⁵ This assumption is built off of Giovanni Sartori's conceptualization of Pluarlity. See, Sartori, Giovanni. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976. 13. Print.

⁴⁶ Sartori 13.

⁴⁷ Sartori 15.

This is supported by the experience of most of the developing societies bent upon constructing a national identity and integration, which have quickly resorted to the single party or to military rule, and in either case to banishing organized dissent, that is, opposition.”⁴⁸

Sartori posits an additional position regarding pluralism. Pluralism, he suggests, develops often as a result of religious, political or class-based disconnections whereby the stakes of political controversy are so high so as to justify the surrendering of power within a competitive party system.⁴⁹ One disconnect that he highlights as a common spark to party systems are the wars and conflicts over religion. Religion, and other societal values of high importance represent one of many occasions where heterogeneity of a society creates disconnect to spark factions that can lead to the creation of opposition parties.

As parties emerge from factions that begin to be tolerated within a political system, the relationship between parties and the state may take various forms. Certainly we know of the forms of one, two and multi-party systems, but within those systems it is important to distinguish precise relationships. Among the three there is (i) the party that remains external to the sphere of government, Sartori calls this the ambassador party, (ii) the party that operates within government without governing, and (iii) the party that actually takes on the governmental function.⁵⁰

The parliamentary party development that Sartori explores in his elaboration on responsible and responsive government must be presented in order to evaluate where

⁴⁸ Sartori 16-7.

⁴⁹ Sartori 17.

⁵⁰ Sartori 19.

Mexico diverges from the path towards plurality in party systems. Parallel to the evolution of plurality in a polity is the evolution of responsible government. Responsible government is defined by Sartori as the responsibility of ministers to parliament, which does not necessarily entail responsibility within a party-based system. The institution of Parliament in the cases studied by Sartori and his predecessor, Burke, represented the shift from control *of* the people to control *for* the people, and in the very first stages *for* the people was not intended to imply *by* the people.⁵¹ In this sense virtual representation preceded actual electoral representation.

Sartori rationalizes that a government responsible to its houses of parliament will in the long run become a responsive government attentive to, and influenced by its people.⁵² Sartori states that members of parliament came to justify the use of greater enfranchisement into the electorate as a way to pursue their own interests as they began to defect from unanimity. It is with the extension of suffrage that parties emerge. And it is when enfranchisement reaches a “critical mass” that a party system emerges.⁵³ Sartori remains purposefully vague in the precise size qualification for this final step. In so doing he disregards the possibility for regimes to extend official suffrage without giving credence to the electoral system and the impact that such a system would have on the development of parties and party systems.

The final contribution made by Sartori that is useful to the topic of this thesis is the distinction between one-party and no-party states. While the party-less or pre-party states and antiparty states imply justifications for the lack of parties, the one-party state

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Sartori 20.

⁵³ Sartori 22.

implies a question as to why the one-party rather than party-less state. Sartori explains that one-party systems only could emerge after the establishment of party systems in the world arena and where a society has already emerged suitably politicized.⁵⁴ Single party systems emerged only after Western democracies had established the expectation of large, nearly universal enfranchisement and the emergence of party systems and mass party bases.⁵⁵

The systemic unit is such that the single party is essentially a duplication of the state and vice versa, the state is a duplicate of the party. As he explains the system is the byproduct of party office whereby a bureaucratic merit system exists alongside a party career system. In regard to the question of competition within a single party system Sartori provides an argument against the theory proposed by others that intra-party competition can substitute for inter-party competition by the traditional notion of competitive democratic regimes. Dissent within a party, he argues induces more of a “private” than a “functional” contest.

Loyalty and Disloyalty in the Opposition

Sartori touches on the subtle evolution of the opposition parties themselves in his mentioning of the movement from toleration to dissent. In many cases, opposition parties that arise from non-democratic regimes must tread more carefully than those in democratic regimes. The first opposition parties to be tolerated by the state are largely unprecedented and generally take a number of years, or decades to build the support and reputation to compete fairly of positions of power.

⁵⁴ Sartori 41.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Juan Linz elaborates this careful balance in his conceptualization of the loyal and disloyal opposition. Sartori presented the concept of factions in the context of the development of party systems. Regime transitions, or in some cases regime stability as we will see, are impacted by the development of two distinct types of oppositions—the loyal and disloyal. Disloyal opposition, according to Linz, is essentially anarcho-syndicalists or secessionist movements who refuse to abide by the existing rules of the game to bring about change. Linz defies the general conceptualization of political opposition in his definition of *loyal opposition*. While disloyal opposition are defectors from the existing state system, loyal opposition are actors that remain committed to change via legal means for gaining power rather than through the use of force.⁵⁶ The political forces constituting the loyal opposition to a democratic regime are ideally characterized by the following:

1. A public commitment to achievement of power only by electoral means and willingness to surrender to other participants with the same commitment.
2. A rejection of the use of violent means to achieve and maintain power.
3. A rejection of any non-constitutional appeal to the armed forces.
4. A rejection of the rhetoric of violence to mobilize support.
5. A commitment to participate in the political process, elections and parliamentary activity.
6. A willingness to assume the responsibility to govern or be party of the majority when no alternative government by system parties is possible.

⁵⁶ Linz, Juan. *Elements of Breakdown*. 28-9.

7. A willingness to join with opponents ideologically distant but committed to the survival of the democratic political order.
8. A rejection of secret contacts with the disloyal opposition and a rejection of its support when offered.
9. The readiness to denounce to a legitimate democratic government the activities of opposition forces or the armed forces aiming at the overthrow of that government.
10. A commitment in principle to reduce the political role of neutral powers, like presidents and kings, the judiciary and the armed forces to narrow limits to assure the authenticity of the democratic political process.⁵⁷

Linz applies his qualifications to democracy in crisis, while in the case at hand we will apply this concept of loyalty of the opposition to a stable, non-democratic regime with the ironic commitment of the opposition to remaining within the system.

Power and Interdependence

In the development of a state, regardless of the regime type or party system, the policies made and implemented by a state impact the reactions of others in the world around them. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in their work, *Power and Interdependence*, introduce the impact that policies have on the relationships of states within the world arena. The dynamics of power and interdependence can be applied to the policies within a state as well and will provide key insights in the discussion of power dynamics in the case of Mexico.

⁵⁷ Linz 36-37.

Keohane and Nye posit that asymmetrical interdependence can be source of power—power as defined as the control over resources or the potential to affect outcomes.⁵⁸ This asymmetry, however, as Keohane and Nye point out, is rarely a one-to-one relationship. The political bargaining capabilities of actors have a large impact on this. At the domestic level power relations of actors represent the relationship between the state and key actors in society, such as the state and labor, the state business.

In order to distinguish varying degrees of interdependence one must distinguish the dimensions of sensitivity and vulnerability. Sensitivity involves the responsiveness of actors within a policy framework. Sensitivity in terms of dependence means liability to costly effects imposed from outside before policies are altered to try to change the situation.⁵⁹ At the national level, sensitivity could refer to the costly reactions of a politicized society to policy changes by the state. Vulnerability interdependence, in contrast, refers to the costs of adjusting to the change.⁶⁰ Some states will endure a heavier cost of policy changes of a state in which they depend on for something, generally a resource such as oil, than other states that may have other alternatives more readily available.

Conclusion

The scholarly work presented in this chapter outlines the core theory that this thesis will expand on for the case of Mexico. Stein Rokkan's theory on the phases of state creation and consolidation and his emphasis on the impact of relative time spent at each

⁵⁸ Keohane, Robert, and Joseph Nye. *Power and Interdependence*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1977. 11.Print.

⁵⁹ Keohane and Nye 12.

⁶⁰ Keohane and Nye 13.

phase, the degree of exit and voice permitted by the state and the various factors enabling the creation of the state will all be considered later in the examination of the case of Mexico. Charles Tilly also contributed important conceptualizations of the notion of the state, key factors of state making in Europe and the impact that extreme 'stateness' can have on state stability. The points made by Rokkan and Tilly and the elaboration by Dahl on the long-term political goal of opening up inclusiveness of the state and the rise of opposition sectors of society will guide the discussion on Mexico's long awaited transition towards democracy. Furthermore, Dahl's axioms on the relation of state toleration of opposition and the impact of relative resources of each will be essential in the investigation on Mexico's transition. The presentation of party systems by Giovanni Sartori, the power and interdependence concepts contributed by Keohane and Nye and the conceptualization of efficacy and effectiveness and their relationship to state, and regime legitimacy will guide the discussion of legitimacy in the particular state-party and state-society systems that developed in Mexico. The assumptions and propositions made by Sartori and Linz in particular will be applied and analyzed in consideration of the case study of Mexico. The topics delineated here of state creation and state stability and finally of the transition towards democracy by Rokkan, Tilly and Dahl will serve to guide the following examination of the case of Mexico.

Historical Review of the Case Study

Pre-Colonial and Colonial Heritage

The Spanish conquest and colonial rule over Mexico, spanning more than three centuries, was the primary center of Spanish rule in the New World. As such, Mexico inherited a large bureaucratic apparatus that had once been capable of overseeing all colonial regions. This highly structured bureaucratic system operated within a strict hierarchical structure based on obedience to Castile and to the Catholic Church. The social divisions and inequalities that were to plague Mexican society throughout the subsequent historical epochs owe their origins to the sharp racial, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions that this era created.

The creation and consolidation of the Mexican state owes much to its colonial and pre-colonial heritage. From the colonial period one can identify a number of important legacies. These include the legacies of corporatism, social inequality, special interests, cultural intolerance, and Spanish Bureaucratic tradition (within this, personalization of power).¹ Many of the legacies are rooted in the Catholic Church. The religious heritage of the Catholic Church, with its influence over social organizations and education had a long-lasting impact on Mexican society. For instance, the legacy of corporatism can be traced to the special privileges afforded to the Church by the colonial government. The special relationship between the church and the state and other groups served as the

¹ Camp, Roderic. *Politics in Mexico: The Democratic Consolidation*. 5th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 26-30. Print.

predecessor of a continued use of corporatism and special interests in preferred relationships between the state and groups within society.

Other important legacies of the colonial and pre-colonial period are those of social inequality and intolerance of difference. Both the Aztec heritage of ruthless absolute rule by spiritual leaders and the bureaucratic authoritarian rule of Spanish colonial rule influenced the deepening of the socio-economic, cultural and racial inequalities in Mexican society. The close integration of Church and State led to the Catholic Church's monopoly of Mexican religion and further, of social organization. Finally, the central hub of the Spanish Colonial Empire built in the ashes of the once mighty Aztec capital contributed to the subsequent centralization of the Mexican state around Mexico City.

The colonial period served an important role in Mexican history in its initial penetration into the depths of state territory and organization of initial bureaucratic traditions. In comparison to British colonial rule to the North, the Spanish did not leave such long lasting institutions that would carry over so directly to the consolidation of the new independent state. The education system organized under colonial rule was more of a product of the Catholic Church and indeed, the Jesuit missionaries, than of the Spanish bureaucracy. Evidence of the military tradition of the Viceroy did not remain a heavy influence on the early Mexican state; instead it was the unruly regional bosses or caciques that came to characterize the Mexican equivalent of 'organized' armed forces. The system of taxation to the Viceroy, so very hated by the independence forces took a long time to be brought back into the bureaucratic system of Mexico. The legacies of the

controlled Colonial era would very soon be overshadowed by the anarchy following independence.

From Independence to Porfiriato

Mexico officially won its independence in August 1821 when the final remaining Spanish viceroy was forced to sign the Treaty of Córdoba. To this day, however, Independence is celebrated on September 16th to celebrate a day eleven years prior to official independence when Father Miguel Hidalgo, a small village priest issued his famous *grito* calling for independence. Though the brief popular uprising led by Hidalgo was violently suppressed by viceregal and royalist forces, the continued recognition of the first popular call for independence marks the first disconnect between the wishes of the haves and the have nots that has continued to this day. The treaty was negotiated by Agustín de Iturbide, a royalist who had also negotiated the Plan de Iguala, by which Mexico would become ruled as a limited monarchy, with the Roman Catholic Church as the official state Church and equal rights and upper-class status for the Spanish and mestizo populations, exempting the majority *mulatto* and *indigeno* population.²

The period immediately following independence for Mexico in 1821 was marked by distinct continuities and discontinuities from the colonial period. After gaining independence, the exacting bureaucratic structure of the colonial system was left in a precarious position. The nationalist surge that had briefly unified for the independence movement quickly broke into factions of liberal and conservative bases, both sides lacking the organizational prowess and unity to fully take on the job of state building.

² Camp 21-5.

Independence did not bring any immediate revolutionary change to the structure of the colonial government or the disarray of the internal factions during independence struggle. In effect, this meant the substitution of royal bureaucracy by the 'army,' which at the time was made up of supporters of the man sitting in the Presidential chair. The Constitutional Congress of February 1822 broke down at the hands of the Bourbonist and republican factions, however both united against Iturbide.³ Iturbide, having declared himself emperor of the new Mexican state was finally overthrown by his former aide, General Antonio López de Santa Anna. Nationalist hero Santa Anna declared Mexico a Republic.⁴

An important continuity from the colonial period was the ongoing ideological discord between the Royalists and the Liberals. The primary political discords following independence surrounded the issues of how the new state system would be structured. The camps were first divided between the liberals, in favor of a federal system and the conservatives, preferring to emulate the centralized system that the Spanish had utilized.⁵

While the bitter struggle between Centralist and Federalist forces began, the young fragile state faced a number of major threats to its sovereignty. After Santa Anna easily defeated a final Spanish invasion in 1829, another invasion occurred ten years later in 1838, shaking the young state. The French invaded Veracruz in an effort to exact compensation for damages to French-owned property.⁶ While these invasions did spark nationalist sentiment surrounding the generals like Santa Anna who had maintained

³ Bethell, Leslie. *Mexico Since Independence*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. 4-12. Print.

⁴ Bethell 5.

⁵ Bethell 8.

⁶ Bethell 11-16.

Mexico's sovereignty, it was not enough to mobilize a strong state-building momentum or to properly prepare for future threats to Mexico's sovereignty.

The Federalists-Bourbanists tensions came to a head during the War of the Reform between 1858 and 1861, under which the fleeting victory of the Liberals allowed them to briefly enforce the Constitution of 1857. Due to the inability to consolidate their own power domestically, the conservatives regarded the ensuing French invasion and state intervention in a positive light, assuming a European monarch would better serve their own interests.⁷ This was probably also due in part to the unwillingness of the liberals to compromise.⁸

The discontinuities of the period following independence would have a long-term impact on the young state. Two events during the lead up to the Liberal Reform period represent key turning points in Mexico. The first was the Mexican-American War in 1845 to 1848, where Mexico lost a large portion of its territory to the United States.⁹ This moment would forever be a bitter memory in Mexican political memory and determine much of the future attitudes for foreign relations with the Northern goliath.

The second key event was the French intervention that began in 1861 when President Benito Juárez suspended the interest payments to foreign countries due to the heavy accumulation of debt to its key creditor nations: Spain, France and Britain.¹⁰ Juárez's presidency was interrupted by the rule of the Hapsburg monarch, Maximilian I. After invading Veracruz, Maximilian and his wife Carlota were appointed by the French

⁷ "Mexican nobility yearned for a European prince... to deliver them from forced loans and other fiscal burdens." See, Bethell 4.

⁸ Camp 35.

⁹ Bethell 19.

¹⁰ Bethell 44-45.

Crown as Mexico's new emperors.¹¹ After France withdrew its support, Maximilian and his remaining supporters did not last long before he was executed on June 19, 1867.¹² The short-lived Mexican Empire served to completely discredit the conservative faction and enabled the Liberal party to consolidate the state.

The Restored Republic sought to replace the old order with a modern foundation by enacting a series of reform laws largely aimed at weakening the church.¹³ While this era is called the liberal era or *La Reforma*, the liberals were pro liberty without an emphasis on equality. In their attack on the church, they also made way for regional oligarchs to take charge, especially during the expropriation of church lands. In this way the "liberal" era in Mexican history supported the liberties of some but certainly not equality for all.

While the Liberals implemented a number of new policies, the state in no small measure remained disunited and unconsolidated. Many authors emphasize regionalism and fragmentation that continued to plague the state building process.¹⁴ Even after the war with the French, indeed despite it, and despite the popularity of Juárez as a leader, the country was even further away from integration. After ten years of war and the fragmentation that resulted from Maximilian's rule, the economy was in chaos and was more dependent than ever on Europe.

While as a colony, the political elite in Mexico did not have to concern themselves with foreign relations, as a young state foreign relations would emerge as a

¹¹ Bethell 43.

¹² Bethell 47.

¹³ Bethell 49.

¹⁴ Anna, Timothy. *Forging Mexico*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. 19-21. Print.

major concern very early on. Mexico's relationship with the U.S., which would come to represent a key factor in Mexican state politics, began during this era. The relationship began with the bitter loss of one half of Mexican territory.¹⁵ As a young and highly unorganized 'state' Mexico had no defense against the expansionist interests of the goliath to the North. This encounter would leave Mexicans distrustful of its neighbor and also probably gave greater urgency to the need to consolidate the state and consolidate control over its remaining territory. Mexico's foreign relations, with creditors abroad and domestically, and its state stability was first consolidated under the man that whose name became associated with an entire era: Porfirio Diaz.

Porfiriato

While on paper the Mexican state at the close of the Liberal period resembled a young European state, in reality the state remained highly disunited among regional, economic and cultural factions. The liberals fell in 1867 to Porfirio Diaz, a General from the War of French Intervention, after two attempts by Diaz to unseat the popular president, Benito Juarez.¹⁶ While the Diaz administrations did not represent any overt discontinuities from previous administrations, his did introduce important additions to Mexican state policies, state structures and ideologies.

Diaz rose to power as positivist political ideologies began to make a presence in Latin America. Positivist thought held special credence for the case of Mexico at this time. Positivism was based on the notion that political policies should be formed

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Bethell 60.

scientifically and that liberty and progress should be sought through peace and order.¹⁷ This preference for order impacted the policies and attitudes of the Diaz administration in his personal push for political stability and economic growth. Diaz sought to attack the detrimental self-perpetuating cycle of economic stagnation and political instability by enforcing centralized control over Mexican society.

With this ideological mindset, the Diaz administration remodeled the state structure of Mexico. Diaz did achieve political stability and peace in what has become known as *Pax Porfiriana*.¹⁸ He achieved peace through a combination of repression, conciliation or pacification and cooptation. As a military man, Diaz sought to establish the armed forces as a key institution for keeping the peace and consolidating control over the anarchic society. Prior to Porfiriato, the military essentially consisted of disorganized groups of strong men loyal to individuals and the state. Diaz increased the state's military expenditure, buying arms from Europe and appointing many of his army friends in political offices.¹⁹ Thanks to this institutionalization of the military completed under his administration, Diaz established a pattern for civil-military relations that were to last until the 1940's. Under this system, there existed no clear subordination but a legacy of shared power and interlocking leadership.²⁰

In addition to building the military, Porfiriato established greater control and stability for Mexico by building an effective federal bureaucracy and by controlling elections. During the span of the Diaz administrations between 1876 and 1910, for

¹⁷ Camp 37.

¹⁸ Bethell 81.

¹⁹ Bethell 85.

²⁰ Bethell 39.

instance, the payroll of the federal bureaucracy increased by 900%.²¹ What would become a long history of election rigging, the Diaz administration controlled national elections through a combination of economic rewards for supporters, pacification, corruption, press censorship, and in the case of the Yaquis Indian revolt and others, through violent suppression.²² It is in this sense that Diaz's interpretation and implementation of positivist-inspired ideology was focused on establishing order and stability over liberty.

Diaz also succeeded in expanding the span of control of the federal state to regional localities in order to prevent the rise of regional bosses and movements that could threaten the regime. Diaz used the newly consolidated military power and increased economic strength of the state to reign in the feudal fiefdoms that had continued to threaten the hegemony of the state. Diaz strategically allowed caciques to enrich themselves and placed military commanders with no connection to the region in question as a check to those caciques and to oversee officials. Loyalty to central rather than local governments was a priority in official appointees. He also established a check on the power of the army by establishing *nacional rurales* as professional police force to reinforce his policies.²³ Diaz accomplished the initial steps of establishing lasting state institutions, of particular importance the empowerment yet control of the military and regional bureaucratic structure.

It was only once a greater societal and political stability was attained that Diaz could focus on his dream for Mexico: economic progress. He took three important steps

²¹ Camp 40.

²² Camp 41.

²³ Bethell 83.

towards state development: i) subjugated the Northern frontier; ii) began to take small measures in expropriating land to peasants, and iii) initiated the making of a ruling class and the emergence of a middle class.²⁴

The subjugation of the Northern Frontier not only brought the anarchic Northern region under state authority; it also opened the way for Sonoran political leaders to enter the political scene. The expropriation of peasant land was a step away from the liberal land policies of the Reform era. The initial steps towards institutionalization of the state helped initiate the making of a ruling elite while the economic progress accomplished under the regime sparked the first emergence of a middle class.

Two key policies for social issues were implemented under Porfiriato. Diaz sought to reverse two relationships the state had inherited from his liberal predecessors: those with the Church and with the Indian populations. Adding to the ample evidence placing Diaz in the authoritarian political camp, Diaz sought reconciliation with the Church. Always the structural realist, Diaz maintained a pragmatic relationship with the Church allowing it to strengthen its religious role while remaining subservient to the State.²⁵ As for the Indian population, Diaz considered the Indians to be obstacles to Mexican development. To remedy this problem Diaz sought to attract European immigrants to settle in Mexico.²⁶

The period of Porfiriato denoted some very significant yet in some ways ambiguous contributions to the consolidation of the state; most were steps forward however some were steps away from consolidation. Clearly the most important step

²⁴ Bethell 88-109.

²⁵ Camp 38.

²⁶ Ibid.

forward was the total control and relative stability that Diaz was able to enforce over the region that had been dominated by regional caciques and to create an effective system of centralized control. Related, the economic progress that was achieved under the regime must not be underestimated. While centralizing the state was a vital step for state consolidation, the personalist qualities of the regime left the state vulnerable to economic and political threats.

Also somewhat ambiguous was the institutionalization of the state that occurred under Porfiriato. While Diaz was able to establish the state as a central political unit, the degree or quality of durability that this institutionalization would have was uncertain. Some scholars have pointed out that although Diaz strengthened the role of state in society, he did not legitimize its institutions.²⁷ In reality, the state was strengthened for the purpose of retaining power for Diaz and not for the purpose of actual state consolidation. In the case of Mexico, considering the relative non-consolidation of the state in the period preceding it, Porfiriato represented a substantial leap forward for state consolidation. Of course this leap landed on unsteady ground due to the various problems and challenges inherent in the institutions built under the personalized rule by Diaz.

The Revolutionary Era

Historians and political scholars disagree over the precise causes of the Revolution. Nevertheless, the causes and consequences of what happened during the Revolution provide substantial insight to the kind of regime that followed it and the rise of the PRI.

²⁷ Camp 41.

In broad terms, the extensive modernization policies of the Diaz administration can be considered a root cause of the Revolution. Ironically, the heavy inflow of investment from abroad, accompanied by the decision to adopt the gold standard, led to the sharp rise in prices and to the outbreak of a major economic crisis in 1907 and 1908.²⁸ This economic crisis, characterized by high unemployment and supplemented by a devastating draught, led to popular unrest due to the level of desperation of the people and to the refusal of the administration to grant any kind of relief to any segment of the population, rich or poor. Other relevant factors were the negative effects of foreign economic penetration, the deepening class struggle exacerbated by Porfirato policies for economic development and an overall clash of modernity and tradition.²⁹

From a political standpoint, many of the social policies of Porfirato and the overall state structure of the regime have been cited as contributing to the outbreak of civil unrest. Perhaps either as a result of apathy of the long installed Porfirian machine, or from the miscalculated perception of the degree of pacification of society, the regime's consensus of 'amificación' with the upper and middle class showed signs of withering by 1910.³⁰ Related, the much used repression tools of the regime had become more visible. The vulnerability of the regime due to the presidentialism of Diaz brought uncertainty over the succession of the aging president and cronies and represented a sign of the overall breakdown of the regime.³¹

Perhaps most important of these factors was the distancing and increasing alienation of significant upper and middle class leaders, both regional and within the

²⁸ Bethell 109-110.

²⁹ Camp 42.

³⁰ Bethell 111.

³¹ Bethell 109 and Camp 42.

centralized system. Regardless of the manner of the fall of Diaz, the key to the future was the rise of a capable class that would have a viable chance at opposing the Diaz machine and mobilizing the factions within the opposition.

The somewhat successful rise of a viable opponent to Diaz came in the form of Francisco Madero, son of wealthy Coahuilan landowners.³² Founder of the Anti-Reelectionist Party to oppose Diaz, Madero advocated for the basic principles of political liberties and some moderate social reforms. Though his campaign did not officially win the election of 1910, Madero's platform of "Effective suffrage, no reelection" gained national recognition and would become a mantra of the revolution.³³ After he lost the election, Madero issued his Plan de San Luis de Potosí, accusing Diaz of defrauding the elections and assumed the role of provisional president, calling for a mass revolt against the regime.³⁴ Madero's planned "small revolution" went haywire with uprisings sparked all over the country from the state of Chihuahua to his home state of Coahuila to the states of more radical revolutionaries of Pascual Orozco, Francisco Villa and Emiliano Zapata.³⁵ Madero took over with the signing of the Treaty of Ciudad Juárez.³⁶

While the revolution may not have been the product of an organized revolutionary movement of the masses, it was not completely deprived of an ideological origin. Ricardo Flores Magón represents one of the important precursors to the Revolution and its culmination in the 1917 Constitution. Through his liberal clubs, Magón offered arguments in support of workers' rights, establishment of minimum wage principles,

³² Bethell 122.

³³ Camp 43.

³⁴ Bethell 123.

³⁵ Camp 43.

³⁶ Bethell 124.

maximum hours in strike documents and liberal party platforms, the return of communally owned Indian properties and a productive land requirement.³⁷

The period between 1910 and 1914 consisted of a number of challenges to Madero's presidency that had a negative effect on the stability of the country and the state. During his short term Madero faced opposition in the form of political meddling from the U.S. under the Woodrow Wilson administration, the organization of opposition from the Orquista supporters, and pressure from the Catholic Church, the *científicos* and the increasingly organized labor sector.³⁸ The governments throughout the decade were preoccupied with the recognition of their administrations by the U.S. and Great Britain, who represented important foreign investors for the struggling new nation.³⁹

The Carranza administration had a significant task set out for them in the "reconstruction of the fatherland." Through this policy, the administration sought to restore business and commerce by regularizing railroad service, by reducing the size and maintaining the control of the military and creating a new constitution for the state.⁴⁰ Carranza was able to accomplish some initial steps of reconstruction by raising taxes on foreign companies, establishing a central bank, and promoting Mexican business.⁴¹ Not all were successes but importantly the 1917 Constitution did get passed and economic

³⁷ Camp 42.

³⁸ Huerta became provisional president through a pact signed by Huerta and Diaz at the U.S. embassy whereby Huerta agreed to appoint a cabinet of *católicos*, *científicos* and *Reyistas* and to honor Diaz's campaign in the coming election.³⁸ Washington was not satisfied with the Huerta administration and its *científico* leanings, despite sending the invitation for that pact. The Wilson administration did recognize the Huerta presidency, however it did so in order to reassert American influence at a time when British influence in the Mexican oil sector was too strong for American taste. See, Bethell 141.

³⁹ Bethell 139-154.

⁴⁰ Bethell 166.

⁴¹ Bethell 167.

recovery slowly returned beginning in May 1917.⁴² Obregón, whose supporters had made up 80 of the first 200 deputies in the new Congress formed by Carranza's 1917 Constitution, overthrew Carranza in 1920.⁴³ After much political turmoil and renegotiation of alliances, Obregón was formally elected president in 1920, granting the North-Westerners the responsibility of reconstruction.⁴⁴ Some point out that this was more of an unsteady triumph of military might since these new elites lacked the business ties and political know-how for real consolidation of the establishment.⁴⁵

Certain themes and consequences of the Revolution represent important influences to the evolution of the political system and the prospect for state consolidation and stability. A new call for greater social justice was an overall theme of all sectors mobilized during the Revolution. Popular leaders of the Revolution, Madero, Villa and Zapata, related to this general theme in their demands for fairer distribution of national income, expanded public education, improved access, a larger state role in the economy in order to defend against outsiders as well as some calls for more effective suffrage.⁴⁶

Despite the total destruction that seemed to characterize the entire decade, some political themes did prove to have lasting influence. Madero first coined the political mythology of the revolution in his platform against Diaz demanding, "Effective Suffrage, No Reelection."⁴⁷ This theme represents both exaggerated political propaganda and a reality that would be followed to the 'T' for the rest of the century. It is hard to argue that suffrage was extended past the level it was under Porfiriato, however it is clear that

⁴² Bethell 178.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Bethell 196.

⁴⁵ Bethell 197.

⁴⁶ Camp 45.

⁴⁷ Camp 47.

effective suffrage remained an ideal and not fully desired by those in power. The platform designed to protect against the kind of extended rule by Diaz, however, would have zero or no real exceptions for the rest of the century.

Another important impact of the Revolution on the political structure was the domination by Revolutionary generals in administrative positions that continued from 1914 to 1934.⁴⁸ Whereas Diaz had strategically maintained a careful relationship of control over the military during his rule, after the militarized era of the Revolution, the political leaders and particularly the Presidents until 1940 were all, with one exception, generals who fought in battles of the Revolution.⁴⁸ This practice of appointing military cronies to important political offices became a central part of the regimes that came out of the Revolution.

The Revolution initially had lasting impact on the relationship of business with the state. The deals and bargains that Diaz had carefully negotiated had been an important part of the political stability and economic development of the state. When Diaz fell, these deals collapsed, leaving a gaping hole for the health and the stability of the political economy. Some firms were left without their preferential treatment afforded to them previously and other firms saw an opportunity to get a bigger piece of the pie. Factions emerged within the business sector and rivalry between foreign banks and companies for concessions created new conflict between small firms and established firms.⁴⁹ Following the 1907 economic crash, some businessmen actually believed that a revolution was the only step that they could take to promote their interests. This worked out in their benefit

⁴⁸ Camp 46.

⁴⁹ Camp 46.

in the long run considering the close relationship that business was afforded under the PRI.

Several new overall attitudes towards key issues also shifted as a result of the Revolution. The relationship of the state with the Church shifted back to the pre- Porfiriato attitude by reinstating the removal of religion from primary education, taking away the Church's right to own property and restricting the clergy's potential political actions. These attitudes were reflected in the 1917 Constitution.⁵⁰ Another issue of previous contention, land, was affected by the Revolution. The industrializing policies of Diaz were reversed with the establishment of the *ejido* system or communal land, by breaking up large landholdings.⁵¹ Impacted by the ideals of Ricardo Flores Magón, the 1917 Constitution legalized strikes and granted labor the right to collective bargaining and established the revolutionary concept of social security.⁵² Finally, with the passing of the new Constitution in 1917, a new level of legitimacy was afforded to these ideas in a new constitutionalism attitude of the society.⁵³ Though some scholars argue that the new constitution was not broadly or deeply popular and that it barely survived as an institutional contract.⁵⁴

The Revolutionary decade left Mexican society ready for the development of a state system that would need to recognize the interests of labor and the rural poor as well as incorporate broad political and economic elite previously excluded from the Diaz rule. What remained to be seen was how the reconstructed state would choose to

⁵⁰ Camp 47.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Bethell 175-8.

implement these themes and the relationship that the state would establish with business and the military. The system could not ignore the influential personalities of popular Revolutionaries.

Reconstruction

The decade of the 1920's is known as a period of reconstruction and renaissance whereby the new Constitution and state slowly recovered from the destruction of the revolutionary decade and consolidated the gains of its people. This decade was characterized by the recreation and consolidation of a capitalist state, made possible by the newly acquired peace, relatively speaking. Despite the conclusion of the bloodiest decade of the Revolution, conflict continued during this decade, the most significant of which were with oil companies, the Church and organized labor.⁵⁵

Even with the new constitution, the state emerged from the Revolutionary era structurally weak and still facing the formidable task of reckoning with the regional strongmen whose compliance or cooperation underpinned the future stability of the state.⁵⁶ The presidencies of this era—Huerta, Obregón, and Calles—are known as the Sonoran dynasty. These men believed that Mexico should be developed through private capital with particular interest in targeting agriculture and industrial expansion.

There were a number of political crises during this decade that would threaten the weak foundations of the state. The Cristero Rebellion in 1926 to 1928 of Roman Catholic peasants sought political recognition after decades of political exclusion. A new economic crisis began as early as 1925 for Mexico and was further aggravated in 1927 by

⁵⁵ Bethell 204.

⁵⁶ Bethell 202.

falling oil and mineral prices. The Revolutionary National Party, the future PRI would be Calles' response to these crises as an attempt to consolidate political stability.⁵⁷

This decade was also an important test for the new Constitution as to how it was to be interpreted, implemented and accepted by both Mexican citizens and by foreigners abroad. An important example of this was Article 27 that returned original ownership of 'lands and waters' to the Nation.⁵⁸ As a heavy importer of oil, this article represented a major threat to U.S. interests.⁵⁹ Though Obregon effectively sold out to U.S. pressure on this issue, the decision indicates the desperate state of security felt in Mexico at the time and the powerful influence of U.S. interests.

After stepping down in 1924 Obregón successfully campaigned and won reelection only to be assassinated before taking office in 1928. Obregón's presidency (1920-1924) succeeded in reestablishing a relationship with both the U.S. and other foreign actors and also reestablishing federal authority over the revolutionary regionalism, the first substantial steps in reconstructing the Mexican state.⁶⁰ Establishing relations with the United States and killing revolutionary rebels, of course meant nothing for the consolidation of a stable state without the parallel fostering of nationalism, continued maintenance of threats and establishment of institutions to adjudicate disputes that could lead to uprisings.

The ambition that characterized Obregón and his reluctance to step down from power would become a theme of many of the presidencies to come. His successor,

⁵⁷ La Botz, Dan. *Democracy in Mexico: Peasant Rebellion and Political Reform*. Boston: South End Press, 1995. 53. Print.

⁵⁸ Krauze, Enrique. *Mexico: Biography of Power*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1997. 396. Print.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Bethell 203.

Plutarco Elías Calles, would be the high point of this theme. This presidential succession effectively brought an end to any ideological radicalism that had lingered on from the Revolutionary fervor and the other two branches of government were brought into submission to the ‘Revolutionary Family.’ Known as the *jefe maximo*, Calles was able to do what Obregón had only dreamt of doing; he was able to continue to exercise real power after officially stepping down from power.⁶¹ Calles essentially followed a policy of classic economic liberalism by distancing the government from the private sector and restoring the railroads to the private sector.

Three important policy shifts of Calles led to further political turmoil—a new eruption over oil with the U.S., the re-election crisis and a crisis of Church-State relations. Seeking to gain nationalistic sentiment for his administration Calles briefly rebelled from U.S. interests reneging on Obregon’s previous agreement over oil. Calles consolidated stability in his repression of the Cristero Rebellion, which had arisen after Carranza and Obregón refused to enforce anti-clerical articles of the new constitution.⁶²

The re-election crisis represented an important test for policy choices regarding the tensions with the U.S. and the Church as well as the very foundation of the newly consolidated state. Through a series of political pressures Calles was forced to allow the Obregonistas to amend the Constitution to permit Obregón to run for reelection. The Partido Nacional Revolucionario was formed in reaction to the political instability that had characterized each presidential succession since Madero and in reaction to the threat that political ambition of past presidents had represented. The assassination of Obregón

⁶¹ The Calles administration was 1924-8 and his ‘Maximato’ was 1928-34. See, Bethell 203.

⁶² Bethell 213.

would forever be a reminder that the Mexican state was formed on at least one half of the revolutionary principle of “Effective Suffrage, no reelection.”

The Founding of the PRI

The period of the late 1920’s to late 1930’s represented a shift to a very important new era in Mexican political history from a period of territorial and elite consolidation to broader consolidation in the structure and legitimacy of the new state. While instability remained a theme during this period, the state had survived through enough years and presidencies that it could begin to concentrate on longer-term needs.

The assassination of Obregón and the election of 1928 were followed by a concern over the need to stabilize the state, legitimize power and prolong the hegemony of the Northern dynasty by Calles and his henchman.⁶³ The idea of forming a party became the method of choice, as it would serve a number of interests for the Party. It would help deal with the instability caused by the presidential succession, it would legitimize the power of the regime by respecting the principle of “No Reelection” and could incorporate militant *agrarista*, labor leaders, military strongmen, regional bosses, industrialists, commercial landowners, merchants and others all within an inclusive yet hierarchical party structure.⁶⁴

To achieve this end, the ruling elite sought to formalize its mission to guarantee unity and solidarity over decisive selfishness in a pact called the Querétaro Pact of Union

⁶³ Hellman, Judith Adler. *Mexico in Crisis*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1978. 31. Print.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

and Solidarity.⁶⁵ This was essentially an agreement in which the ruling political leaders pledged their willingness to (1) accept the policies and candidates of the new party, (2) submit to party discipline and (3) refuse the use of armed force in the resolution of political conflicts all in order to smooth over political differences that persisted at the time.⁶⁶ While Plutarco Elías Calles originally created the new party in order to institutionalize the perpetuation of his own power, the creation of the party legitimized the perpetuation of a new “revolutionary coalition,” and created a method for stable and reliable political recruitment for the regime.⁶⁷

The Rise and Fall of Cardenismo

Calles might have officially created the PNR during his continued influence known as the Maximato in 1929, but the party itself only consolidated under the administration of Lázaro Cárdenas. The ruling forces of the 1920’s had struggled to find a way to effectively control and co-opt the various factions within the rising ‘political nation’ of Mexico.

By the 1930’s the large landholders had regained much of their influence, but the non-landholding majority of the society remained a constant threat to the young nation. Despite the fact that he saw Cardenas as an extremist, Calles chose Cárdenas to succeed him as President because he needed to avoid a confrontation with progressives who distrusted him.⁶⁸ This plan did not pan out as Calles had hoped. Cardenas had come to power in the familiar way of the past twenty years through military service and political

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Hellman 32.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Hellman 34.

loyalty to the northern dynasty. He had also won allegiance of peasants in his own state of Michoacan through his distribution of *hacienda* lands during his term as governor there.⁶⁹ In the 1934 election, Cárdenas attracted both those who felt marginalized or frustrated by Callista rule and loyal Callistas.

Cardenismo was characterized by a handful of progressive initiatives on state building, capitalist development and corporatism. Cárdenismo was above all, a product of his era. He came to power as the worldwide Great Depression was continuing to affect an already depressed economy in Mexico. The battle for control of the new party and government culminated in a struggle between Calles and Cardenas in 1935 to 1936.⁷⁰

The political crisis of 1935 and 1936 represented a crucial point in political history of Mexico and the PNR/PRI. Calles' reign of control seemed to be slipping as Cárdenas came to power amidst more support than the puppet presidencies preceding him. Cardenas was able to respond to the radicalization of politics and mobilized the increasing organization of workers while Calles was unable to adjust. These tensions climaxed in a standoff between the two figures whereby if Cardenas rejected compromise the party would have to enter new politics of the left. Calles, in turn, could risk destabilizing his life's work if he didn't step down. In a key political maneuver Calles chose to back down and let Cárdenismo have free range to implement what it chose for the rest of the sexenio.⁷¹

Cárdenas brought the Mexican state far left on the political spectrum most notably regarding agriculture and land and the relationship with foreign and domestic investors.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Bethell 245-6.

⁷¹ Bethell 254.

Cardenas supported the progressive articles of the Constitution for labor and land rights, firmly believing in the need for ‘statism’ and state intervention in the economic and social workings of society. Calles had pronounced the agrarian reform a failure believing that the ejido encouraged sloth and that the future lay with private capitalist farming that was free from labor agitation that could lead to the revoking of investment.⁷² Cardenas in contrast worked against the danger of the reliance on foreign capital and believed that land belonged to those who worked it.⁷³

Cardenas’ leftist leaning goals and desire for conciliation among all classes led to a significant restructuring of the ruling coalition. Cardenas could not implement his goals for labor and land policies without a greater support for those policies within the ruling party. He therefore sought to incorporate the masses into the party structure and did so by using Calles’ political creation—the Party of the Mexican Revolution. Under Cardenas’ leadership, the PRM was to consist of four equally incorporated sectors of the population, the peasant sector, labor sector, military sector and the so-called “popular” sector.⁷⁴ With this restructuring, Cardenas sought to permanently shift the balance of power in Mexican politics away from the traditional landed elites to give far greater weight to peasants and workers.

Four sectors of the PRM

Under the Cárdenas administration, eventually the entire Labor sector was incorporated in a newly expanded version of the government sponsored

⁷² Bethell 247.

⁷³ Hellman 36.

⁷⁴ Hellman 40.

Confederación de Trabajadores de México or the CTM. Labor has historically represented a militant force that, when supported by the government, can be used as a force to mobilize against a threat from the military sector.⁷⁵ As such, labor support represented a necessary source for government legitimacy. Once Cardenas left office and the labor lost its militant tendencies with the organization of the CTM, the rhetoric of class struggle was abandoned in favor of an ideology that championed ‘national unity’ and greater and greater collaboration with industry for the good of national development.”⁷⁶ Perhaps an oversight of Cárdenas and other leaders working for cooptation, or perhaps a strategic move on their part, the structure of the CTM did not foster representation of labor. Instead, the CTM’s *continuismo*, corruption, poor management of the leaders, and the decreasing bargaining power of workers increasingly marginalized the great majority of labor.⁷⁷

The Peasant sector was incorporated into the state system through the CNC. The Confederación Nacional Campesina was created for the purpose of balancing the political power of large landowners with greater political organization of all small landowners and landless peasants thereby offsetting the patronage provided by the landowners.⁷⁸ Peasants were also historically seen as a potential sector from which to mobilize a military coup d’etat and were increasingly left behind as the state stabilized.⁷⁹ Leadership of the CNC was highly hierarchical and since leaders were appointed rather than democratically elected, they felt less loyal to their peasant constituency than to the government and

⁷⁵ Hellman 41.

⁷⁶ Hellman 42.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Hellman 43.

⁷⁹ Hellman 44.

regional politicians who appointed them.⁸⁰ As recruitment and financial support came from the top down and the overall organization became more bureaucratized, the CNC rank and file lost leverage and control in their efforts.⁸¹ By 1940, the CNC and the CTM had become instruments for government *control* over those sectors rather than of strategic balancing system that Cardenas had envisioned.⁸²

Cardenas formally incorporated the military sector into the original 4 sectors of the PRM in support of the old adage—keep your friends close and your enemies closer. The traditionally top-heavy structure and heavy consumer of government expenditure organization continued to represent a major threat of a military revolt into the Cardenas administration. As such, Cardenas sought to institutionalize greater professionalism within the military and successfully cut the military’s share of the federal budget down from 25% in 1934 to 19% by 1938.⁸³ Cardenas’ plan was to incorporate the military within an official political context, putting them on the same level as the other three organized sectors rather than putting them within a ‘special caste’ as they had been benefiting under for decades.⁸⁴ Cardenas removed generals and military officers from power by strategically moving them one by one to less influential public offices.⁸⁵ This strategy was successful in reducing the tendency of the military to intervene covertly and it eventually led to the disappearance of a military influence in the party as members

⁸⁰ Hellman 45.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Hellman 46

⁸³ Hellman 47

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Bethell 254.

either left the party to join the right wing or were absorbed into other sectors of the party.⁸⁶

The “Popular” Sector represented the final pillar of the support base of the young party. Contrary to the name, this sector does not represent the mass rural poor that the word ‘popular’ implies. Instead this sector was essentially a federation of middle class and elite interests made up of skilled workers, white collar employees, low level government functionaries as well as merchants, middle and large sized landowners and a variety of social associations.⁸⁷ These various sectors of the population became formally organized in the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares, or CNOP.⁸⁸ The structure of the CNOP differed from the CTM and the CNC in that it had no legal relationship to the government.⁸⁹ This ‘popular’ sector enjoyed the greatest share of government benefits and also strengthened its political position outside of the government, making it far more effective in representing the interest of its constituency than the other three sectors.

As has become clear in the above presentation of the four sectors of the PRM support base, those four sectors and their corresponding institutions did not correspond to key deciders in the ruling coalition but rather tools by which the real ruling coalition coopted its leaders for the interests of the regime. The real ruling coalition became known as the Revolutionary Family. This coalition was made up of all the powerful men that represent the most influential interests in Mexico, including all living past presidents, the most powerful regional strongmen, the governors of the richest states, the mayor of the

⁸⁶ Hellman 48.

⁸⁷ Hellman 49.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Distrito Federal, the head of the army, the head of all top banks in Mexico, the wealthiest industrialists and those who control key industries, the American ambassador, the secretaries general of the CTM, CNC, and the CNOP and the President of the Senate.⁹⁰ This revolutionary family was not publicly recognized, they did not meet together at one time, nor did all members always have equal weight.⁹¹ The Family along with the relative autonomy of the CNOP reflects the high degree of organization and influence within the ruling party that is afforded to the wealthy.

Cardenas counted the Peasant and Labor sectors as his greatest supporters due to his policies regarding both. Unions rallied behind Cárdenas in the struggle to help form a new radical coalition.⁹² Of course the *agraristas* had supported the Cárdenas ballot and expected support from the new ‘center.’ Cardenas made a major shift from Callista policy on agrarian reform. Cardenas saw the ejidos not as sloth, but rather, as a key institution for development. However the agrarian reforms under his administration, like those before his, were hasty and ripe with deficiencies.⁹³ While Cardenas created the institutions incorporating broad sectors of society into the new Party, due to structural insufficiencies, the institutions, particularly the CTM and the CNC became institutions whereby the ruling coalition would assert control *over* the sectors rather than expand control *for* those sectors.

“Rational Socialism” of Cardenismo

The ideologically radical character of the Cardenismo era and its impact on the consolidation of what would become the PRI regime affords special attention here. More

⁹⁰ Hellman 53.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Bethell 255.

⁹³ Bethell 257.

so than the revolutionary principles that immediately came out of the core decades of the Mexican Revolution, the Cárdenas administration represents the most radical leftward-leaning era of modern Mexican history. Cárdenas sought to implement what he referred to as ‘rational socialism.’ The socialist tendencies of this era were more of a hodgepodge of ideologies than real hard-core socialist ideology.⁹⁴

A central mission of this ideology was to “*teach people to produce more*” and a quest for cultural cohesion and national integration.⁹⁵ The educational mission of ‘rational socialism’ sought to establish a public elementary education system where teachers were to be the forefront of local politics. The weakness of this socialism that doomed it to failure was that it came from above. It made itself felt through often unwanted educational projects, seeking to integrate the Indian population into society and increasing education expenditure to an unprecedented level.⁹⁶

The consolidation of the CTM as the hegemonic labor organization represented a formidable task. Cárdenas’ “workers’ democracy” had first to surmount the significant barriers to hegemony of the CTM, such as the civil service union, requiring membership by the state as well as peasants groups.⁹⁷ Cardenas was able to win over the CTM, just as Calles had won over CROM, through the granting of official subsidies and other benefits of collaboration.⁹⁸

Two major crises of industry and labor fell upon the Cárdenas administration as Cárdenas was consolidating the regime. The challenges, in the railroad and oil industries

⁹⁴ Bethel 265.

⁹⁵ Bethel 266.

⁹⁶ Bethel 267.

⁹⁷ Bethell 275.

⁹⁸ Bethell 265.

were both reorganized and expropriated under Cardenas. The railways were under-capitalized, over-manned, hit by road competition and heavily indebted to foreigners.⁹⁹ After strikes were called in 1935 and 1936 the demands were met but the basic economic problems remained and in 1937 they were nationalized.¹⁰⁰ Government management was ceded to worker's management in May 1938 but the workers' initial fiscal success soon ran into deficit, Avila Camacho would later take back full management by the state.¹⁰¹

In the case of oil, nationalization was the result that shocked the world and credited Cardenas as a national hero but was not the initial aim of Cárdenas. The oil industry was nearly wholly foreign owned, smaller and profitable in comparison with the railway industry. Nationalization was included in the Six Year Plan, however it was envisioned to be a longer-term goal. A number of factors contributed to his decision to nationalize oil, including the militancy of oil workers and the imperialist symbol of the foreign owners and the nationalism surrounding oil. Due to various pressures of political prestige and the principals of his 'workers' democracy', in 1938 Cárdenas faced three choices, either to surrender to the will of the foreign investors, a temporary take-over of the companies' property or outright expropriation.¹⁰² Cárdenas chose the latter despite his inclination to avoid it. In the end it was the highlight of his presidency and his perceived *machismo* incited national solidarity.¹⁰³

The nationalization had serious consequences for the economy. The peso slipped and the embittered foreign oil companies rallied a boycott of Mexican business. The

⁹⁹ Bethell 277.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Bethell 279.

¹⁰² Bethell 281.

¹⁰³ Bethell 279-280.

newly incorporated oil workers were called on to tighten their belts for the national interest, however from then on, foreign relations were based on respecting the principals of national sovereignty, non-intervention and self-determination.¹⁰⁴

As these industry crises became resolved, the regime entered the tumultuous decade of the 1940's in a remarkably strengthened position. The PNR gathered in 1938 for its third national assembly and turned itself into the new PRM, el Partido de la Revolución Mexicana, encompassing its new corporatist structure.¹⁰⁵ The "détente" of U.S.-Mexico Relations had deteriorated after expropriation of American landholdings, the railway nationalization and of course the oil nationalization. The U.S. certainly backed the companies' boycott and Britain's response was similar. Perhaps if it were not for the growing Axis threat, the U.S. would not have gone so easily back to repairing diplomacy.¹⁰⁶

Pan-American conferences in 1939 and 1940 also impacted the relationship during which the U.S. pledged hemispheric security and warning off belligerent powers from the "New" World.¹⁰⁷ Labor and the CTM opposed taking a side in what they saw as an imperialist war for markets and pushed instead for a policy of neutrality.

The years 1938 and 1940 saw an important political shift in what some regard as a clear end to the Revolution. The change in direction came from a decline in presidential power. As the Cárdenas sexenio came to an end with his refusal to cultivate a successor, the Cardenista coalition broke down.¹⁰⁸ Economic and internal pressures built along with

¹⁰⁴ Bethell 283.

¹⁰⁵ Bethell 282.

¹⁰⁶ Bethell 285-286.

¹⁰⁷ Bethell 286.

¹⁰⁸ Bethell 289.

added challenges of a large deficit, rising inflation and rising costs of living. The organized opposition founded the PAN in 1939 by lay Catholics support and from Monterrey business.¹⁰⁹ The regime, with its young consolidation under the Party of the Revolution, was at a crossroads. Much was unknown as to the long-term strength of staying power of the coalition built by Cárdenas. Much depended on the ability of the following administration to further strengthen the existing coalition, with the opportunity to changes political and ideological direction readily available.

The opportunity was at first seized by Saturnino Cedillo, a Revolution veteran, governor of San Luis Potosí and Minister of Agriculture. Cedillo was a powerful regional *cacique* that was fundamentally at odds at the centralizing mission of the regime. Cedillo soon grew too strong for the likes of Cárdenas. When Cárdenas arrived in San Luis Potosí in 1938 to order Cedillo to put down his arms, Cedillo responded by beginning a rebellion that would cost him his life.¹¹⁰ The government reacted by co-opting Cedillo's support by amending agrarian reform in the region for their favor; the halfhearted rebellion took to the hills and Cedillo was shot.¹¹¹ This rebellion is known among historians as the last old-style military rebellion of the long revolution.

The Cedillo revolt might have represented a serious threat to the stability of the regime had Cedillo found a way to rally the conservatives against the socialist administration and the rising threat of communism, however Cedillo was in the end unsuccessful and the Cárdenas administration with its centralizing mission, prevailed for the moment. The political and ideological crossroads of the party came to a head in the

¹⁰⁹ Bethell 292.

¹¹⁰ Bethell 294.

¹¹¹ Bethell 295.

1940 presidential election. Sticking to his ideological guns, Cárdenas refused to follow the tradition of *el tapado* and name a successor. The heir apparent was Avila Camacho who had won support of the military and conservative opponents of Cárdenas. Cardenas had hoped for free and fair election but the party assured Camacho.¹¹² Camacho stressed conciliation and unity and rejecting commitment to class struggle.

Political shift

In the wake of the Cedillo revolt and with the rising threat of communism, even if Cardenas had tried to impose a radical successor the conservative faction of the party would have rallied against it. The party at the time of the succession was highly divided as to what direction it should take. Camacho built his campaign outside the party as a reflection of the weak state of the party. As Secretary of Defense under Cardenas, Camacho had the support of the military as well as from the state governors and many local caciques who were interested in maintaining their authority in the face of growing federal power and easily shifted from a weakening Cardenas to an “opportunistic” Camacho.¹¹³ It was only after Camacho had solidified a broad support base that the party acquiesced along with the manipulated support of the CNC and CTM. Camacho was favored due to circumstance more than anything. Camacho sought to align himself with the anti communist sentiment of the time.¹¹⁴ The election of Camacho would come to represent a major shift in the ideological makeup of the regime with the pointed decline

¹¹² Bethell 296.

¹¹³ Bethell 297.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

of the left, and the rise of the new right with its virtues of private enterprise, commercial-based agriculture and a renewed inclusion of the church.¹¹⁵

Avila Camacho's themes of conciliation and unity went hand in hand with the wartime necessities that were demanded of Mexico as an ally of the U.S..¹¹⁶ Greater collaboration with the U.S. following Pearl Harbor after which both states joined the Allied side of the war led to a renewed push for industrialization of Mexico. Economic growth, exports and agriculture grew during the height of Camacho's sexenio, before they worsened by 1945-1946 as inflation grew, leading to greater labor unrest and nationalistic appeals by the organized left.¹¹⁷ Those in power put greater restraint on labor and with it the "social truce" of the regime began to break down.¹¹⁸ Far less of a social-leftist than his predecessor, Camacho's administration claimed to be a moderate supporter of the ejido system but there was a clear shift during his administration away from the policies of Cardenismo. During his sexenio, private landowners benefited disproportionately from the administration's agriculturally related investments and policies.¹¹⁹ A major shift occurred under this administration within the CNC towards clientelistic dependence and internal stratification as those in positions of power sought to gain from the cooptation offered by the regime¹²⁰

Camacho's favored successor was Miguel Alemán, signified the first in a shift to civilian presidents and the rise of a new technocratic generation of the regime. The left initially supported what they perceived to be a nationalist candidate only to be

¹¹⁵ Bethell 302.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Bethell 310.

¹¹⁸ Bethell 311.

¹¹⁹ Bethell 312.

¹²⁰ Bethell 312-313.

disappointed. A new stricter electoral law was passed in time for the election in hopes of securing legitimacy of the election and to avoid a repeat of 1940. The new law required the stricter organization of national parties and closer federal supervision of elections, enhancing official control over all regions. Additionally, the official party made its final transformation into the Partido Revolucionario Institucional that differed little from its predecessor, the PRM, other than a further demotion in the power of the CTM.¹²¹

The new Alemán administration was chalked full of young technocrats who, like the new President, had not been part of the revolution and considered it little more than a “convenient myth.”¹²² The 6 years of the Alemán administration were key in the consolidation of the PRI whereby presidential power rose to a new level, the party solidified its monopoly over the political scene of the country and had the ability to manipulate and control the mass organizations created by Cárdenas as it willed.¹²³ The mission of Alemán was to maintain conciliation of classes while avoiding any struggle.¹²⁴ U.S. policy under the Truman Doctrine and rhetoric of the Cold War both solidified the nationalistic cause of the PRI and introduced a justification of the need for stability of the regime, giving it a “democratic” justification for the regime. With the divisions within the left the PRI was assured relative peace and security to implement its model of industrial development and capital accumulation.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Bethell 315.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Bethell 315.

¹²⁴ Bethell 339.

¹²⁵ Bethell 319.

The choice of the revolutionary family, Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, a compromise candidate, solidified an easy victory. This election in 1952 is considered to be the last of the open campaigns of the reign of the PRI.¹²⁶

Ruiz Cortines sought to address the rising problem of a deteriorating legitimacy and popularity of the ruling elite by firing a number of Alemán era public officials, thereby distancing himself with the previous administration and also opening political suffrage to women emphasizing the moral role of women and opening the PRI support base.¹²⁷ Additionally he announced numerous anti-corruption and reform-minded policies, though they never truly came to fruition, they served his goal in strengthening the public's support of his administration and the regime as a whole. In a further effort to highlight the lack of corruption with his administration and to appease the populous over the rising cost of living, Ruiz Cortines imposed strict fines on monopolies and on the hoarding of goods and lowered the price of corn and beans.¹²⁸ In doing so, however, he made a fundamental shift away from the traditional model of non-intervention in the economy, creating a fissure in the Party's alliance with business. Business reacted with capital flight; the government backed down and returned to favoring business over the masses in the name of development.

Despite a major long-term loss in the purchasing power of the working class, the regime was able to use a combination of coercion and co-operation to avoid meeting all of the demands of would-be defectors. Sometimes co-operation was demanded through

¹²⁶ Bethell 346.

¹²⁷ Bethell 347

¹²⁸ Bethell 348

force, as in the case of the railway strikes of 1958-9.¹²⁹ Through this display of force, the regime sent a message that it would not tolerate independent unionism and demanded full compliance by the leaders of organized labor.¹³⁰

1958-1970

The following period between 1958 and 1970 was characterized by general political tranquility thanks to the unquestioned capacity of the state for coercion and co-optation by the consolidated coalition of politicians, técnicos and, to a lesser degree, military officers.¹³¹ The Presidential succession of 1958 came down to another compromise candidate between the Cardenistas and Alemanistas, Lopez Mateos who won a strong 90% of the vote.¹³² López Mateos' solid victory and high voter turnout was a clear indication of PRI hegemony over the political structure.

The administration of López Mateo signified a slight step away from the heavy-handed right leaning policies of the previous administrations regarding land, labor and electoral reform, while continuing along the general path set out by the regime on foreign policy and the economy. His administration was seconded only to Cardenas in land reform distribution. This helped tremendously to regain some of the loss of support that Aleman and others had initiated among peasants, labor and the left. Politically, however, this move represented a strategic pre-emption over any desire by the radical left to mount

¹²⁹ Bethell 153.

¹³⁰ Bethell 350.

¹³¹ Bethell 352.

¹³² Bethell 353.

an anti-establishment campaign and reconfirmed the revolutionary ideology of the regime, whether or not that confirmation was legitimate or not.¹³³

In 1963, Lopez Mateos made an important electoral reform in what could be seen as the first step in opening up the PRI to competitive elections and greater prospects for democracy. After each of the bitter losses of opposition candidates and the relative good behavior of those candidates, this reform guaranteed a minimum number of five seats in the Chamber of Deputies to any party winning more than 2.5 per cent of the total nationwide vote.¹³⁴ This reward was a strategic move on the part of the state to co-opt and make loyal opponents of the PPS, PARM and the PAN parties.

The ease and stability of the presidential succession in 1964 may be an indication that this period represented the height of the PRI political machine. The *tapado* was directed at Díaz Ordaz, the third Secretary of Gobernación to succeed to the Presidential Chair.¹³⁵ Immediately after stepping into power, Diaz Ordaz began his rule by force and discipline by firing any office-holder within the regime that held 'too much or too little power.'¹³⁶ During his sexenio, Diaz Ordaz also halted a number of reform movements within the regime. An anti-business reform of the income-tax code came up during this administration and the President withdrew the key provisions further deepening the regime's intimate connections with the private sector.

While the Diaz Ordaz administration would come to represent a major force in the suppression of opposition movements among the masses, it began with a reaffirmation of close state-labor linkages. In 1966 the regime oversaw the creation of a new state-society

¹³³ Bethell 353

¹³⁴ Bethell 356

¹³⁵ Bethell 356

¹³⁶ Bethell 356

institution, the Congreso del Trabajo (CT) as an overhead link between the CTM, the Federación de Sindicatos Trabajadores en el Servicio del Estado (FSTSE) and the general populous. This overture to the masses was created in the midst of a number of ineffective and unsupportive initiatives for the rural agricultural sector, causing peasants to protest through marches and land seizures.¹³⁷ Of course it was the student movement of 1968 that gave the administration the notoriety of violent suppression it is known for today.

1968 Massacre

By the mid 1960's, social movements outside of the regime as a whole had become very rare. While many other states in Latin America at this time saw a substantial rise in the political activism within their university campuses, Mexican student organizations were basically non-existent beyond the PRI-sponsored student organization that essentially was a training ground for PRI politicians. Riot police forcefully repressed a small number of student organizations and movements.¹³⁸ The growing organization and structure of the mounting student movement represented the desire of those within the middle class for democracy and the rejection of hierarchical bureaucratic structures that characterized the regime. The government continued to arrest and even torture those seen as agitators in the movement and displayed a surprising ability to track down individuals who had ever shown radical leftist leanings.¹³⁹ Correspondingly, the student movement showed a similarly surprising persistence as the movement continued to grow despite increased repression.

¹³⁷ Bethell 359.

¹³⁸ Hellman 133.

¹³⁹ Hellman 135.

The event that would become known as the Tlatelolco Massacre occurred in the midst of the preparations for the Olympic Games in Mexico. The student movement, organized under the Comisión Nacional de Huelga (CNH) sought a number of straightforward demands including the release of all political prisoners, the abolition of the special riot police, the resignation of the Chief of Police and his deputy and the lifting of the military occupation of schools.¹⁴⁰ These demands were not revolutionary in ideology but the structure and democratic organization of the movement was quite radical in comparison to the hierarchal status quo of the day.

On October 6th, an estimated 6,000 supporters of the movement gathered for a peaceful rally of speeches and proclamations in open Plaza de las Tres Culturas, and the Tlatelolco apartment complex in Mexico City.¹⁴¹ It was during one of these speeches that unidentified white-gloved “security agents” opened fire on the helpless crowd.¹⁴² There is much disagreement over the number killed and injured that day by the some 10,000 soldiers but the numbers vary from 50 to 200 killed and perhaps 500 wounded and close to 1,500 arrested.¹⁴³

Controversy immediately centered on the question of where to point the blame. Popular figures for this included, the Secretary of the Gobernacion, Regent of the Federal District, Secretary of Defense and the President himself, Diaz Ordaz.¹⁴⁴ This event spurred many important questions regarding the regime and Mexican society: was this the price of political stability?

¹⁴⁰ Hellman 138.

¹⁴¹ Bethell 361.

¹⁴² Bethell 361

¹⁴³ Bethell 361 and Hellman 142

¹⁴⁴ Bethell 361

Importantly, the event also led to the distancing of the intellectual's from the state, and a growing number of them questioning the legitimacy of the regime. The significance of the events of 1968 represented perhaps a greater challenge to the maintenance of PRI stability in that it could no longer rely on the same methods of repression to control the development of opposition movements.¹⁴⁵ In 1970 Echeverria took office calling for an "open dialogue" on a renovation of the PRI and new economic reforms.¹⁴⁶

1970-1990

Several themes characterized the period from 1970 to 1990. The period saw an increase in population, which thereby created a pressure for job creation and saw the first major increase in migrant workers to the U.S., which in turn increased tensions with the U.S..¹⁴⁷ This period also experienced a major growth in inequality with an expansion of upper and middle classes. This period also saw the first beginnings of civil society and an independent press, which highlighted the growing concern for the election process.¹⁴⁸ The first signs of the end of the Mexican economic miracle came during this period. The epoch of *desarrollo estabilizador*, with goals to keep prices stable, especially in urban areas, keeping salaries low and stimulating industry became the policy of the PRI.¹⁴⁹ The weaknesses such as high levels of unemployment, accumulation of debt to abroad, and overvaluation of the peso became more and more evident during this period as well.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Hellman 144.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Bethell 363-5.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Bethell 369.

¹⁵⁰ Bethell 362.

Luis Echeverría became president in 1970 after a usual rise from within the political elite. He became the first president to have never held an elected position.¹⁵¹ The President attempted to save face in the political legitimacy of the regime by declaring an open dialogue, *apertura democrática*, in the aftermath of Tlatelolco.¹⁵² This attempt did not represent an attempt to reconfigure the structure of institutions within the regime, but rather a grand attempt to conjure the memory of Cardenas in a countrywide campaign of speeches and proclamations.¹⁵³

Perhaps due to the relative stability the regime felt at this time with its alliance with business and the elite, or perhaps because the regime saw an opportunity to gain favor back within the peasant and worker support bases of the party, the Echeverría administration made a significant shift in its economic policy from the pragmatic stance of the Diaz Ordaz administration's *desarrollo estabilizador* to a popular leaning policy of *desarrollo compartido*. This policy sought to improve distribution as well as production and profit and returned to an almost Cardenista era emphasis on the agrarian sector and the rural peasants.¹⁵⁴ This new policy framework rested on the belief that the state must intervene to help in the corn-producing sector, thereby cutting out the powerful caciques. While Echeverría did not fully turn his back to growth-oriented economic policies, or the party's alliance with business, his administration passed one other important regulation in

¹⁵¹ Bethell 366.

¹⁵² Bethell 367.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ The administration introduced this policy with the creation of a new overhead institution called the Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares (CONASUPO) with the objective to (1) regulate the market for basic commodities, to (2) increase income for poor farmers and to (3) ensure the availability of basic, affordable goods. See, Bethell 369.

1973 curbing the actions of foreign enterprise and multinational corporations.¹⁵⁵ Tensions arose between domestic private sector and the government as the state squeezed out multinational competitors and to create more state owned enterprises (SOE's).¹⁵⁶

There was a slight controversy that changed the traditional method for *el tapado* regarding the role of the sitting president and the Party in the final choice on the Party's candidate. The party president, Jesus Reyes Haroles declared that the party would release a basic plan of the government for the next term, a very crafty way of tying the hands of the future president, before he was chosen.¹⁵⁷

The process began with seven *tapados* all from within his cabinet. The final *destapamiento* was a surprise to some, due to his relative lack of a support base, but that lack of a support base also made him the greatest asset to Echeverria. The PRI as a political institution had entered its golden era of far-reaching power and influence within Mexico having developed innovative tools for maintaining stability for the Family. The President retained the final authority while in office as well as the now-long respected tradition of the *tapado*.

In the 1976 election, the PAN was too divided to put forth its own candidate, making an easy win by the PRI candidate, López Portillo. The election turnout, however, showed high levels of absenteeism, signifying an important growing sense of apathy within society towards the aging regime.¹⁵⁸

This sense of apathy with the government was in no way lessened by the economic situation at the time. The government devalued the peso on August 31, 1976

¹⁵⁵ Bethell 371.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Bethell 372.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

for the first time in nearly fifteen years, partly as a result of months of large-scale capital flight.¹⁵⁹ This move flew in the face of the “Mexican miracle” and the success of previously popular Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) economic development policies. The transition period between the two administrations soured further under threats to lives of the president and rumors of military coup, however all turned out to be frivolous threats.¹⁶⁰

Portillo, weary of the dangerous and high tense situation upon entering office Portillo chose a risky strategy in an effort to win back support of the opponents of the regime—electoral reform.

In the effort to appease the mounting political opposition and to regain the diminishing legitimacy of the regime, evidenced by the high levels of absenteeism of the 1976 election, Portillo developed a three-part reform measure incorporated under the Federal Law of Political Organizations and Electoral Processes (LOPPEE).¹⁶¹ The first element was a liberalization of the procedures for party registration granted to any party that achieved either 1.5 percent of the total national vote or by enrolling at least 65,000 members. The second was an expansion of the Chamber of Deputies to 400, 100 of which would be elected by proportional representation rather than simple majority allowing greater room for opposition candidates. The third element was an extension of access to mass media for the opposition candidates and parties.¹⁶² These reforms effectively let

¹⁵⁹ Bethell 374.

¹⁶⁰ Bethell 375.

¹⁶¹ Camp 203.

¹⁶² Bethell 376

opposition parties garner approximately 26 percent of the seats in the lower house and were guaranteed a minimum of one-quarter of all the seats.¹⁶³

In 1979 the country struck oil, a savior to a political economy that was nearly at a standstill as policies of ISI had begun to slowly lose favor and the confrontational situation of the previous administration with the business sector had come to a head. The administration heeded the warning from the left observing the danger of oil dependency vowing to keep exports to 1.25 million barrels per day.¹⁶⁴ However, as the coordinated efforts of OPEC countries helped to drive the prices of oil up, exports grew and so did oil earnings. In this “petrolization,” oil earnings grew from \$311 million in 1976 to nearly \$14 billion by 1981, while non-oil exports such as agricultural commodities declined.¹⁶⁵

With the extraordinary growth in the GDP afforded by the oil boom, the Portillo administration took the opportunity to make a number of important shifts in its domestic economic policies. For one, it attempted to use its extra revenue to return to an emphasis of its agricultural sector. It created the Sistema Alimentario Mexicano, or SAM, to channel funds into the production and consumption of agriculture commodities with the goal of becoming self-sufficient in food production.¹⁶⁶ The program met with success during the favorable weather of 1981, only to fall precipitously in the following drought years.

Challenges that arose from these policies included a serious crisis in the balance of trade. The peso became artificially strong, while the U.S. was in recession, which

¹⁶³ Camp 203.

¹⁶⁴ Bethell 377

¹⁶⁵ Bethell 378.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

created greater incentives for wealthy Mexicans to travel and spend abroad. Border industries such as *maquiladoras* lost sales and tourism within Mexico stagnated.¹⁶⁷

As students of economic development know, the 1980's saw the downfall of the popular ISI strategies of development with the collapse of the exorbitant debts throughout Latin America. Mexico not only ended its exceptionalism in the region, but also was the first in the region to wave the white flag. The government incurred higher and higher debts from Portillo's strategy of high state-investment-led growth. From the 1970s to 1981 the government's deficit doubled as a percent of GDP to 14 percent then increased to 18 percent in 1982 leaving the government with only one option, to borrow more raising the national debt to \$80 billion by 1982.¹⁶⁸ The once stable inflation was in turn driven up to 100 per cent thereby reducing the purchasing power of the workers.

Whereas a limited yet substantial use of corruption by those who held public office had always presumably taken advantage of, Portillo and his cronies brought corruption to a new level. His administration made a far more ostentatious show of the practice in public scenes, gambling high stakes without blinking an eye. At a time of economic hardship for the majority within Mexico, this show of corruption was a poor choice politically for the regime.

Before leaving office, Portillo deflated the peso in February 1982. The peso plummeted, and inflation grew, followed by further devaluation in August when it announced that it would likely not be able to meet its debt obligations. This crisis has become known as the Tequila Crisis. The international community responded by hastily formulating an emergency relief plan in order to avoid default. In September, Portillo

¹⁶⁷ Bethell 380.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

declared state expropriation of privately owned banks.¹⁶⁹ The left applauded this nationalization while the right criticized it. These changes resulted in a final rupture of the long-time alliance of the state with the private sector, leading the private sector to organize amongst itself in the coming decades.

Portillo chose a candidate with weak connections to the PRI who had served in his Budget and Planning office, Miguel de la Madrid. A close personal friend and Harvard educated candidate won with 75% of the vote.¹⁷⁰ In breaking with what he criticized as “financial populism” of the previous administrations, De La Madrid accepted the conditions of the IMF for renegotiation of the debt, lifted price controls and deflated the peso again, the value fell to around 150 per dollar, all as an attempt to restore confidence within the international community.¹⁷¹

In January of 1983, reversing the previous policy of Portillo, De la Madrid sent a bill to Congress that would authorize the sale of 34 per cent ownership of the newly nationalized banks to private investors, in an attempt to restore the party’s alliance between the state, the private sector and the foreign sector.¹⁷²

The austerity measures implemented by De la Madrid were ‘obligatory’ as he had stated while in reality they appeared to be obligatory mostly for the working class. These classes alone had to deal with the inflation hovering between 70 and 90 per cent while only gaining 25 percent wage increases and suffered further after the removal of price ceilings and public subsidies.¹⁷³ This created a serious strain between labor and the state.

¹⁶⁹ Bethell 382-383.

¹⁷⁰ Bethell 384.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Bethell 385.

Threats to strike were only averted by “postponement of discussions” rather than settlement of issues.

By attempting to reconsolidate the ruling coalition, the regime ran the risk of pushing the state-labor and middle class tensions to the brink. In response to this rising danger, the administration initiated a series of investigations in their so-called ‘moral renovation’ campaign. One such investigation was the case against Jorge Diaz Serrano, the former president’s associate and head of Pemex for alleged participation in a fraud.¹⁷⁴ This was a risky move that could also serve to further alienate key sectors of the ruling ‘coalition.’

This ‘moral renovation,’ however, appeared merely as propaganda in light of the new situation regarding the narcotics trade between the U.S. and Mexico. After a U.S. drug enforcement agent was found murdered in 1985, allegations over cover-ups and corruption within the Mexican police force put a damper over the diplomatic relations.¹⁷⁵ Thus began the now decades long battle between U.S.-Mexican efforts to curb the drug trade.¹⁷⁶

Relatedly, the immigration saga that the U.S. and Mexican authorities continue to quibble over today began during this decade. It began with the Simpson-Rodino Bill signed into law under President Ronald Reagan in November 1986. This law created economic sanctions against employers in the U.S. who knowingly hired illegal aliens and an amnesty for undocumented workers who could prove continuous residence in the U.S.

¹⁷⁴ Bethell 386

¹⁷⁵ Bethell 386.

¹⁷⁶ Bethell 387.

since January 1982.¹⁷⁷ With numerous loopholes and below expectation numbers of applications for amnesty the two provisions of the bill made little difference in the numbers migrating to the U.S. that would increase from 3 million to 4 to 5 million by the early 1990s.¹⁷⁸

Disaster struck Mexico City on September 19th, 1985, a 7.3 magnitude earthquake destroyed buildings all over the city, the worst of which hit the old downtown area.¹⁷⁹ Beyond the nearly 100,000 left homeless and estimated \$4 billion of damages left in its wake, the earthquake sparked a political fall-out. In the hours, days and weeks following the earthquake the citizens of Mexico City responded by spontaneously rising to the occasion with an outpouring of voluntary aid of all kinds in a previously unheard of emergence of “civil society.” In comparison, many considered the governments’ response to the catastrophe as too little, too late. From evidence of non-compliance to construction codes within many, to a rising demand for the election rather than presidential appointment of the Federal District’s regent, the government was faced with a major legitimacy crisis.¹⁸⁰

In contrast to the decades long reliance on state-led growth De la Madrid undertook an unprecedented overhaul of Mexico’s state-owned enterprises.¹⁸¹ Greater liberalization of the economy was achieved through a general ‘opening up’ of the

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Bethell 388.

¹⁸⁰ Bethell 389

¹⁸¹ De la Madrid sold off 96 state-owned enterprises, merged 46. transferred 39 to state governments, closed down some 279 inefficient plants and undertook a program of ‘industrial reconversion’ of strategic sectors to improve efficiency. See, Ibid.

economy and from joining the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) creating a reduction of barriers to imports.

The period beginning in 1984 represented a significant shift in the strategies, support base and national presence for the long-time 'loyal opposition' the PAN. Riots broke out in response to the contested results of PRI victories in municipal elections in the state of Coahuila. At least two dead and roughly 35 wounded, this event marked the first time since the 1968 massacre of the government firing upon protestors.¹⁸² This event sparked a growth of militancy and a general impatience for the traditional cooperation of the PAN with PRI dominated elections. The PAN at this time also saw a large growth in its support among the business community. The year 1984 was the first time that business leaders not only donated money to the party but also ran for public office under the opposition party.¹⁸³

Under heavy pressures in the wake of a major earthquake as well as ongoing economic crises, de la Madrid undertook a new electoral law. This 1986 electoral code provided 6 provisions including the significant measure for the winning or majority party to never obtain more than 70 percent of the seats in the lower chamber. The PRI's proportional representation was significantly reduced from its recent range from 83 percent to 74 percent.¹⁸⁴ Additionally, only three hundred deputies would now be elected by a relative majority based on individual congressional districts, while those based on proportional percentages of their total national vote were increased from 100 to 200

¹⁸² Gentleman 24.

¹⁸³ Gentleman 25.

¹⁸⁴ Camp 204-5.

increasing the total number of seats from 400 to 500.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, opposition parties may obtain 40 percent of the seats without winning a single majority district, the majority winning party was now to retain a simply majority in the entire chamber and half the Senate is to be renewed triennially instead of the entire chamber every six years.¹⁸⁶

The Presidential succession of 1988 represented a move away from tradition in three ways. The Presidency had lost its overwhelming dominance over the past years largely thanks to the economic crises. Dissident faction within the PRI emerged that were insisting on opening the process of presidential succession. The international media was also paying unprecedented attention to the succession.¹⁸⁷ The dissident faction that had formed a temporary coalition in the campaign for Cárdenas formed the new opposition party, the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) that subsequently consolidated its position as the third strongest national party.¹⁸⁸ This election also gave greater strength to the power of the Chamber of Deputies as the opposition was for the first time elected to nearly half the seats.

At this time the PRI used a new method by which party candidates for president could publically compete for the party candidacy while also reinvigorate Party presence more publically. New *Comparecencias* were public appearances where the PRI candidates gave formal presentations to various assemblies of PRI notables on their visions for the nation's future. This represented an unprecedented public exposure of what had so long been a private *destapado*. The question remained as to whether it was a sign of real 'democratization' or merely a cosmetic change.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Camp 205.

¹⁸⁷ Bethell 392-3.

¹⁸⁸ Camp 287.

In regard to the economic turmoil at the time, the 1988 election of Carlos Salinas ensured that the importance of privatization and the economic liberalism begun by De la Madrid would continue. Salinas sought develop conditions for international competition through massive privatization, essentially rolling back the decades of import substitution industrialization and state-led development. After selling many state owned enterprises and cutting back tariffs, the administration was able to reverse the much-despised last move by Lopez Portillo by selling off the banks it had nationalized a decade earlier.¹⁸⁹ In a process that many have criticized as the highest form of crony capitalism, 1,155 of the firms the state had owned in 1987 was cut to a mere 286 by 1992, an 80 percent drop.¹⁹⁰ Among these, included Teléfonos de México and Mexicana airlines, both of which had enjoyed a full or nearly full monopoly over their respective industries were sold off at the fraction of their value.

The year 1988 saw a significant and long-awaited elite splitting ending with the creation of a new left-wing opposition party, the PRD. Sparked by leftist Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, he and his allies disagreed with De la Madrid's economic policies, specifically the government's austerity reforms under the IMF stabilization package, trade liberalization and privatization of state-owned enterprises. Cárdenas, in contrast, continued to have faith in the ISI model of development and the need to maintain an active nationalist state.¹⁹¹ The split that occurred in 1988 was also a reaction to the narrowing of career opportunities within the PRI and the increasingly closed ruling elite.

¹⁸⁹ Camp 278.

¹⁹⁰ Camp 279.

¹⁹¹ Magaloni, Beatriz. "The Demise of Mexico's One-Party Dominant Regime: Elite Choices and the Masses in the Establishment of Democracy." *The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America: Advances and Setbacks*. Ed. Frances Hagopian and Ed. Scott P. Mainwaring. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 128. Print.

The Cardenistas split with the party officially at a party assembly in 1987 after forming the opposition group the Corriente Democrática.

Mexico's Transition: 1990s- Present

The elections of 1988 and 1991 underwent important shifts in both PRI support within society and PRI tolerance of opposition. The 1988 election whereby PRI candidate Salinas won with a mere 51 percent of the vote and the newcomer Cárdenas won fully 31 percent of the national vote according to official numbers was significant for two reasons. First, the 1986 reform seemed to suggest the increased importance of pluralism whereby the PRI would have to negotiate with the opposition in order to gain support for the passage of legislation. Second, the high levels of abstention seen the 1982 election seemed to have reversed itself in preference for not the long loyal PRI opposition party, the PAN, but for the Democratic Current, the PRD. The election of 1991, the PRI, in contrast to 1988, claimed 61.4 percent of the vote and reclaimed its majority status, essentially questioning the permanence of the strength of the opposition and growth of plurality in governance.

The most substantial institutional reforms occurred in two stages during the 1990's. The first stage of reforms, 1990 to 1993, represented piecemeal electoral reforms negotiated by a bipartisan coalition between the PRI and PAN. In 1990, Salinas conceded to the PAN in exchange for its support in the Lower Chamber of Deputies of the President's economic agenda.¹⁹² These economic reforms were far reaching enough to require support outside the PRI. In response to the weakening economy and pressures

¹⁹² Magaloni 130.

from international financial institutions, Salinas sought to privatize the banking system and to restructure the property rights that required constitutional amendments. As part of the compromise with the PAN, the reform created the federal Electoral Tribunal, though the government retained control of its board.¹⁹³ It was later in 1993 that further reforms granted the Federal Electoral Institute the authority to certify electoral results and the creation of the Sala de Segunda Instancia for appeals whose decisions could not be appealed by any other authority.¹⁹⁴

A subtler, non-official shift occurred during this time outside official reforms. The PRI, for the first time, began making greater allowances for local PAN victories during the Salinas administration in further rewards for the acquiescence to the electoral fraud of 1988. Further, new *concertaciones* were carried out—post-electoral bargains among the PAN’s leadership in exchange for support and continued ‘legitimacy’ of the regime.¹⁹⁵ Meanwhile the PRD who had experienced increasing political persecution openly opposed the legitimacy of the Salinas regime and the direction of the economic policy.

Discontent returned and with vengeance sparking the second wave of reforms from 1994 to 1996 as a result of domestic crises and newly urgent international pressure. The year 1994 is significant for two reasons. Going into effect January 1, 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement made by Mexico, the United States and Canada, called for the phasing out of the longstanding trade barriers between the three nations. After Salinas pushed it through the opposition, Salinas was hit by accusations of corruption

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Magaloni 131.

despite the argument by the opposition that the agreement would bring an even deeper gap between the rich and the poor of Mexico. A major uprising in the state of Chiapas arose in response to this crisis of political disagreement. The Zapatista Army of the National Liberation (EZLN), a revolutionary leftist group issued a declaration of war on what they say as an illegitimate federal government.¹⁹⁶ These domestic and international crises were what pushed the PRI to finally relinquish full control of the electoral process in the second stage of reforms.

In an effort to calm the chaotic political atmosphere created by the uprising in January before the presidential elections in June, the administration passed another set of reforms. These reforms most notably granted independence to the Federal Election Institute. Also of significance, the political negotiations that came in the wake of the Chiapas revolt were the first to include the PRD.

The reform in 1994 created six *consejeros ciudadanos*, or citizen councilors of a 10-person board to oversee the electoral process, the president of which was to be the Interior Minister (Secretario de Gobernación). Elected by a two-thirds vote in the Lower Chamber, the PRD, PRI and the PAN each had the right to propose two councilors and four members of Congress, two from the PRI and two from opposition parties.¹⁹⁷

Two additional crises—the 1994 Peso Crisis and the assassination of PRI candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, further contributed to the realization that something had to change within the system. The PRI, which, along with most economic experts at the time, had not seen the economic crisis looming and had had high hopes for the

¹⁹⁶ Camp 280.

¹⁹⁷ Magaloni 168.

recovery and future prosperity of the Mexican economy and the regime thanks to what they saw as a well balanced economic plan implemented under Salinas.¹⁹⁸

The 1994 elections were highly significant for a number of reasons. The gravity of the political and economic scene surrounding the crises alone were enough to signal a major turning point for the PRI, regardless of the reforms and the results. The tensions also sparked unprecedented international coverage of the elections. Within Mexico itself, there was an unprecedented turnout on Election Day of 78 percent. Winning roughly 50 percent of the vote, the PRI enjoyed the benefits of its reforms as most Mexican reportedly believed the elections to be more or less credible, adding newfound legitimacy to the electoral process.¹⁹⁹ Importantly the PRI's advantage of media access represented further evidence of the inequality of political access that remained in the system.

The final stage of the electoral reform came in 1996. The 1996 reform solidified the 1994 reform by granting the IFE the power to monitor and sanction campaign expenditures, level campaign financing and media access and to incorporate the Federal Electoral Tribunal into the judicial branch and allow for judicial review of electoral laws.²⁰⁰ This broadening of both the electoral institution and the judicial branch importantly weakened the control of the PRI and represented another major step towards a democratic system of checks and balances.

Even with these expansive reforms, it remained unclear as to whether elections in Mexico could ever truly reflect the votes of all Mexicans fairly. Prior to the 2000 election it is reported that two-fifths of Mexicans believed the elections would be unfair in some

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Camp 211.

²⁰⁰ Magaloni 131.

way.²⁰¹ Mexico's unprecedented election of the first opposition candidate in more than 70 years reflected a much-altered system with the election of Vicente Fox.

Interestingly, Roderic Camp cites the most influential long-term element in the PAN victory as the shift in the comparative ideological perception of the PRI and the PAN. While the PRI was traditionally considered to be a center-right party, the PAN, representative of its Catholic and business foundation, has been traditionally considered to be a right of center party. There has been, according to Camp, a shift whereby the PAN is now identified as the party of the center while the PRI has evolved into the party right of center.²⁰²

Vincente Fox was elected with 42 percent of the national vote.²⁰³ With the high levels of mobilization seen in the elections of 1996, the millennial election reflected an emotional national drive to unseat the PRI from power perhaps more than a newfound consensus of the PAN political agenda. Fox was followed by PRI candidate Francisco Labastida with 36 per cent and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of the PRD with 17% of the national vote.²⁰⁴ Elected on a number of many unrealistic platform goals such as giving every Mexican family a Volkswagen Beetle and a small store and that he could solve the Chiapas conflict in 15 minutes, in retrospect continued support of the PAN might not be sustainable. However Fox did make a number of important changes such as the creation of the Federal Investigation Agency (AFI) for the purpose of fighting federal crimes, largely in response to drug cartel violence. Fox also is credited with the creation of the Federal Law of Transparency and Access to Public Government Information with the

²⁰¹ Camp 213.

²⁰² Camp 221.

²⁰³ Camp 220.

²⁰⁴ Camp 221.

purpose of providing citizens with access to information to hold government accountable.²⁰⁵

A number of other policies of the Fox administration stand out. Fox is credited with being the first President to make a concerted effort to reach an agreement with the U.S. regarding immigration, however the September 11th attacks disrupted the process. Furthermore Fox made a risky move in his disapproval of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, though justified in retrospect, as Mexico's number one trade partner, it was a bold move for the first opposition administration to test the waters for future non-PRI U.S.-Mexico relations.²⁰⁶

Lastly, an interesting mission of the administration, the creation and construction of the José Vasconcelos Library highlights some of the potential weaknesses of the first opposition administration. After inaugurating the massive new library in May of 2006, the library closed within the year due to defects in construction.²⁰⁷ Such a failure may be a reflection of the weakness of the new regimes' bureaucratic apparatus.

The 2006 election reflected a continued support of the PAN and an increased support of the PRD. With 58% of the vote, Felipe Calderon's win was hotly contested by the PRD.²⁰⁸ In the past six years as President, Calderon has become famous for his self-proclaimed war on drugs in a full-scale offensive against the drug cartels that had by 2006 become a serious threat to the State. More than 34,000 Mexicans have since been

²⁰⁵ "Big Hits and Also Big Mistakes: The Administration of Vincente Fox." *Explorando Mexico*. The Federal Government of Mexico, n.d. Web. 9 Apr 2012.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Hider, James. "Mexican Inauguration Erupts into Fist-Fights." *The Times*. N.p., 01 Dec 2006. Web. 29 Apr 2012.

killed as part of the violence associated with this offensive.²⁰⁹ Calderon has repeatedly criticized the United States in its treatments of illegal immigrants while as staunch PAN conservative represented a committed U.S. ally supporting the free flow of commerce and labor with the U.S. in the face of rising populism elsewhere in Latin America.²¹⁰ In the face of heightened criticisms of the failures of his war on the drug cartels, Calderon enters the final months of his six-year term with a surprising 52 per cent approval rate.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ "Felipe Calderon." *Times Topics*. New York Times, n.d. Web. 9 Apr 2012.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Mitofsky, Consulta. "Evaluation of the Calderon Administration." *Mexico Institute*. Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, 01 March 2012. Web. 9 Apr 2012.

Condition of the State Today

Mexico's recent evolution toward a more democratic state cannot be understood without a brief elaboration on the current situation of the state today. Economically, Mexico is perhaps now in the strongest position it has been in nearly four decades. Having paid back its loans and fulfilled the requirements under the structural adjustment programs of the 1990s ahead of schedule, Mexico enters the second decade of the millennium in a newly strengthened position. Outside the sphere of economics, however, the strength of the state is far less certain.

In order to answer the central questions of this thesis regarding the impact and causes of the rise in violence in Mexico and the corresponding shift to democracy in the past two decades, a closer examination of the facts on the ground is necessary. Statistical reports regarding the violence vary, and depict a broad range of figures. It would take a far lengthier presentation to analyze the precise data on drug related violence. In the appendices, I present three tables that show the degree of complexity and size of the problem of ongoing violence in Mexico.

Table 1 is a chart taken from the news source, La Reforma showing a conservative estimate of drug related homicides since 2001. The dramatic increase of drug related homicides is shown to range from a low of 1,080 deaths in 2001; to 2,120 in 2006; 5,153 in 2008; 6,587 in 2009 and 5,775 in the first half of 2010.¹

Tables 2 and 3 depict longer-term trends of all homicides in Mexico. Both show violence skyrocketing in 2006 corresponding with Calderon's announcement of his new

¹ Duran-Martinez, Angelica, Gayle Hazard, and Viridiana Rios. "2010 Mid Year Report on Drug Violence in Mexico ." *Trans-Border Institute*. (2010): 4. Web. 29 Apr. 2012.

war to eradicate the drug cartels. Table 2 is a chart released by the Mexican government of all homicides reported from January 1997 to October 2010. Table 3 shows a report of all homicides reported from January 1979 to October 2010. It shows that the year 2010 reported the highest homicide rate in recent history. Though overall homicides in Tables 2 and 3 depict a slow decline in the decades before 2006, Table 1 figures indicate that *drug related* violence was slowly increasing even before the 2006 announcement. The Tables also includes a number of inconsistencies.

Independent researchers have found a number of inconsistencies within official numbers of homicide cases.² For instance claiming that the official numbers of some states count the number of police reports submitted rather than of individual body counts within each report.³ Table 2 and 3 show that Mexico had seen a long-term decline in the overall homicide rate until the official declaration of the Calderon's war on drugs in 2006. Since then the incidences of drug related homicides have increased precipitously depicting the failures of the policy and an urgent need for change.

This recent increase in violence was what sparked the debate in 2008 and 2009 as to the question of Mexico becoming a failed state. A claim was made in 2008 by the U.S. Joint Forces Command argued that Mexico could potentially face rapid and sudden collapse in the future because the government, its politicians, police and judicial infrastructure were under assault by criminal gangs and drug cartels and thereby incapable of maintaining state security and stability.⁴ While experts on the subject have

² Valle-Jones, Diego. "Homicides in Mexico 2010." *Diego Valle-Jones*. N.p., 28 Dec 2011. Web. 29 Apr 2012.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Beittel, June. "Mexico's Drug Related Violence." . Congressional Research Service, 27 May 2009. Web. 29 Apr 2012.

largely disproved this claim, the challenges that surround the issues raised by the claim remain central to the current challenges to the strength of the Mexican state today. The government of Mexico continues to maintain that, “by all significant measure, Mexico has a functioning state” in that “it provides education, health, security and other government services to millions of people.”⁵ But while the Mexican state may not be on the verge of collapsing, public fear driven by the failure of the current administration to improve the situation necessitate greater change.

The influence and infiltration of drug trafficking organizations and criminal gangs into governmental institutions highlight the precipice upon which state stability is balancing. Observers of the situation note that drug trafficking organizations are not seeking to take down the state but rather to subvert it. Since the organizations are interested in maintaining their respective hegemony over key trafficking routes, they rely on corrupt government officials and law enforcement.

Perhaps the greatest challenge in the fight against the drug cartels is the issue of corruption. Much of the profit from the trafficking of drugs is used in the pursuit of the collusion of officials. Efforts have only begun to address this major challenge. The Calderon administration has highlighted victories in the fight against corruption, such as the largest-ever arrest of politicians and senior officials in Calderon’s home state of Michoacán. Throughout the country, the continued call for the firing of top officials such as the Security Secretary García Luna and an overall cleanup of the political system by

⁵ Ibid.

the population at large highlight the need for a deeper cleanse of the bureaucratic and police enforcement agencies.⁶

In terms of the public perception of the ongoing violence, research institutes on the subject argue that much of the public discontent and desperation of the situation revolves around the lack of transparency regarding the war for cartel eradication. A report organized by University of San Diego's Trans Border Institute quotes Maria Marván Laborde of the Instituto Federal de Acceso a la Información (IFAI) stating, "I am convinced that if there was a policy of transparency and access to public safety information, there would be greater confidence from society in this fight against drug trafficking and in the efforts on which this administration has embarked."⁷ Unfortunately the disclosure of such information, or even openness regarding the flaws in the reporting of violence, would undermine the effectiveness of the administrations' efforts. Therefore such transparency is unlikely to emerge under the current administration.

Academics are not the only ones calling for greater transparency. May of 2011 saw the world's first and perhaps largest demonstration protesting the drug war. In a four day march an estimated 90,000 protesters called on the Calderon administration to make far-reaching changes in Mexico's security policy and an end to the war on drugs that had taken the lives of so many loved-ones in a 'citizen's pact.' The pact includes six demands: "1) Resolution of the assassinations and disappearances and the naming of victims; 2) An end to the war strategy and adoption of a "citizen security" strategy; 3) Effective measures against corruption and impunity; 4) A focused attack on the economic

⁶ Carlson, Laura. "Mexico's Anti-Drug War March Demands Far-Reaching Political Reforms." *Americas Program*. N.p., 05 Sep 2011. Web. 29 Apr 2012.; Ibid.

⁷ Duran-Martinez.

roots and criminal revenue streams, including money laundering; 5) Immediate attention to the plight of youth and effective actions to rebuild a broken society, including reorienting the budget to education, health, culture and employment; 6) Participatory democracy.”⁸ These demands, along with a rise in organization of civil society, represent a new wave of mobilization against the status quo structure of policy making. From such mobilization, it is clear that Mexicans today are becoming fed up with ineffective policies of the PAN and are beginning to recognize that a democratic electoral system does not ensure an effective government.

⁸ Carlson.

Chapter 4: Concluding Analysis

This section addresses the core puzzle examined in this thesis and it is driven by the following question: How does the tradeoff between the maintenance of state stability and the development of competitive representation affect the movement toward establishing democracies? I begin by identifying the effect(s) the PRI and Mexico's party system have had on the stability and development of the state. I focus on the challenges a considerable effort toward democratization would have generated, and how the PRI used them to justify its hegemonic rule. I then discuss the changes that ensued between 1961 and 1994 and how they affected the transition to democracy. Thereafter, I address the condition of the Mexican state today. Specifically, I answer the following question: Do the security challenges that have arisen since the year 2000 represent evidence that transitions to democracy often result in a fall in state stability or vulnerability? Based on the last analysis, I close with a discussion of the stability-democratization trade-off. I concentrate on the transition from one-party systems to a multiple party system; how different types of party systems affect the tradeoff; and how this study may challenge or substantiate conclusions presented in other state stability and democracy literature.

Analysis of the Case Study

The processes of state development and democracy development reflect a set of interconnected needs. Stein Rokkan tells us that as the state develops, a greater portion of society is brought into the system. As the state apparatus and institutions grow, the state requires greater amounts of funding, which requires an extraction of resources and

funding from society at large. In order to justify greater amounts of funding in the form of taxation, the state must increase benefits or public goods to society. The core of democratization requires growth in both participation and contestation in government.¹ Giovanni Sartori informs us that factions are inevitable in the development of the state and the relative tolerance of opposition parties and plurality in governance is a major influence in state and democracy development.² Public goods, however, are also ranked hierarchically whereby state security is always valued above rule of law, participation in the political system and redistributive services.³ In short, the process of democratization is dependent on the relative strength and development of the state for providing state and human security; moreover the nature and structure of the parties and party systems can influence the type of interdependence that ensues.

Mexico forces analysts to try to unravel the following dilemma: How does a state create and maintain stability while it opens itself to democracy? The core reason for Mexico's exceptionality was the relative politicized nature of society at large during the founding of the PRI. The surprisingly progressive ideology of the 1917 Constitution and the comparatively high mobilization of society at the end of the Revolution beg the posing of two questions: Why was the expansion of participation and contestation in 20th century delayed in Mexico? What factors might have pushed for a faster democratization of Mexico?

1. Preference for Order and Stability

¹ See the definition of democracy and Polyarchy by Robert Dahl in Literature Review.

² See the section in the Literature Review chapter entitled, "Opposition, Parties and Plurality in Governance."

³ Rotberg, Robert. *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. 3. Print.

The Mexican state has been a product of its own experience with insecurity. Key events such as the 1845-48 war with the United States, the invasion by the French in the 1860's, the Era of Anarchy that preceded Porfiriato, and the chaos of the Revolutionary period all created a society with a strong preference for order and stability over freedom. The state responded to these experiences by relying on various systems of control. It was the experience of anarchy of the previous eras that had led to tolerance for the supreme dictatorship of the Diaz regime.

Both the Era of Anarchy leading up to Porfiriato and the chaos of the Revolution led to a heightened preference for order and stability over freedom and participation in Mexican society. This preference was the result of bitterness regarding Mexico's vulnerability to foreign intervention and the incapacity of Mexico's elites to compromise ideologically as is necessary in any young state that strives to unify.

2. Aversion to Perpetual Rule of Presidents and Closed Oligarchies

While Mexico's experience with instability created a preference for stability, Mexico's experience under Porfiriato ingrained an additional sentiment—abhorrence of one-man rule and closed oligarchies characterized by the Diaz dictatorship. This loathing would become a leading factor in the development of the PRI's hegemonic party rule. The “amificación” and pacification of the elite did not represent the consolidation and compromise needed in the wake of the deep divides that remained from the Liberal-Conservative battles following independence. This consolidation simply was put on hold under the supreme rule of Diaz.

The development of stateness under Porfirato highlights Charles Tilly's argument regarding the linkage between high levels of 'stateness' with high propensity for revolt.⁴ The key determinant that pushed the Diaz regime out was not the autonomy he granted to key interests but rather the exclusion of elites from participating in his administration. The legacy of hostility toward the perpetual rule of one leader, and the tight-knit cronyism with no room for broader political inclusion of elites, would become paramount in the unique regime that followed the revolution—one that was built on the value of no reelection and the necessity of a strong coalition among a wide spectrum of economic and political elite.

3. Early Politicization of Society

A politicized society is necessary for the rise of a party system within the state.⁵ Low levels of overall mobilization during state building generally correspond to greater instances of success in consolidating the needed institutional base on which to enter later phases of participation.⁶ The experiences of Porfirato and the Revolution created a politicized society in Mexico that necessitated the creation of a regime capable of absorbing the newly politically active society.

The early experience with overt, repressive, authoritarian rule resulted in two interrelated and highly influential effects. The first was the ideological mobilization that surrounded the Revolution. The 1917 Constitution reflected the demands of multiple sectors. It extended broad rights to labor, the press and other underrepresented groups,

⁴ Tilly, Charles. *Coercion, Capital and European States: AD 990 - 1992*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992. 35-6. Print.

⁵ Sartori, Giovanni. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976. 41. Print.

⁶ Rokkan, Stein. *State Formation, Nation-Building, and Mass Politics in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 597. Print.

and laid the groundwork for land reform. Yet, much in the same way that Diaz, upon gaining power, moved away from his 'liberal' ideology and towards a far more conservative basis of rule, the evolution of the PRI underwent a similar shift.

Second, as a result of the newly acquired ideology articulated in the 1917 Constitution, the founders of the PRI had a guideline to help them mobilize and coopt key sectors of Mexican society. The social, economic and political grievances of the Revolution and the Articles of the 1917 Constitution that came out of them became not the strict rules that the regime would need to follow but guidelines for the minimal public goods that the society expected of the state. It was these minimal public goods—land reform, bargaining power of labor groups, certain state subsidies and preferences for national business—that became the basis under which the rising political elite was able to coerce the Peasant and Labor sectors and perpetuate their power. The politicization of Mexican society was therefore perhaps one of the most significant influences in the creation of a system that would provide the minimal requisites of the lower classes while protecting and furthering the interests of the wealthy classes.

The PRI Machine

What were the most important aspects of society at the founding of the PRI system and throughout the rest of the century that would have presented challenges to the democratization process? What were the most important aspects of the PRI state system that justified the perpetuation of its hegemonic rule? Which of the themes existing in the period prior to the establishment of the PRI can be said to have delayed democratization? Where does stability come in? Answers to these questions I present below.

A society that is sensitive to, and activated by, political action is “politicized”. The politicization of Mexican society in the closing years of the Revolution came as a major challenge for the consolidation of the PRI system. The challenge lay in the careful pacification of a strong and mobilized labor and peasant sector that showed signs of organizational potential, while allowing continued and extensive freedom to protect the interests of the political-economic elite of Mexico. A number of conditions and developments helped achieved the necessary balance:

- 1) The breadth of the ideological spectrum that remained within the party system despite the party’s outward incongruity,
- 2) The periodic policy concessions to both radical wings of the party and importantly,
- 3) The lack of overtly repressive methods for perpetuation of party control of the system,
- 4) The all-encompassing desire for economic progress that both appealed to all sectors of the PRI base and resulted in the “Mexican Miracle,” but above all,
- 5) The party’s unique corporatist structure allowed the regime to control society’s exit and voice options while proclaiming a policy of inclusion.

One-party systems can only emerge after the establishment of suitably politicized society and after the party becomes a player in the world arena.⁷ As a result of the politicization of Mexico’s society by the end of the Revolution, it became ripe for the establishment of both a party system and opposition actors. Mexican society had already

⁷ Sartori 41.

been awakened politically in such a way that the state had to count all elements as relevant actors in the polity—and what's more that inclusion could be useful to maintain stability.⁸

While the Querétaro Pact, which secured elite cooperation, remained central to PRI stability for the remainder of the century, it was the ideological inclusiveness of the PRI that perpetuated and enhanced the support and legitimacy of the Party. The progressive ideology of the 1917 Constitution, and especially the ideological mission of Cardenismo, served as a key rallying point for the mass support of the party. It was the ideological pendulum that existed in the evolving presidential successions that ensured the stability of the system and broad based support for the party. Although Cardenismo made strides in winning the support of the designated Labor and Peasant base of the party, the industrial capitalist policies of Alemanistas guaranteed support from the private sector base of the party.

If one single sexenio can be credited with creating the methods and institutional basis for longevity and ideological flexibility, it was Lazaro Cardenas's. Cardenas single handedly created the institutional underpinnings from which the party machine would establish its clientalistic practices. He established the precedence for ideological plurality within the party under which both leftist Cardenistas, and later on, rightist Alemanistas would benefit. The election of Cardenas brought major labor and peasant support into the party and set in motion the exceptional openness within the party.⁹ Although the backlash to his progressive 'rational socialism' translated into a series of more radical pro-industry

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Cardenas' refusal to participate in the *destapado* tradition by cultivating a successor effectively sidestepped a major battle between the progressive Cardenista faction of the party and the pro-business faction that possibly could have led to a major elite splitting.

presidencies, it also enabled leftist factions to remain within the party. Without the progressive sexenio of Cardenas, the weakening support of labor in the wake of Calles' Maximato, the progressive faction and support in the party might never have returned to a position of power in the presidential chair.

In addition, stability and longevity were achieved through a number of key policy concessions to would-be defectors from the PRI. The most notable example of this occurred under the Cardenas administration. Nationalization of oil served as a rallying point for nationalism and reconciliation of classes under the Cardenas administration. Nationalism is a key aim of state builders, especially for latecomers to development that revert to one-party or military regimes, such as Mexico.¹⁰ The second most significant policy concessions were the periodic land redistribution policies. While Cardenas and Cortines were substantially more active in implementing land reform than all other administrations, every administration, regardless of ideological views, used periodic land redistribution and *ejido* development as a way of appeasing the grievances of the landless, rural poor.

The continued drive for economic development and general success with it that permeated the agendas of literally all PRI sexenios, provided justification for the perpetuation of the regime. Since the PRI was reliant on support from the industrial sector, policies boosting the development of key industries were good for the PRI's allies in the business sector. Thanks to Cardenas' "rational socialism," economic progress was

¹⁰ "Perhaps the policy must exit first, perhaps unification has to precede party "partition," and perhaps this is the condition that makes parties a subdivision compatible with unity rather than a division that disrupts it. This supported by the experience of most of the developing societies bent upon constructing a national identity and integration, which have quickly resorted to the single party or to military rule, and in either case to banishing organized dissent, that is, opposition." See, Sartori 16-7.

good for both the socialist-leaning sectors of society as well as hardline capitalists. Policies could periodically favor industry and landless farmers in order to retain the support of each. While ‘rational socialism’ was meant to redistribute wealth to the poorest Mexicans, it also emphasized the need for enhance the ways the poor contributed to development. The party retained a careful balance in framing its policies for each sector of its support.

The final two conditions that helped contribute to the longevity and stability of the system revolved around the two exceptional characteristics of the PRI -- the specific loyalty and tolerance of the opposition actors and the lack of need for the oppressive tools characteristic of most authoritarian regimes.

The PRI’s unique lack of need for repressive tools was thanks to the broad effectiveness of alternative methods for coopting all sectors of society into remaining within the system. The PRI succeeded in this endeavor, with few exceptions, due to its adept combination of limiting the exit and voice options available to would-be defectors.¹¹

It limited exit options in selective obligatory institutional memberships for certain sectors—the CTM and the CNC. In the direct, hierarchical and highly organized incorporation of broad sectors of society into the Party machine, the PRI shaped the diverging interests into a plurality in *within* the party. The appointment of these institutions’ officials by PRI officials, rather than election by the sectors which they

¹¹ Rokkan 597.

represented, was the lynchpin that guaranteed the cooperation of the institutions with the Party's agenda and with that, the stability of the system.¹²

The hierarchical nature and dependence on party appointment of officials of the CNC and CTM created not a quasi-checks and balances system, but rather a system by which the state and the party could control and subdue society. The party limited the voice options in a manageable way, still apparently tolerable enough for would-be defectors to remain within the system. In contrast, the "popular" or landed middle class sector's designated institution, the CNOP, retained far more autonomy from party control, thereby granting greater opportunities for asserting its interests with the ruling coalition. This opportunistic voice option allowed that if opponents worked within the system, it was possible for their discontent to be heard and dealt with, if only minimally. Through these mechanisms for mandatory and controlled participation, the PRI directed would-be dissenters away from an exiting of the system

The Downfall

The fall of the PRI was brought about by a combination of societal changes, economic and international pressures. In consideration of the above analysis of the PRI's strengths, what changed between the early 1960s, when the PRI was still making a public effort to undermine the influence and presence of the opposition, and 1996 to finally bring about the delayed transition to democracy?

¹² "Leaders of the less privileged groups are tied more to the regime, less to their constituencies." See, Levy, Daniel, and Gabriel Székely. *Mexico: Paradoxes of Stability and Change*. 2nd ed. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987. 124. Print.

The most important causes resulting in the downfall of the PRI were related to the deteriorating relevance, effectiveness and success of the factors previously relied on for incorporating labor and the poor and the slow and steady downfall of the Mexican Economic Miracle. Two events in the last fifty years contributed extensively to the breakdown: i) the student and labor grievances and violent state reaction involved in the 1968 uprisings, and ii) the 1985 earthquake. Furthermore the combined economic and political crises and tensions that arose during the 1980's and 1990's sparked an urgent impetus for change necessary to mobilize the country to pressure the regime for reforms.

Beyond the grievances of the students and their allies protesting government policies surrounding the 1968 student uprisings, the reaction by the regime in both the implementation of the use of force and the policies in the wake of the cover-up provide insight into the downfall of the PRI. The decision to revert to the use of violence represented an overestimation of party support and consolidation. That the uprisings reached the level of public involvement that they did, highlights the existence of the initial cracks to the PRI machine that had so long relied on methods of cooptation, conciliation and coercion.

The PRI's failure in 1968 with regards to the grievances of the students and their allies was its unwillingness to make concessions that in the past it had been willing to extend to ensure it would retain the support of society. This episode showed that the PRI had become overconfident in its strength to risk such an overt use of repression. Luckily for the PRI, it took some years following this incident, along with increased economic pressures, for the opposition to gain enough strength to assert their power against the PRI.

The economic downfall of Mexico in the later part of the 20th century represented a central cause that led to the defection from the party to the opposition and the consequential rationalization for the PRI to take on a self-orchestrated transition from hegemonic rule to a competitive multi-party system.

The drawn-out decline of the economic miracle of Mexico, evidenced in the accumulation of debt and extensive peso devaluations, revolve around the overall weaknesses of Mexico's version of the popular import substitution industrialization economic strategy and its participation in an IMF led structural adjustment program.¹³ The repeated de-valuation of the peso coupled with expansive foreign-designed austerity packages served as a metaphorical flashing neon sign evidencing the total failure of PRI economic policies that had so long promised progress and trickle down capitalist development. The necessity of foreign financial intervention was the bitter icing on the cake.

The strategies of PRI administrations in regard to the opposition in the 1970's and 1980's, particularly the de la Madrid administration, coupled with the economic strategies of the time ended up back firing on the Party. While the reform of 1986 was meant to stimulate the opposition enough to bolster the legitimacy of the PRI, in the end the stimulation was more than the Party had bargained for.¹⁴ The PAN's victories in the 1985 and 86 elections at the state and local levels prompted the PRI to revert to using such techniques as missing ballot boxes, duplication of registered voters, counting votes

¹³ As students of economic development history know, the execution of ISI throughout Latin America during this era ended in exorbitant spending necessitating loans that countries would never pay off, investment in industries that would largely never become economically competitive and required extensive subsidies for inefficient industrial sectors.

¹⁴ Camp 205.

of citizens who had not voted, and late-minute changes in the location of polling booths.¹⁵ The scope of fraud in the reaction by the PRI at this time marked the defection of left-wing Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

International tolerance of non-democratic regimes had shifted towards the end of the 20th century to international pressure for democratic reforms, especially from the U.S.. The international press coverage of presidential elections that built during the 1990's provided an external check on the legitimacy of the electoral process. The increasing interconnectedness of the U.S. and Mexico was a major source for this pressure. While the negotiations and signing of NAFTA in 1994 seems like the most obvious example of this pressure, the U.S. involvement in international financial institutions resulted in a heavy American influence responding to Mexico's economic crises of the 1980s. Furthermore, the increasing pressure of Mexican immigration to the U.S. necessitated increased interest of the U.S. for a more democratic state as well as continued stability for its third largest trade partner.

The weakness of the regime that led to the deterioration of the state apparatus and state effectiveness in dealing with crises is clearly evident in the state response to the earthquake in 1985. The government's inadequacies were highlighted in the failed response to save persons trapped in the rubble in comparison to the heroic neighborhood volunteers' efforts in the wake of the quake.¹⁶

Throughout the strongest years of PRI hegemony, part of the strength of its longevity was thanks to its turnover of career politicians and inclusion of elites within the system but also its evolution of political recruitment. The regimes' inability to continue to

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Camp 61.

adapt to the needs and interests of an evolving society contributed in part to its downfall. It seems that the most recent shift towards a new highly educated, tightknit political-technical elite actually weakened the regime's capacity to relate to its traditionally broad support base.¹⁷ The shifts moved towards more business-administrative educated elites within the political recruitment of the regime.¹⁸ While in no way reflecting a less educated political bureaucracy, the rise of the political-technocrat created a lack of party experience and with that, a decreasing ability for political bargaining skills of the party bureaucratic apparatus while being more receptive to political and economic strategies used abroad and less of those used in the traditional corporatist structure of the PRI.¹⁹

The state underwent a deeper, fundamental change through a number of shifts within private sector-state relations. The fracturing of the longtime state and private sector alliance and increased voluntary associations among multisectoral business leaders left the post-PRI system without the corporatist structure it had traditionally relied on for relations with the private sector, weakening the state in the face of an increasingly well organized private sector.²⁰ These new power dynamics, coupled by the parallel collapse of the corporatist structure previously relied on between the State and the CTM and the

¹⁷ Camp 128.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ben Ross Schneider argues that three systemic shifts during the downfall of the PRI has lead to an increasingly well organized voluntary encompassing associations within big business, such as the elusive and powerful CMHN (Consejo Mexicano de Hombres de Negocios). The primary factors for this include (1) PRI exclusion of business from elections and official appointment, (2) government actions that occasionally appeared threatening to the interests of Mexican business and (3) periodic government reliance on these associations to mediate relations with business in the face of the deterioration of corporatist relations with business. See, Schneider, Ben Ross. "Why is Mexican Business so Organized?" *Latin America Research Review*. 37.1 (2002): 77-118. Web. 10 Apr. 2012.

CNC, created a highly unequal power relations between the wealthy haves and the less organized, less autonomous have-nots as the state entered democratization.

The Transition

The faltering hegemonic Party, out of touch with society, carried out reforms culminating in the transition to a competitive system. However these reforms did not have the foresight necessary to implement lasting and systemic change. Much needed were parallel institutional reforms outside of electoral institution reforms and the highly biased and largely unmonitored structural adjustment programs. As recent developments since the official transition to a democratic system in 2000 have proved, the military, police and bureaucratic apparatus of the state remain ancient and ineffective. Mexico's transition to a competitive system was detrimentally impacted by the weaknesses of the state system that the PRI had built coupled by the incompatibility of its corporatist institutions. What is important to note about the PRI's unique self-initiated transition to democracy is that the change was a direct result of the strategic policy and choices of the once hegemonic party. And further, that the main opposition parties, which by then had gained unprecedented strength, chose to remain in the system and wait out the slow tedious and non-linear reforms to allow for their full involvement and eventual success as competitive parties.

The non-linear characterization of the reform period between 1977 and the final reform of 1996 underlines both a lack of consensus within the party as well as the ongoing fear within the party of the dangers associated with opening to a more competitive system. Clearly, the assumptions made by non-democratic regimes that

plurality necessarily means a lack of consensus and a lack of consensus necessarily results in political disorder was an ongoing assumption within the mindsets of the PRI prior to the reform period.²¹ In the founding years of the PRI incorporation of the masses was key in establishing its rule. At the height of PRI reign and into its downfall, the increasing reliance on electoral fraud is evidence perhaps less of over-confidence of the regime but rather of the fear of the dangers associated with an open, competitive system.

What changed between 1961 and 1996 that finally justified the transition to democracy?

Drawing on Robert Dahls' axioms regarding the importance of the costs and benefits toleration and oppression, Beatriz Magaloni concludes that the PRI relinquished its control over the election process to an independent IFE for two reasons: 1) It calculated that it still had a good chance of winning elections cleanly, and 2) It recognized that the opposition was in a stronger position than in the past to mount a serious challenge if the PRI did not relinquish control over the IFE.²² By handing over control of the IFE, the PRI effectively 'tied its hands' not to commit fraud, which represented a major step towards democratization for the regime.²³ The traditional clientelist methods of representation had indeed become more costly and more difficult as the middle class grew and business became more organized. Outside pressure, associated

²¹ Sartori, Giovanni. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976. 13. Print.

²² Dahl's Axioms held true: (1) willingness to tolerate opposition increased as expected costs of toleration went down, (2) likelihood of toleration increases as the expected costs of suppression increased, and (2) the more the costs of suppression exceed the costs of toleration, the greater the chance for a competitive regime. See, Dahl 49 and Magaloni 135.

²³ Magaoni 133.

with the costs of suppression, in this sense was a leading factor prompting the PRI's self-initiated reforms.

Mexico scholar, Roderic Camp, differs from Magaloni in emphasizing a different rationale for initiating reforms. He posits instead that the PRI established the various electoral reforms as a way of stimulating the opposition with the goal of cleaning the PRI and its image as perceived by the general populous.²⁴

A maxim by Giovanni Sartori contributes another important perspective that could apply to the PRI's decision to implement electoral reform,

“Pluralism develops often as a result of religious, political or class-based disconnections whereby the stakes of political controversy are so high so as to justify the surrendering of power within a competitive party system.”²⁵

This maxim applies most closely to the high tense political controversy that existed in 1994 and 1995 as a result of the uprising in Chiapas and the controversy over the introduction of NAFTA. These crises culminated in the ultimate and absolute reform granting independence to the IFE in 1996, representing the final unlocking of the PRI system that had previously barred the victory of any non-party candidate from Presidential office.

Though over-confidence of the PRI in its continued predominance in the system is palpable, and the reform-based PR campaign remains empirically valid, it was the fundamental shifts within the Party itself, I would argue, that encompasses a deeper reasoning behind the electoral reforms. From a big history perspective it was the Party's continued success and stability in providing minimal economic progress and minimal

²⁴ Camp 202.

²⁵ Sartori 17.

public services, such as the adjudication of labor and peasant disputes with organized business, and the efficacy and effectiveness by which these missions were guaranteed, that most contributed to the legitimacy of the PRI's hegemonic rule. With the economic failures, the increasing irrelevance and deterioration of the corporatist structure previously relied on, the Party, at this time was faced with a serious legitimacy crisis.

This legitimacy crisis prompted a game-changing decision with the PRI ruling party. The political-technical elite, largely educated in the United States, recognized the urgency of this crisis and the vital necessity for systemic reforms. Much as the Cardenas-Calles ideological battle in 1940 ended in the decision by Calles to bow to the progressive agenda of Cardenas in return for the stability of the system in which he made his life's work, the climatic decision by the PRI between 1988 and 1996 to bow to electoral reforms reflected the priority of the party to see the stability of the system it had created rather than allow the total exiting of the opposition and deterioration of the state. Evidenced by the non-linear development and response to the reforms, the remaining ruling coalition within the PRI was not in a consensus in regard to this. Mexico's transition to democracy was thus prompted by outside pressure on an aging hegemonic system and the mature, realistic decision by its ruling elite to bet for the first time on Mexico rather than on itself.

Before moving on to the final concluding analysis of the puzzle being explored in this thesis, it is important to return for a moment to the conditions of the Mexican state today and the questions that surround the current crises involving the drug cartel war. In consideration of the claim by some analysts in 2008 and 2009 that Mexico could be

headed toward a failed state status, do the security challenges that have arisen since the first democratically elected opposition candidate in 2000 signify evidence that transitions to democracy necessarily result or often result in a fall in state stability and rise of state vulnerability?

In order to answer this question, I will compare the crisis of legitimacy faced by the state in 1994 with that of today. The security challenge of the drug cartels questions the legitimacy no longer of a specific party but that of the state. This represents a greater challenge to state stability than a related challenge of legitimacy that the PRI as a party faced in 1994 with the Chiapas rebellion. While the Chiapas uprising represented a serious threat to the stability of the state in its rightful challenge to the *institutional* legitimacy of the PRI as a party, the situation today is substantially graver. The Chiapas uprising and overall questioning of the legitimacy of the PRI was appeased somewhat easily with the 1994 and 1996 reforms to the electoral institutions. Today, in contrast, is much less of a quick fix. Whereas the societal pressure that existed in the 1990s for institutional reform targeted the transition to democratic rule, the present situation cannot be so easily identified. The challenges inherent in the war on cartel eradication represent flaws in the state structure of the newly democratic state system. It is a matter of institutional legitimacy of the electoral process specifically versus a deficit of legitimacy across the board.

The general ineffectiveness and lack of efficacy of the newly consolidated democracy highlights the weaknesses of the nascent competitive system. The recent rise of the PAN and the PRD has been slow to fill the gaps of incorporation of the broad sectors of society previously incorporated by the PRI corporatist structure. It is by

unlucky happenstance that the final transition to a competitive system has coincided with the proliferation of an international security challenge surrounding the drug cartel war. The system is ill-equipped today both with the downfall of the PRI apparatus and the inexperience in governance of the new party to handle such an all encompassing security challenge that is heavily dependent on the lawful, structured, efficient and effective response of a wide range of bureaucracies and institutions.

The greatest challenges to Mexico today remain closely linked to the security challenges surrounding the drug war and the institutional strength that the state must build in order to face these challenges.²⁶ The greatest weaknesses of the State correspond to its greatest challenges for the future, representing an important feedback loop. They include: (1) Surmounting the drug violence and maintaining security within and without Mexico's borders, (2) building strong, new, autonomous and effective institutions that can withstand the various pressures and challenges of the young struggling democracy, (3) maintaining the ability to keep its citizens secure and exercise its authority over its sovereign territories and (4), creating trust in its institutions. Without trust in the institutions, surmounting the drug violence is impossible, and without strong and effective institutions, the state cannot hope to keep its citizens secure and maintain a monopoly of force within its sovereign territories.

As regards the future of a one party rule for Mexico, many scholars have cited the 2000 election as the end-all of Mexico's one-party rule. However certain events provide

²⁶ Experts across the board emphasize that the greatest challenges to Mexico today are the lack of security, apathetic electorate, and weakening economic and government institutions—further instigators of instability include Mexico's disproportionate distribution of wealth, high unemployment rate and slow growth rate of its GDP. See, Nava, Juan P. "Mexico: failing state or emerging democracy?" *Military Review* Mar.-Apr. 2011: 31+. *Gale Power Search*. Web. 19 Feb. 2012.

evidence to the contrary. For one, there has been a resurgence of PRI support—only 12 years—two sexenios-- after the foundation of democracy was established in 2000. In fact, the current head of the Federal District, a member of the PRI, has long been pegged as the favored candidate for the upcoming 2012 elections.²⁷ Second, the assumption that the PRI was the only threat to democracy is not well founded. The 2006 election of Felipe Calderon of the PAN has been disputed with claims of election irregularities and voter fraud.²⁸ The 2000 victory of the PAN does not represent the permanent creation of a stable multi-party competitive system. And, as this summer's presidential election is likely to prove, a return to PRI hegemony is likely even after the twelve years of PAN presence in Los Pinos.

I would suggest two possible interpretations of this return to power of the PRI: It could signal that the seeming failure of the PAN to maintain security has forced the Mexican people to welcome to office a president under whose party state and human security was last guaranteed. Second, it could indicate that a PRI victory will not come as a result of the strength of the PRI but rather as a result of the weakness of the opposition parties in the wake of the PRI system.

The PRI party organization has been able to take advantage of these phenomena to re-establish its strength. What the significance of this resurgence will mean for the democratic process will soon be seen, and that will depend in part on the methods that are used to implement its new party policies.

²⁷ "Mexico's Pena Nieto extends lead over main rival." . Reuters Canada, 15 Apr 2012. Web. 16 Apr 2012.

<<http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCABRE83F02220120416?sp=true>>.

²⁸ Nava.

Conclusions about how one-party systems can impact the stability-development tradeoff

Even with the above recognition that Mexico's security challenges probably do not signify a parallel fall in state stability in all transitions to democracy from one-party rule, its experience does provide important insights to the stability-development tradeoff. The development of a state and the interrelated development of a democratic system within that state are processes replete with challenges and forces working against their consolidation. The development of a one-party system, as we have seen in the case of Mexico, can result in the deterrence or even extended postponement of the transition to a competitive democratic system. A successfully stable and tightly controlled one-party system such as the PRI can both retard the rise of opposition parties and result in the cooptation of would-be opponents of the system through creating a loyal opposition. Furthermore, upon transitioning to a democratic system the opposition, previously coopted by the hegemonic system, may have lingering deficiencies, such as the case of the PAN. Since the strength of a hegemonic system often relies on such tools such as clientalism, corporatist institutions, corruption and outright bribery for the functioning of its institutions, the transition to democracy can leave the relative strength of the state in a precarious position, depending on the particular route to democracy that it takes.

As we know from literature on plurality and party systems, the development of party systems occur in part as a way of making the government responsible to its citizens. The particular structure and legitimacy surrounding the PRI machine can contribute important insight into Sartori's elaboration that intra-party competition cannot replace inter-party competition characteristic of multi-party democracies and the responsiveness

expected of inter- versus intra-party competition. In the case of the PRI, tolerance of minimal intra-party competition and plurality within the party was a major factor in the stability, longevity and even legitimacy of the regime. Legitimacy was achieved due to the regime's relatively high tolerance for the opposition in exchange for the loyalty of that opposition. However, as the state develops and its institutions become more complex in their provision of public goods for society, stable intra-party competition cannot be sustained. One of the most impressive accomplishments of the PRI was its ability to sustain its relative cohesiveness in the face of such broad intra-party plurality. Further, the encouragement of the broad spectrums within the party for such an extended period in effect stunted the development of opposition parties capable of governing.

The party cohesiveness and stability in the case of Mexico, was maintained through its broad corporatist structure. What is interesting about the downfall of this system and the weakness of the state that remained in the vacuum left by the PRI was its connection with the unique form of legitimacy in its corporatist structure. As Sartori elaborates, state responsiveness develops as a result of the institutions it creates.²⁹ His model for the development of party pluralism differs from the route to party pluralism that has developed in Mexico. The model reflects the development of the state from constitutional pluralism to responsive government whereby the state is responsible first to its ministers and parliament and then to the state institutions that develop. In the case of Mexico, the PRI was never fully responsible to parliamentary institutions or any institution involving the electoral process at all. Rather, it made itself responsible to the extra-state institutions it had created itself for the cooptation of broad sectors of society.

²⁹ Sartori 19.

In this sense the party system developed responsibility—and with that, legitimacy— not through formal state institutions, but rather through extra-state institutions that allowed for greater control and flexibility on the part of the ruling coalition.

The frustration and near total lack of hope within Mexican society in the face of today's security challenges is a result of the diminished legitimacy of the state due to the vacuum left in the wake of the PRI. While the PRI retained a high degree of strength at its height, fundamental deficiencies lurked just below the surface that would cripple the state remaining in the wake of its downfall. The PRI's corporatist structure relied on unsustainable corporatist institutions that were built not to strengthen the state but rather to strengthen the party. The state that the PRI's hegemonic system had created has ceased to exist, and with it the stability of the state and the legitimacy of its institutions.

In this sense, the consolidation of a state under a hegemonic one-party system can lead to fundamental challenges for state stability and legitimacy as that system transitions to an open, competitive system. As the case of Mexico exhibited, the challenges can arise when the opposition gains strength yet the institutional system under which the previous regime operated is no longer relevant. If the transition process does not include broad, system reforms, beyond the electoral process, by which to strengthen the bureaucratic capacity of the state outside of the usual tools of non-democratic regimes such as corporatism and corruption, the state is left in a very vulnerable position. If, as in the case of Mexico, new, urgent crises emerge following a democratic transition by which an efficient and effective state response is required, and the state has not properly prepared itself institutionally, a fall in state legitimacy and stability may result. Furthermore a fall in legitimacy can lead to the opportunity for state failure. Another possible response to

such a situation, as this summer's Presidential elections in Mexico may prove, would be a reverting to a closed, though stable and controlled system in an effort to reestablish a strong, effective state system.

Conclusions about how party systems and transitions to democracy as a whole can impact the tradeoff

The paradox of Mexico's exceptionally smooth transition to democracy was the fall in legitimacy of the state since its transition.³⁰ It is commonly assumed that a transition to a more democratic system generally coincides with a higher propensity for legitimacy of the state. In the case of Mexico today, the new legitimacy of its democratic electoral process has been overshadowed by the fall in legitimacy of essentially all remaining institutions. What can this phenomenon contribute, validate or disprove within literature on state development, stability and legitimacy literature?

It is commonly known that ineffectiveness weakens the authority of the state, which in turn weakens legitimacy of the government.³¹ Furthermore, it is well recorded that public goods provided by a consolidated state are hierarchically ranked, with the maintenance of state and human security ranked highest.³² The legitimacy of the PRI was maintained due to (1) the assurance of minimal public services, (2) relatively dependable economic progress and (3) the effectiveness by which policies were implemented and disputes were adjudicated—however outside the realm of democratic norms the implementation was carried out. The latter of these assurances, the effectiveness of the

³⁰ Legitimacy here refers to the effectiveness-efficacy of a state system and not referring to *democratic* legitimacy

³¹ Linz 22.

³² Rotberg 3.

PRI, represents the crux of the reason for the fall of legitimacy since the downfall of the PRI. It was only after the opposition came to power that it became evident that the long decline of the PRI had coincided with the long decline of state strength. More to the point, it was the decline of state effectiveness that has created the fall in legitimacy of the state in the eyes of society. State stability, intricately connected to legitimacy, is now at risk. It is not because the transition to democracy is inherently destabilizing, but rather that the transition to democracy from a state system built upon the extra-legal practices of a hegemonic party system creates conditions that can lead to state failure. This analysis necessitates an elaboration on a number of prescriptive requirements:

The democratization process from authoritarian systems can have destabilizing impacts on the stability of a state system if:

1. The previous non-democratic regime relied on extra-legal or non-official means for implementing policy, adjudicating disputes, negotiating with non-governmental organizations or regulating financial institutions.
2. The previous non-democratic regime stunted the growth of a multi-party system.
3. The previous non-democratic regime existed under a party-system which blurred the line between state and party apparatus
4. The transition process does not include a thorough restructuring of state institutions and the fostering of new state-society relations, either through voluntary civil society associations, or formal institutions meant to mediate relations transparently.

Conclusion

As the case study of Mexico's transition to democracy, and the challenges it faces, following this transition shows, the democratization process is dependent on the relative strength and development of the state for providing state, and especially human security. And further that parties and party systems can be major influences in this interdependence.

As we have seen, since 2000, the state has weakened in its assurance of effective deliverance of the most essential public goods. The longtime dependence on extra-legal and non-official bureaucratic structures that operated under a grey area of state-party institutions has created an institutionally inept state structure incapable of delivering the public services in the wake of the PRI's downfall. The stability that was enjoyed under the PRI's presidential transitions and systemic strength that existed at the level of the party ceased once another party took over.

The new democratic system is defenseless in the face of organized business today; it is left with a weakened institutional base from which to handle security crises such as the rising power of drug cartels—or earthquakes and other natural disasters.

Mexico's continued preference for the privileged and continued provisions for the security of their interests through the reforms of the last thirty years has guaranteed enough stability by which to avoid the deep, institutional change that remains necessary for the full transition to a competitive, open, multi-party democracy.

While the crisis and reform period of the 1990s and the first democratic election in 2000 represented a turning point in Mexican political history, I would argue that the coming decade will come to represent a more telling crossroad. In a similar manner in

which Mexico's reconstruction of the state following the Revolution necessitated a major reassessment of Mexican statehood and conciliation of the classes, Mexico today must reassess the values upon which its state system is based. And further, Mexico must continue to protect its newly competitive system, avoiding a relapse into the tightly controlled system of yesterday, while rebuilding the institutions that should be providing state and human security.

Due to the current situation of state weakness, Mexico is in danger of relapsing to a political system that ensures control and stability at the cost of liberty and plurality.

“The overwhelming dominance of definitions based on the largely unrecognized assumption that uniformity is desirable has led the historical literature to confuse the needful thing, unity, with the harmful thing, uniformity. But, Luis González asks, *in what way does recognition of the legitimacy of the thousands of matrias that make up the patria threaten the whole?* Does recognition of heterogeneity endanger the survival of the nation? I believe not. I believe it constitutes a necessary awareness of the multiplicity of the mosaic without which the whole is weakened rather than strengthened. If modern Mexico faces a crisis of definition, perhaps some of its definitions have been false.”³³

In consideration of the mounting threats to state stability and the weakness of its nascent democracy, this emphasis of the need for uniformity strikes a new chord in the Mexico of today. The fears of disunity, dissent and discontent must be embraced in order

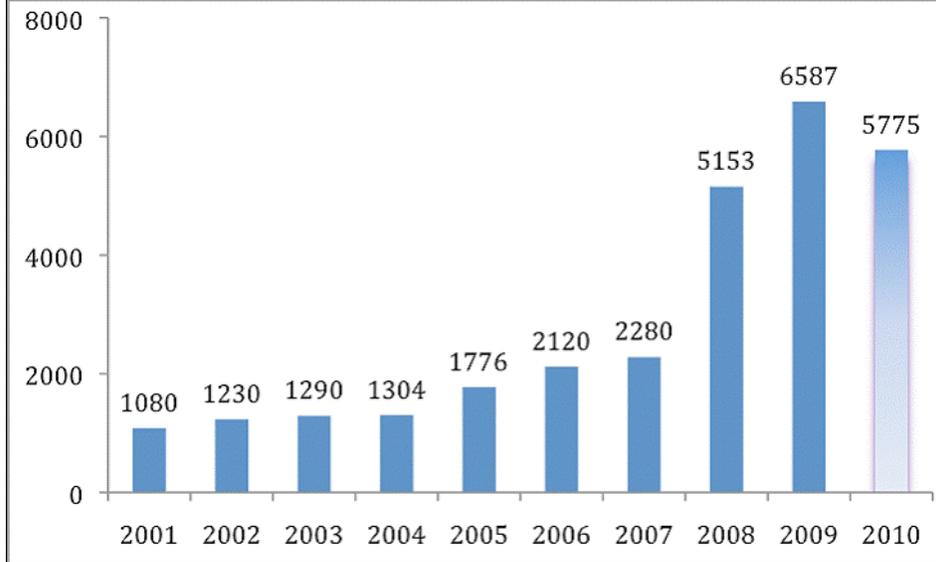
³³ Anna, Timothy. *Forging Mexico*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. 21. Print.

to deepen the institutionalization of plurality in governance and not as dangers to the stability of the system.

Due to the rising position of Mexico within the world's political economy, its position relative to the U.S. and to the rest of Latin America, the future of Mexican state stability and democracy should be a central concern to the U.S. and the rest of the world arena. Furthermore, its experience should inform the future transitions of states throughout the developing world. The democratization process, particularly electoral democratization, must only be undertaken with a clear understanding of both the ongoing and the new challenges to state stability that can develop in a transitioning from a non-democratic system to an open, competitive democracy.

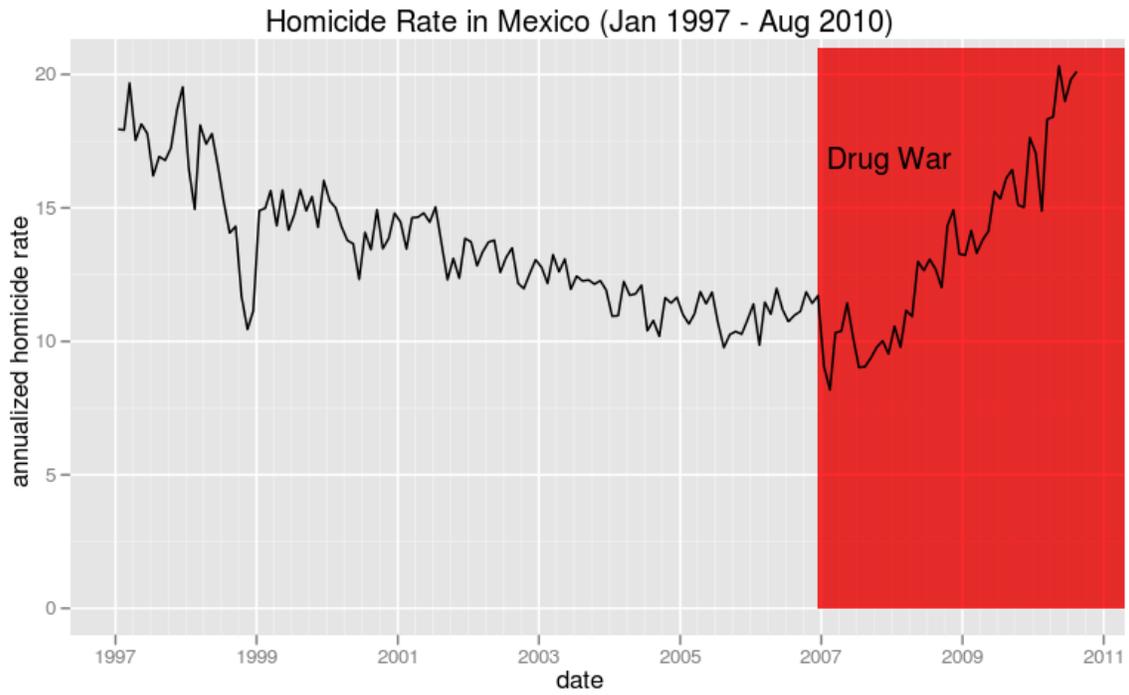
Tables

Table 1: Drug Related Homicides in Mexico, 2001-2010¹



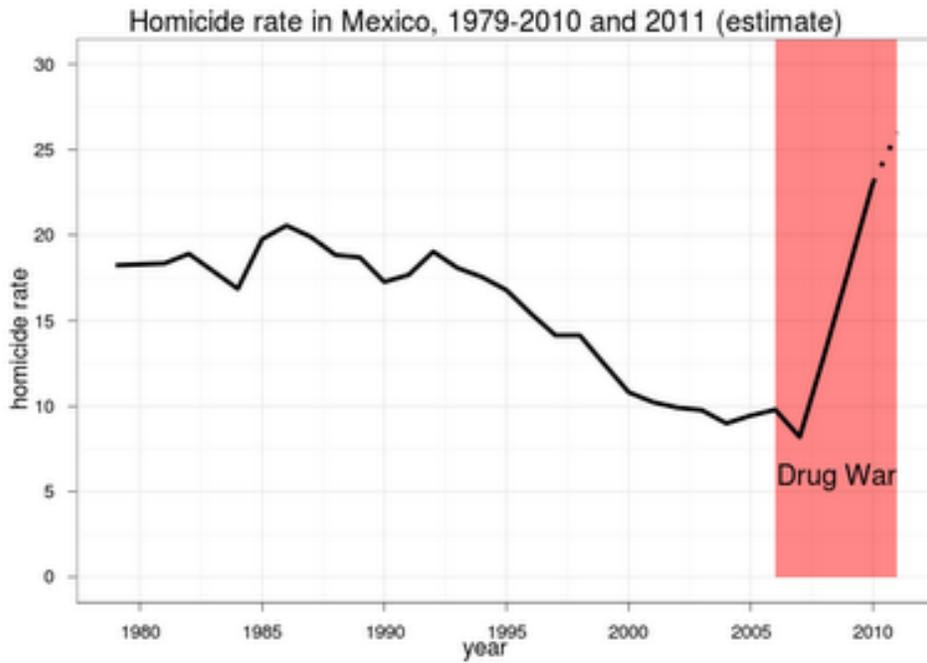
¹ Duran-Martinez, Angelica, Gayle Hazard, and Viridiana Rios. "2010 Mid Year Report on Drug Violence in Mexico ." *Trans-Border Institute*. (2010): n. page. Web. 29 Apr. 2012.

Table 2: Homicide Rate Since 1997²



² Valle, Diego. "Recent Developments in the Drug War." *R-Bloggers*. N.p., 01 Dec 2010. Web. 29 Apr 2012. <<http://www.r-bloggers.com/recent-developments-in-the-drug-war/>>.

Table 3: Homicide Rates Since 1979³



³ Valle-Jones, Diego. "Homicides in Mexico 2010." *Diego Valle-Jones*. N.p., 28 Dec 2011. Web. 29 Apr 2012. <<http://blog.diegovalle.net/2011/12/homicides-in-mexico-2010.html>>.

CISLA Addendum

Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts
Senior Integrative Project

Guiding Questions

What are the origins and dynamics of contemporary society?

What is the relevance of the past in understanding the present and the possibilities for the future?

What are the material, spiritual, and ethical challenges of modernity?

Critics of the worldwide trend towards global integration, known as ‘globalization’ often criticize the negative impact the phenomenon is having in causing the decline of traditional societies, ancient traditions and languages in favor of a more materialistic, “Westernized” society. While there may be a relative decline of the prevalence of more traditional cultures in some parts of the world, there are many instances of the past continuing to play an important role in some societies within an increasingly globalized context. Mexico is one such case where the struggles and themes of the past continue to impact reality today and the challenges of its progress pose new questions about its progress.

The ethical challenges of modernity today revolve around the issue of inequality and the growing gap that exists both within deeply unequal societies and between the developed North and the ongoing underdevelopment of the global South. While Mexico, like many developing countries, has made huge strides towards the industrialized, globalized ‘modern’ society as we measure it today, the underlying inequality represents not only a blemish on the image of progress for Mexico but it also poses the larger question of at what cost progress and modernity comes.

Mexico counts today as one of the most unequal economies in the world. The immense wealth and modern infrastructure that is found in the Distrito Federal and the increasingly wealthy cities to the North such as Monterrey stand in stark contrast to the rural areas just hours outside of city limits. The economic status of the majority of lower and middle economic groups of Mexico, counting fully 36% living at the poverty line and 13% in extreme poverty, contrast sharply with Mexico's own Carlos Slim Helu, telecommunication giant and currently the richest man in the world worth more than \$62 billion.¹

The contemporary notion of modernity today largely revolves around the concept of political and economic development. As this thesis has made clear, these two trends are neither inevitable nor irreversible. Furthermore the trend toward economic progress come at a high cost, and presents many ethical challenges. At both the global and national level, recent studies have emerged highlighting the growing costs of progress. The costs range from environmental degradation to the increase and continued violations of human rights and inequality. In many cases, including Mexico and even the United States, economic progress has outpaced political progress, and it has come at the cost of skyrocketing inequality.

Recent studies have begun to shed light on the ethical and material impact that such unchecked economic growth has had throughout the world. At the global level, an analysis depicting the relationship between 43,000 transnational corporations has identified a relatively small group of companies, mostly banks, who control a

¹ "Wiki Driven Corporate Transparency Latin America." Start Some Good, n.d. Web. 2 May 2012.

disproportionate amount of the global economy.² The specific findings of this report reveal a shocking statistic that 147 transnational corporations (TNCs) control 40% of the world's wealth.³ Independent organizations in Mexico have found a similar trend whereby 38 men in Mexico control a full 27% of the Mexican economy.⁴ The core findings of each of these research projects are based on the fact that large corporations are owned and directed by individuals connected to a high number of other companies and that those companies themselves often have direct ties to other companies. Such trends of corporate interlocking networks, at both the national and international levels depict perhaps one of the most complex and dangerous consequences of concentrated and unchecked economic growth.

At the very core, globalization is the growing interconnectivity of the global community. Yet interestingly, the challenges of growing interconnectivity have been apparent throughout world history.

Today's globalized world is largely a product of big historical trends, of dynamics of the past as well as new dynamics that continue to be introduced every day. When considering the history of the world, globalization has been the product of a great historical trend. Many globalization scholars cite three main waves of globalization. Each of these waves reveals key new dynamics of technology and increased global communications. With each new innovation in technology, new challenges have emerged with the loss of old traditions in everything from the distribution of labor and resources to societal beliefs on religion.

² "Revealed--The Capitalist Network that Rules the World." *Physics and Math*. New Scientist, n.d. Web. 2 May 2012.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "Wiki Driven Corporate Transparency Latin America."

The first wave of globalization essentially took place in Mexico, and in the “New World” in general. The conquest of Mexico and the merging of cultures that followed marked a crucial transition from the pre-Columbian to the modern world. It is exceptional to history because it is arguably one of the only convergences of two distinctly different civilizations.

Since this first wave of globalization, Mexico has been highly impacted by the ongoing theme of the new role of the ‘other’ in society. The Aztec and Mayan societies were highly hierarchical in their class system. However it was not until the conquest by the Spanish that this sentiment of ‘otherness’ gained a racial component.

Mexico’s development, which was slow until the turn of the twentieth century, as a society and a state, coincided with the other two waves of globalization. The building of the Mexican state and the consolidation of the elite had coincided in time with the blossoming of the second wave of globalization during the Industrial Revolution of the United States and Western Europe. However, at each wave of globalization, the interests of those in power have systematically and consistently repressed the needs and desires of the have-nots of Mexico.

Since the third wave of development that is said to have begun following the Second World War, Mexico has represented an important rising star in the globalized world order. Mexico’s hegemonic PRI party sought to insert the country into the new globalizing world for its own benefit. Later in the century Mexico saw important reforms in the opening up of its longtime hegemonic one-party rule in the 1970’s and continued long-term economic growth despite a number of economic crises.

In 1994 and 1995 Mexico entered into a major trade partnership with the U.S. and Canada through the North American Free Trade Agreement. This trade agreement symbolizes many of the successes of globalization and, importantly, many of its deficiencies. NAFTA, from a Mexican standpoint, has not contributed to the kind of economic development and growth that was promised during the intense debate and push by U.S. diplomats prior to the agreement. Surrounding this agreement is the issue of exportation of production by U.S. companies in search of lower cost labor production, the biggest example of this being the *maquiladora* assembly plants that sprung up along the Mexican Border States at this time. Characterized by low wages and long hours, this industrial development increased interconnectedness of Mexico on the regional level during the latest wave of globalization and has led to further ‘othering’ within sectors of its society.

The issue of ‘otherness’ for Mexico within today’s globalized world surrounds the challenges inherent in being a developing country from the Global South, and in particular within Latin America. The development of Mexico has been both overshadowed by its neighbor to the North in the issues depicted above, and at the same time it has faced an identity crisis—torn between identifying itself with the rest of Latin America and continuing to identify itself with the U.S.

So where does this leave the prospects for Mexico in today’s globalizing world? Development efforts of the state are making major strides towards greater inclusion of historically marginalized groups, towards greater equality through wealth distribution programs such as Oportunidades and even towards a more sovereign and powerful

position within the world arena (Mexico takes over the leadership position of the G20 this year).⁵

Mexico is in many ways the product of globalization as well as its own rich and diverse history. It is clear that the dilemmas and challenges of the past—of otherness and of inequality, of subjugation and marginalization—continue to be present in today’s increasingly globalized Mexican society.

The challenge of inequality has deep roots in Mexican history but scholars like Jorge Casteñeda and Aguilar Camín depict a hopeful future for this turning point for Mexico.

“Mexico is a prisoner of its History. Inherited ideas, sentiments and interests keep Mexico from swiftly moving to the pace yearned for by its citizens. The history that has been logged in our national psyche—in its laws, its institutions, its habits and fantasies—obstructs the country’s future trajectory. It has been famously observed that politicians are held hostage by dead economists. Similarly, public life in Mexico is held hostage by the decisions of its dead Presidents, by the political inheritance of statism and corporatism that we call “revolutionary nationalism” and is sheltered by the mythical acronym—PRI—that today is both a minority party and the reigning political culture... Something greater is needed to pull the country out of its existential and political stagnation. A new national epic is needed whose axis cannot be separated from the welfare of the majority, the promise of employment, health, social mobility and

⁵ Reid, Michael. *Forgotten Continent: The Battle for Latin America's Soul*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009. 212-233. Print.

security—a horizon of modernity that contemplates the rise of a solid middle class that includes a majority of the people. What is required is an epic of prosperity, democracy and equality that, as of now, is not clearly outlined anywhere.”⁶

These sentiments on the current challenges to Mexico’s political and economic development can easily be applied to the challenges of progress at the global level.

The world is progressing. We are progressing towards an ever-evolving image of what the future holds. These ideas are propagated not only by the best, and the brightest but also the wealthiest and the most powerful. “Progress,” by definition, suggests itself to be a good thing. History tells us how far we have come and science tells us how far we can go. But our moral ground needs to be given a reality check in order stay on track with true universal progress and away from a progress for the few and stagnation for the rest.

⁶ Castaneda, Jorge, and Aguilar Camin. "A Future for Mexico." Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, n.d. Web. 29 Apr 2012.

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