

# Politics in Mexico

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*The Democratic Consolidation*

Fifth Edition

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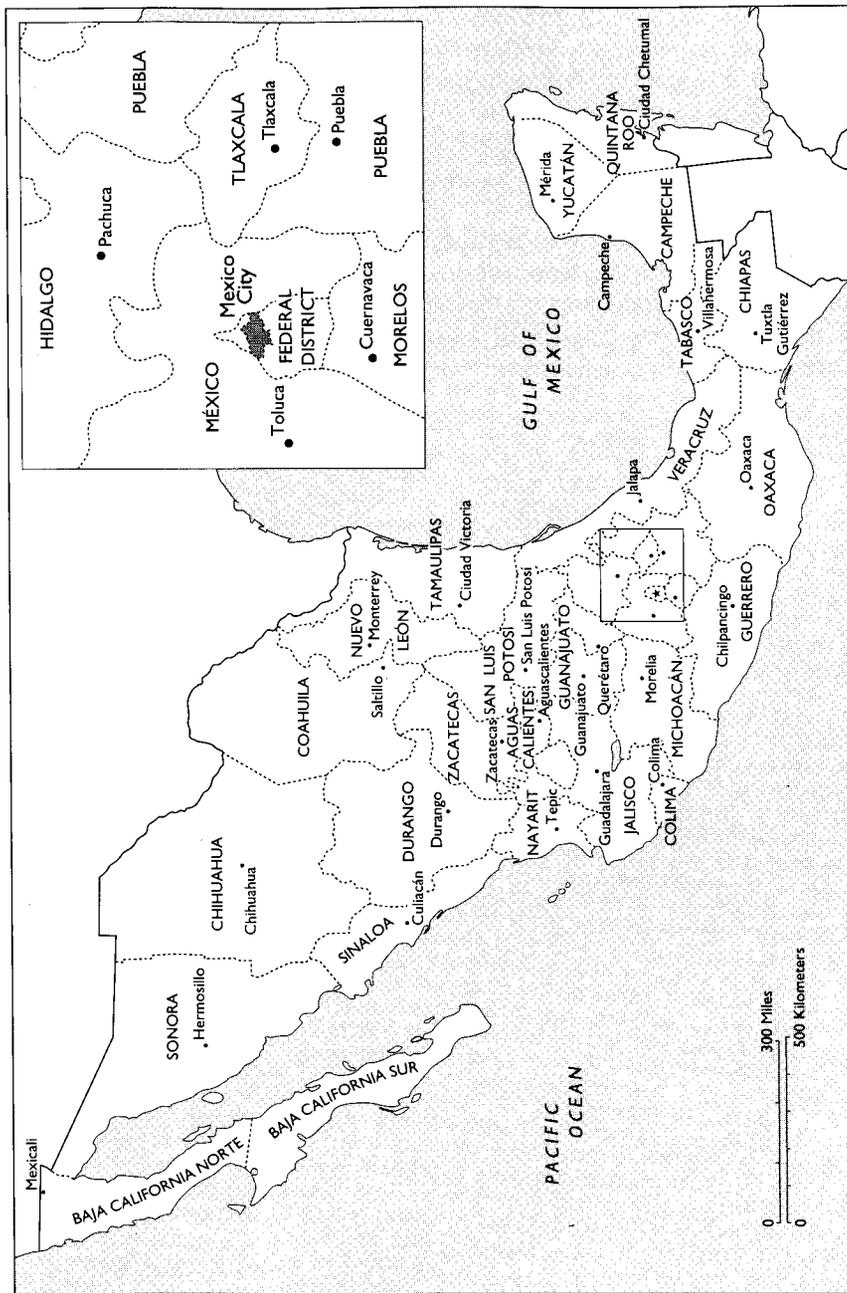
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Mexico General Political Map, States and Capitals

# 1

## Mexico in Comparative Context

The contours of political development in modern Mexico often appear clearer and more pronounced when viewed as the products of tension among three key ideological traditions—namely, corporatism, pluralism, and Marxism. For its advocates, corporatism offers a humanistic alternative to both interest group liberalism identified with the United States and other western democracies, and communism as practiced in China, Cuba, North Korea, or the former Soviet union.

GEORGE W. GRAYSON, *Mexico: From Corporatism to Pluralism?*

An exploration of a society's politics is, by nature, all-encompassing. Political behavior and political processes are a reflection of a culture's evolution, involving history, geography, values, ethnicity, religion, internal and external relationships, and much more. As social scientists, we often pursue topics of current political interest, ignoring the medley of influences from the past.

Naturally, each person tends to examine another culture's characteristics, political or otherwise, from his or her own society's perspective. This is not only a product of ethnocentrism, thinking of one's society as superior to the next person's, for which we Americans are often criticized, but also a question of familiarity. Although we often are woefully ignorant of our own society's political processes and institutions, being more familiar with the mythology than actual practice, we become accustomed to our way of doing things in our own country.<sup>1</sup>

I will attempt to explain Mexican politics, building on this natural proclivity to relate most comfortably to our own political customs, by drawing on implied as well as explicit comparisons with the United States. This comparison is further enhanced by the fact that Mexico and the United States have been joined together in a free-trade agreement since January 1994. We also are products of a more comprehensive western European civilization, into which other traditions are gradually making significant inroads. Some

critics suggest that we have relied too exclusively on Western traditions in our education; nevertheless they are unquestionably the primary source of our political values. Thus our familiarity with political processes, if it extends at all beyond United States boundaries, is typically that of the western European nations and England.<sup>2</sup> For recent immigrants, of course, that heritage is different. Again, where possible, comparisons will be made with some of these political systems in order to place the Mexican experience in a larger context. Finally, Mexico is a Third World country, a category into which most countries fall, and hence its characteristics deserve to be compared with characteristics we might encounter elsewhere in the Third World.

### WHY COMPARE POLITICAL CULTURES?

The comparison of political systems is an exciting enterprise. One reason that the study of politics in different societies and time periods has intrigued inquiring minds for generations is the central question, Which political system is best? Identifying the "best" political system, other than its merely being the one with which you are most familiar and consequently comfortable, is, of course, a subjective task. It depends largely on what you want out of your political system. The demands made on a political system and its ability to respond efficiently and appropriately to them are one way of measuring its effectiveness.

Throughout the twentieth century, perhaps the major issue attracting the social scientist, the statesperson, and the average, educated citizen is which political system contributes most positively to economic growth and societal development. From an ideological perspective, much of international politics since World War II has focused primarily on that issue. As Peter Klarén concluded,

U.S. policymakers searched for arguments to counter Soviet claims that Marxism represented a better alternative for development in the Third World than did Western capitalism. At the same time U.S. scholars began to study in earnest the causes of underdevelopment. In particular scholars asked why the West had developed and why most of the rest of the world had not.<sup>3</sup>

The two political systems most heavily analyzed since 1945 have been democratic capitalism and Soviet-style socialism. Each has its pluses and minuses, depending on individual values and perspectives. Given recent events in eastern Europe and the breakup of the Soviet state, socialism is in decline. Nevertheless, socialism as a model is not yet dead, nor is it likely to

be in the future. Administrators of the socialist model, rather than the weaknesses inherent in the ideology, can always be blamed for its failures. Furthermore, it is human nature to want alternative choices in every facet of life. Politics is just one facet, even if somewhat all-encompassing. The history of humankind reveals a continual competition between alternative political models.

In short, whether one chooses democratic capitalism, a fresh version of socialism, or some other hybrid ideological alternative, societies and citizens will continue to search for the most viable political processes to bring about economic and social benefits. Because most of the earth's peoples are economically underprivileged, they want immediate results. Often, politicians from less fortunate nations seek a solution through emulating wealthier (First World) nations. Mexico's leaders and its populace are no exception to this general pattern.

One of the major issues facing Mexico's leaders is the nature of its capitalist model, and the degree to which Mexico should pursue a strategy of economic development patterned after that of the United States. Since 1988 they have sought to alter many traditional relationships between government and the private sector, increasing the influence of the private sector in an attempt to reverse Mexico's economic crisis and stimulate economic growth. In fact, Mexico received international notice in the 1990s for the level and pace of change under President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.<sup>4</sup>

In public statements and political rhetoric, Salinas called for economic and political modernization. He explicitly incorporated political with economic change, even implying a linkage.<sup>5</sup> Thus, he advocated economic liberalization, which he defined as increased control of the economy by the private sector, more extensive foreign investment, and internationalization of the Mexican economy through expanded trade and formal commercial relationships with the United States and Canada. Simultaneously, Salinas advocated political liberalization, which he defined as including more citizen participation in elections, greater electoral competition, and integrity in the voting process—all features associated with the United States and European liberal political traditions. In reality, he did little to implement democratic change, preferring instead to retain power in the hands of the presidency.

Salinas's successor, Ernesto Zedillo, who took office on December 1, 1994, inherited a political system in transition and an economic situation that shortly turned into a major financial and political crisis. A combination of economic decisions and an unsettled political context led to capital flight and a significant decline in investor confidence in the Mexican economy. Accordingly, Mexico began pursuing a severe austerity program, exceeding even those in the 1980s during a time of severe recession. By 1997, however, Mex-

ican economic indicators showed strong growth, even if those results were not translated into improved income levels for most Mexicans. Investor confidence in Mexico returned. Zedillo continued to pursue an economic liberalization strategy and increase the pace of political reforms compared to his predecessor. Strong doubts about neoliberal economic policies remain from various quarters, however, generating some nationalistic, anti-United States sentiments. Nevertheless, when he left office in 2000, President Zedillo transferred a healthy economy to his successor, the first president in decades to do so. More importantly, he succeeded in creating a competitive electoral arena, administered by autonomous institutional actors, which witnessed the landmark election of Vicente Fox, the first opposition party candidate to defeat the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in a presidential race.

Vicente Fox, a former businessman, and representative of the National Action Party, formed a bipartisan cabinet and aggressively pursued a neoliberal economic model, including closer trade ties with the United States. His actions as president legitimized democratic practices and the rule of law. Mexicans voted for Fox because he represented change, and most importantly, they wanted increased personal security from crime and improvement in their standard of living.<sup>6</sup> The failures of the Fox administration however, have contributed to an increased level of frustration with, and a lack of confidence in, the democratic process. It remains to be seen in the presidential contest of 2006 just how Mexican voters will express their concerns through the candidates and parties they support, how existing parties may react, and what new parties or movements might emerge.

It is hotly debated among social scientists whether a society's political model determines its economic success or whether its economic model produces its political characteristics. Whether capitalism affects the behavior of a political model or whether a political model is essential to successful capitalism leads to the classic chicken-and-egg argument. It may well be a moot point because the processes are interrelated in terms of not only institutional patterns but cultural patterns as well.<sup>7</sup>

The comparative study of politics reveals, to some extent, a more important consideration. If the average Mexican is asked to choose between more political freedom or greater economic growth, as it affects him or her personally, the typical choice is the latter.<sup>8</sup> This is true in other Third World countries too. People with inadequate incomes are much more likely to worry about bread-and-butter issues than about more political freedom. A country's political model becomes paramount, however, when its citizens draw a connection between economic growth (as related to improving their own standard of living) and the political system. If they believe the political system, and not just the leadership itself, is largely responsible for economic

development, it will have important repercussions on their political attitudes and their political behavior. If Mexicans draw such a connection, it will change the nature of their demands on the political leadership and system, and the level and intensity of their participation.<sup>9</sup>

The comparative study of societies provides a framework by which we can measure the advantages and disadvantages of political models as they affect economic growth. Of course, economic growth itself is not the only differentiating consequence. Some political leaders are equally concerned, in some cases more concerned, with social justice. Social justice may be interpreted in numerous ways. One way is to think of it as a means of redistributing wealth. For example, we often assume that economic growth—the percentage by which a society's economic productivity expands in a given time period—automatically conveys equal benefits to each member of the society. More attention is paid to the level of growth than to its beneficiaries. It is frequently the case that the lowest-income groups benefit least from economic growth. This has been true in the United States, but is even more noticeable in Third World and Latin American countries. In Latin American countries, a fourth of national income goes to only 5 percent of the population, and 40 percent goes to the richest 10 percent. "Only two out of ten individuals think distribution is just or very just, while the remaining eight say it is unjust or very unjust."<sup>10</sup> There are periods, of course, when economic growth produces greater equality in income distribution.<sup>11</sup> Per capita income figures (national income divided by total population) can be deceiving

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Social justice: a concept focusing on each citizen's quality of life and the equal treatment of all citizens.

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because they are averages. In Mexico, for example, even during the remarkable sustained growth of the 1950s and 1960s, the real purchasing power (ability to buy goods and services) of the working classes actually declined.<sup>12</sup> Higher-income groups increased their proportion of national income from the 1970s through the 1990s, decades of economic crisis, while that of the lower-income groups fell.<sup>13</sup> This pattern has been further exacerbated since early 1995. Although the percentage of Mexicans who are not poor has remained at approximately 57 percent of the population from 1984 to 1999, the number of Mexicans who have fallen into the category of extreme poverty has nearly doubled, from 16 percent in 1992 to 28 percent in 1999.<sup>14</sup> The importance of social justice to Mexicans, defined as redistribution of wealth, is illustrated by the fact that one-fourth of Mexicans surveyed in 1998 consider it to be the second most important task of democracy.<sup>15</sup>

Another way of interpreting social justice is on the basis of social equality. This does not mean that all people are equal in ability but that each person should be treated equally under the law. Social justice also implies a leveling of differences in opportunities to succeed, giving each person equal access to society's resources. Accordingly, its allocation of resources can be a measure of a political system.

The degree to which a political system protects the rights of all citizens is another criterion by which political models can be compared. In Mexico, where human rights abuses are a serious problem, the evidence is unequivocal that the poor are much more likely to be the victims than are members of the middle and upper classes. This is why the arrest of Raúl Salinas, brother of the former president, as the alleged mastermind of a political assassination, was such a dramatic departure from past practices. This also helps to explain why only a fifth of all Mexicans have any confidence in their court system.<sup>16</sup> The same can be said about many societies, but there are sharp differences in degree between highly industrialized nations and Third World nations.<sup>17</sup>

From a comparative perspective, then, we may want to test the abilities of political systems to reduce both economic and social inequalities. It is logical to believe that among the political models in which the population has a significant voice in making decisions, the people across the board obtain a larger share of the societal resources. On the other hand, it is possible to argue, as in the case of Cuba, that an authoritarian model can impose more widespread, immediate equality in the distribution of resources, even in the absence of economic growth, while reducing the standard of living for formerly favored groups.

Regarding social justice and its relationship to various political models, leaders also are concerned with the distribution of wealth and resources *among* nations, not just within an individual nation. The choice of a political model, therefore, often involves international considerations. Such considerations are particularly important to countries that achieved independence in the twentieth century, especially after 1945. These countries want to achieve not only economic but also political and cultural independence. Mexico, like most of Latin America, achieved political independence in the early nineteenth century, but it found itself in the shadow of an extremely powerful neighbor. Its proximity to the United States eventually led to its losing half of its territory and many natural resources.

A third means to compare political models is their ability to remake a citizenry, to alter political, social, and economic attitudes. A problem faced by most nations, especially in their infancy, is building a sense of nationalism. A sense of nationalism is difficult to erase, even after years of domina-

tion by another power, as in the case of the Soviet Union and the Baltic republics, but it is equally difficult to establish, especially in societies incorporating diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious heritages.<sup>18</sup> The political process can be used to mold citizens, to bring about a strong sense of national unity, while lessening or dampening local and regional loyalties. The acceptability of a political model, its very legitimacy among the citizenry, is a measure of its effectiveness in developing national sensibilities. Mexico, which had an abiding sense of regionalism, struggled for many decades to achieve a strong sense of national unity and pride.<sup>19</sup> In fact, a recent analysis by the Inter-American Development Bank argues that while Latin America ranks low in an index of ethnolinguistic fragmentation (level of ethnic and linguistic differences) compared with Africa, East Asia, and Asia, it is geographically (based on ecozones) the most fragmented region in the world. As the Bank argues, culture usually differs widely in different ecozones, and therefore geographic fragmentation is an important dimension of social conflict.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Mexico did not have sharp religious and ethnic differences, characteristic of other cultures such as India, to overcome.

Many scholars have suggested that the single most important issue governing relationships among nations in the twenty-first century will be that of the haves versus the have nots.<sup>21</sup> In fact, Mexico's linkage to the United States and Canada in a free-trade agreement highlights this point. One of the arguments against such an agreement was the impossibility of eliminating trade barriers between a nation whose per capita wage is one-seventh of the per capita wage of the other nation.<sup>22</sup> One of the arguments for such an agreement was that it could temper this disparity. More importantly, it might reduce the increasing numbers of Mexicans seeking work in the United States, which is why President Fox has proposed a guest worker program to address the controversial issue of immigration reform.

The dichotomy between rich and poor nations is likely to produce immense tensions in the future; yet the problems that both sets of nations face are remarkably similar. As the 1990 *World Values Survey* illustrates, an extraordinary movement in the coincidence of some national beliefs is afoot, for example, in the realm of ecology. This survey, which covers forty countries, discovered that from 1981 to 1990 an enormous change in concern about environmental issues occurred in poor as well as rich nations. Other problems that most countries share—regardless of their standard of living or political system—include availability of natural resources, notably energy; production of foodstuffs, especially grains; level of inflation; size of national debt; access to social services, including health care; inadequate housing; and maldistribution of wealth.<sup>23</sup>

Another reason that examining political systems from a comparative perspective is useful is personal. As a student of other cultures you can learn more about your own political system by reexamining attitudes and practices long taken for granted. In the same way a student of foreign languages comes to appreciate more clearly the syntax and structure of his or her native tongue and the incursions of other languages into its constructions and meanings, so too does the student of political systems gain. Comparisons not only enhance your knowledge of the political system in which you live, but are likely to increase your appreciation of particular features.

Examining a culture's politics implicitly delves into its values and attitudes. As we move quickly into an increasingly interdependent world, knowledge of other cultures is essential to being well educated. Comparative knowledge, however, allows us to test our values against those of other cultures. How do ours measure up? Do other sets of beliefs have applicability in our society? Are they more or less appropriate to our society? Why? For example, one of the reasons for the considerable misunderstanding between the United States and Mexico is a differing view of the meaning of political democracy. Many Mexicans attach features to the word *democracy* that are not attached to its definition in the United States.<sup>24</sup> For example, most Americans conceptualize democracy as liberty. Mexicans, however, reflect no consensus, giving equal weight to equality and, to a somewhat lesser extent, progress and respect. Problems arise when people do not realize they are using a different vocabulary when discussing the same issue.

Another reason for comparing political cultures is to dispel the notion that Western industrialized nations have all the solutions. It is natural to think of the exchange of ideas favoring the most technologically developed nations, including Japan, Germany, and the United States. But solutions do not rely on technologies alone; in fact, most rely on human skills. In other words, how do people do things? This is true whether we are analyzing politics or increasing sales in the marketplace. Technologies can improve the efficiency, quality, and output of goods and services, yet their application raises critical questions revolving around values, attitudes, and interpersonal relationships. For example, the Japanese have a management philosophy governing employee and employer relations. It has nothing to do with technology. Many observers believe, however, that the philosophy in operation produces better human relationships and higher economic productivity. Accordingly, it is touted as an alternative model in the workplace. The broader the scope of human understanding, the greater the potential for identifying and solving human-made problems.

Finally, as a student new to the study of other cultures, you may be least interested in the long-term contributions such knowledge can make for its

own sake. Yet your ability to explain differences and similarities between and among political systems and, more important, their consequences is essential to the growth of political knowledge. Although not always the case, it is generally true that the more you know about something and the more you understand its behavior, the more you can explain its behavior. This type of knowledge allows social scientists to create new theories of politics and political behavior, some of which can be applied to their own political system as well as to other cultures. It also allows—keeping in mind the limitations of human behavior—some level of prediction. In other words, given certain types of institutions and specific political conditions, social scientists can predict that political behavior is likely to follow certain patterns.

### SOME INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MEXICAN SYSTEM

We suggested earlier that social scientists set for themselves the task of formulating some broad questions about the nature of a political system and its political processes. A variety of acceptable approaches can be used to examine political systems individually or comparatively. Some approaches focus on relationships among political institutions and the functions each institution performs. Other approaches give greater weight to societal values and attitudes and the consequences these have for political behavior and the institutional features characterizing a political system. Still other approaches, especially in the last third of the twentieth century, place greater emphasis on economic relationships and the influence of social or income groups on political decisions. Taking this last approach a step further, many analysts of Third World countries, including Mexico, concentrate on international economic influences and their effect on domestic political structures.

Choosing any one approach to explain the nature of political behavior has advantages in describing a political system. In my own experience, however, I have never become convinced that one approach offers an adequate explanation. I believe that an examination of political processes or functions entails the fewest prejudices and that by pursuing how and where these functions occur, one uncovers the contributions of other approaches.<sup>25</sup> An eclectic approach to politics, incorporating culture, history, structures, geography, and external relations, provides the most adequate and accurate vision of contemporary political behavior. Such an eclectic approach, combining the advantages of each, will be used in this book.

In the past, the study of Mexican politics provoked continual debate about which features have had the greatest impact on political behavior and,

more commonly, to what degree Mexico was an authoritarian model.<sup>26</sup> Today, however, the debate has shifted to analyzing Mexico as an example of democratic and neoliberal, capitalist transformation. The fundamental political questions in this new era are: To what degree has Mexico achieved a democratic political system? Has it gone beyond an electoral democracy? Has it shed many of its semi-authoritarian features? Has it improved the distribution of economic and social benefits? And perhaps most important of all, are democratic beliefs and practices sufficiently entrenched that Mexico will remain a democracy in the future?

For the last seven decades, Mexican politics could best be described as semi-authoritarian—a hybrid of political liberalism and authoritarianism that gave it a special quality or flavor—well documented institutionally in its 1917 constitution, currently in effect. This is also the reason why President Fox asked the Mexican congress in 2001 to reexamine the entire document to consider removing and revising terminology that no longer represents the current state of political affairs. Prior to July 2000, Mexico's political model also was characterized by corporatism, a formal relationship between selected groups or institutions and the government or state, and by *presidencialismo*, the concept that most political power lies in the hands of the president and all that is good or bad in government policy stems from the president.

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Corporatism: a formal relationship between selected groups or institutions and the government or state.

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Today, Mexico can be fairly labeled a democracy, if democracy is defined narrowly as a competitive political system, in which two or more parties compete in an open and fair electoral process and exchange control over national political leadership. Mexico dramatically achieved this form of democracy with the electoral victory of Vicente Fox in July 2000. Mexico has moved toward a more difficult and influential stage in this process since 2001, one deeply embedded in institutional and structural conditions inherited from the past.

As theorists of Latin American democracy have noted, to move beyond the first step of electoral democracy, countries need also to accomplish other significant goals, including legitimizing the legal system, maintaining civilian supremacy over the military, protecting human rights, and achieving social justice.<sup>27</sup>

Mexico presently is in the throes of a wholesale upheaval in its traditional political practices. Thus, if we are highlighting its most important fea-

tures, these features, by necessity, are also in transition. In the recent past, Mexico featured a unique, semi-authoritarian system, unique because it allowed for much greater access to the decision-making process and, more importantly, its decision makers changed frequently. Under this system, its leadership remained largely in the hands of the executive branch, especially the president, who was limited to a six-year term. The presidency retains this important structural limitation, an individual can serve only one term in the presidency.

The strength of the presidency specifically, and the executive branch generally, continued well into the 1990s, resulting in a weak legislative and ineffectual judicial branch. Increasing electoral competition at the national level brought opposition party influence into the legislative branch, and by 1997, the Chamber of Deputies, Mexico's lower house, was in the hands of opposition parties. By 1998, a majority of Mexicans believed that congress was more important than the president for a functioning democracy. Nevertheless, the presidency remains the dominant political institution in Mexico, symbolically and practically.

As Mexico moves into the twenty-first century, federalism and decentralization replace semi-authoritarianism as a dominant feature of the political landscape.<sup>28</sup> Beginning under President Zedillo, the presidency

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Federalism: a political concept that describes rights and obligations shared by national versus state and local governments.

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experienced a gradual reduction of its power, both intentionally and unintentionally. President Fox accentuated that pattern during his administration, stressing the importance of other national institutions, notably the Supreme Court.<sup>29</sup> For example, he referred a serious dispute over state versus federal designations of the Federal Electoral Institute's representatives in Yucatán to the courts, rather than intervening directly in what was essentially a partisan, political matter, an approach that previous presidents likely would have pursued.

Decentralization has affected Mexico in two ways. First, at the state level, the PRI, which dominated Mexican national politics from 1929 to 2000, still retains approximately half (56 percent) of the governorships. Given the fact that the federal government exercises a dominant position in the revenue-collection process, it maintains potential fiscal control over the states. Some governors, who are jockeying for control over the PRI's national future, sought to oppose the Fox administration at every turn, creating various conflicts between state and national authorities.

Decentralization has another, even more complex face. As Mexico takes on participatory structural features in the political arena, it has generated alterations within institutions and organizations. For example, because of its loss of the presidency, various factions within the PRI are now struggling for control over the party. These factions represent different visions of the party's platform and internal structure. The National Action Party (PAN) is not immune to these same changes, largely because President Fox was an outsider who did not represent the interests of PAN's traditional leadership. If the PAN wishes to capitalize on Fox's personal victory, and increase its grass-roots strength, it too will have to undergo significant changes.

Similar changes are also occurring among other established institutions, such as the Chamber of Deputies and the Supreme Court. Both institutions are expanding their influence and changing their established roles, which have internal consequences and affect their relationship to other institutions, as well.

A second structural feature of a democratic Mexico is the rise of new political actors, or the altered influence of previously important actors. Established institutions, such as the Catholic Church and the armed forces, are expanding their roles and filling a vacuum in the political space created by the departure of PRI from the presidency, and by the democratization of the 1990s. Their new relationship to the state is complemented by the rise of civic and human rights organizations, some of which are likely to fill the role traditionally played by interest groups in other democratic societies.

The growing importance of nongovernmental organizations, autonomous interest groups, and independent institutions, such as the Catholic Church, has altered, but not yet entirely eliminated, another traditional feature of Mexican politics prior to 2000, *corporatism*. Corporatism in this political context refers to how groups in society relate to the government or, more broadly, the state; the process through which they channel their demands to the government; and how the government responds to their demands.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps no characteristic of the Mexican political model has undergone more change in the 1990s than corporatism. In the United States, any introductory course in U.S. politics devotes some time to interest groups and how they present their demands to the political system. Mexico, which inherited the concept of corporatism from Spain, instituted in the 1930s a corporate relationship between the state and various important interest or social groups, primarily under the presidency of General Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940). This means that the government took the initiative to strengthen various groups, creating umbrella organizations to house them and through which their demands could be presented. The government placed itself in an advantageous position by representing various interest groups, especially those

most likely to support opposing points of view. The state attempted, and succeeded over a period of years, in acting as the official arbiter of these interests. It generally managed to make various groups loyal to it in return for representing their interests.

The essence of the corporatist relationship is political reciprocity. In return for official recognition and official association with the government or government-controlled organizations, these groups can expect some consideration of their interests on the part of the state. They can also expect the state to protect them from their natural political enemies. For example, labor unions hope the state will favor their interests over the interests of powerful businesses.<sup>31</sup> Businesses, however, were never part of the formal corporatist system.

The political victory of the National Action Party in the presidential race of 2000, however, breaks down the linkages that make corporatism possible. The most important of these relationships was the ability of the Institutional Revolutionary Party to use the state to provide economic rewards to favored individuals and groups, especially by appointing them to political posts. During PRI's long reign, essentially no separation existed between the state and the political party. Although President Zedillo himself altered this pattern somewhat in the last few years of his administration, Fox's government has provided clearer evidence of the separation.

Corporatist elements remain, however, especially in those states and municipalities where the PRI has retained control, thus providing at the state and local level a similar continuity it once guaranteed at the national level. The competitive nature of politics, and the increasing inroads of economic development, continue to erode the existing patterns.

The final structural feature of the Mexican model is the presence and level of influence exercised by international capital and, since the 1980s, international financial agencies. As was the case among so many of its fellow Latin American nations, the impact of foreign investment on macroeconomic policy, and on the lives of ordinary Mexican citizens, became paramount in the 1980s, and again to an even greater degree in 1995, when Mexico suffered its worst recession since the worldwide depression of the 1930s. The dependence of Mexico on outside capital and on foreign trade has exercised an important effect on policy making, if not to the same degree on how decisions are taken.<sup>32</sup> It has even been clearly demonstrated that links between international financial agencies and Mexican governmental institutions contributed importantly to the dramatic, economic ideological shift in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>33</sup> Fox has committed his government to increased economic ties with the United States and Canada, and appointed a chief cabinet officer with two decades of experience at the

World Bank. Mexico also has specifically increased its trade ties with the United States, making it more sensitive to the vagaries of the U.S. economy. Such influences raise significant issues of national sovereignty and autonomy.

The structural features of Mexico's political model—electoral democracy, incipient federalism, the rise of autonomous actors, and the influence of international capital—are complemented by a dual political heritage incorporated into the political culture. The political culture is dominated by democratic attitudes, but strong strains of authoritarian beliefs remain ingrained among many Mexicans. It is contradictory: modern and traditional. Mexico, as the late Nobel Prize winner Octavio Paz argued, is built from two different populations, rural versus urban and traditional versus modern.<sup>34</sup> It bears the burden of many historical experiences, precolonial, colonial, independence, and revolutionary. These experiences produced a political culture that admires essential democratic values, such as citizen participation, yet many remain attracted to an authoritarian model. In a comparative study of Chile, Costa Rica, and Mexico conducted shortly before the electoral victory of Vicente Fox, Mexico's preference for democracy remained low, as suggested in Table 1-1.<sup>35</sup> Undoubtedly more Mexicans prefer democracy to authoritarianism since Fox's victory, but these figures suggest both how recent and how potentially tenuous are Mexicans' beliefs, and those of other Latin American citizens, who have only recently undergone a democratic transformation. In 2004, a United Nations survey found that only 43 percent of Latin Americans fully support democracy.<sup>36</sup>

Place and historical experience have also contributed to another feature of mass political culture: a psychology of dependence.<sup>37</sup> The proximity of the United States, which shares a border with Mexico nearly two thousand miles long, and the extreme disparities between the two in economic wealth and size tend to foster an inferiority complex in many Mexicans, whether they

**Table 1-1** Preference for Democracy in Latin America

Country	Support for Democracy Minus Support for Authoritarianism (response in percentages)
Costa Rica	65
Chile	5
Mexico	4

*Note:* In Mexico, 50 percent preferred democracy, 26 percent either, and 20 percent authoritarian. In Costa Rica, the figures were 80 percent, 9 percent, and 6 percent, respectively. In Chile, the responses were 50 percent, 28 percent, and 17 percent.

*Source:* Roderic Ai Camp. "Democracy Through Mexican Lenses," *The Washington Quarterly*, 22(3) (Summer, 1999), 240.

operate in the worlds of business, academia, technology, or politics. The economic, cultural, and artistic penetration of the United States into Mexico carries with it other values foreign to its domestic political heritage. Psychologically and culturally, Mexicans must cope with these influences, most of which are indirect, often invisible. A strong sense of Mexican nationalism, especially in relation to its political model, is expressed in part as a defensive mechanism against United States influences. Underlying this defensive mechanism, however, are fundamental beliefs about many issues, including democracy, which are distinctly Mexican.

### MEXICO'S SIGNIFICANCE IN A COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

From a comparative perspective, Mexico provides many valuable insights into politics and political behavior. The feature of Mexico that has most intrigued students of comparative politics in the past is the stability of its political system.<sup>38</sup> Although challenged seriously by military and civilian factions in 1923, 1927, and 1929, its political structure and leadership prevailed for most of this century, at least since 1930—an accomplishment unmatched by any other Third World country. Even among industrialized nations like Italy, Germany, and Japan, such longevity is remarkable. The phenomenon leads to such questions as, What enabled the stability? What made the Mexican model unique? Was it the structure of the model? Was it the political culture? Did it have something to do with the country's proximity to another leader of political continuity? Or with the values and behavior of the people?

We know from other studies of political stability that a degree of political legitimacy accompanies even a modicum of support for a political model. Social scientists are interested in political legitimacy and political stability each for its own sake, but they assume, with considerable evidence, that some relationship exists between economic development and political stability. It is misleading to think that the characteristics of one system can be successfully transferred to another; still, it is useful to ascertain which may be more or less relevant to accomplishing specific, political goals.

Mexico also has attracted considerable international interest because it was a one party-dominant system encountering only limited opposition from 1929 through 1988, the year in which a splinter group from the official party, supported by long-standing parties and groups on the left, ran a highly successful campaign. Mexico's system is unusual in that the antecedent of the PRI, the National Revolutionary Party (Partido Nacional Revolu-

cionario, the PNR), did not bring the political leadership to power. Rather, the leadership established the party as a vehicle to *remain* in power; the PRI was founded and controlled by the government bureaucracy. This had long-term effects on the nature of the party itself, and on its importance to policy making.<sup>39</sup> In this sense, the PRI was unlike the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, whose death in 1991 spelled the end of Communist leadership in the successor states. The PRI, because it did not produce Mexico's leadership, as do the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States, was much more tangential to political power. As the Mexican model continued to evolve along democratic lines, the party's function, and consequently its importance, grew significantly. Although it lost its first presidential race in 2000 and suffered sharp divisions among its leadership, the party continues to thrive at the local level, winning back state governorships and municipalities from PAN and the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD).

A third reason that Mexico's political system intrigues outside observers has been its ability to subordinate military authorities to civilian control. Mexico, like most other Latin American countries, endured a century when violence became an accepted tool of the political game. Such acceptance makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to eliminate the military's large and often decisive political role. Witness many Latin American countries;<sup>40</sup> one has only to look at Argentina and Chile during the 1970s and 1980s. No country south of Mexico has achieved its extended *civilian* supremacy. Rather, in many Latin American countries where civilian leadership is once again in ascendancy, their dominance is tenuous at best. This is precisely why theorists of Latin American democracy have included civilian supremacy over the armed forces as a component of a functional democracy.

Mexico, therefore, is a unique case study in Third World civil-military relations. What produced civilian supremacy there? Is the condition found elsewhere? A confluence of circumstances and policies gradually succeeded in putting civilian control incrementally in place. Some involved the special characteristics of the system itself, including the creation of a national political party. Some are historical, the most important of which is the Mexican Revolution of 1910, which led to the development of a popular army whose generals governed Mexico in the 1920s and 1930s, and who themselves initiated the concept of civilian control.<sup>41</sup> As pluralization increases, many of the features that sustained the relationship prior to 2000 are disappearing. It remains to be seen whether those changes will alter the traditional pattern.

A fourth reason for studying Mexico is the singular relationship it has developed with the dominant religious institution, the Catholic Church. Throughout much of Latin America, the Catholic Church has been one of the

important corporate actors. For significant historical reasons in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Mexico's leadership suppressed and then isolated itself from the Catholic hierarchy and even in some cases the Catholic religion.<sup>42</sup> The Catholic Church has often played a political role in Latin American societies and currently has the potential to exercise considerable political and social influence. A study of church-state relations in Mexico offers a unique perspective on how the church was removed from the corporatist structure and the implications of this autonomy for a politically influential institution. It is readily apparent that the church performed a significant task in bringing electoral democracy to Mexico. It is equally apparent that it has become a vocal critic of selected government policies.<sup>43</sup>

A fifth reason for examining Mexico in a comparative political context is the opportunity to view the impact of the United States, a First World country, on a Third World country. No comparable geographic relationship obtains anywhere else in the world: Two countries that share a long border exhibit great disparities in wealth. Mexico provides not only a test case for those who view Latin America as dependent on external economic forces but also an unparalleled opportunity to look at the possible *political* and *cultural* influences and consequences of a major power.<sup>44</sup> A recent survey of citizens in Mexico and the United States, which explored a series of political and social attitudes, suggests the importance of cross-national influences along the border.<sup>45</sup>

The relationship is not one way, but instead is asymmetrical.<sup>46</sup> The United States exercises or can exercise more influence over Mexico than vice versa. This does not mean that Mexico is the passive partner. It, too, exercises influence, and in many respects its influence is growing. Because of European civilization's influence on our culture, we have long studied the political models of England and the Continent. Our obsession with the Soviet Union exaggerated our focus on Europe. As Latino and other immigrant cohorts grow larger in the United States, our knowledge of the Mexican culture will become far more relevant to understanding *contemporary political behavior* in the United States than anything we might learn from contemporary Europe.

A sixth reason to explore the Mexican political model is its experiences since 1989 with economic liberalization. One of the issues that has fascinated social scientists for many years, but especially since the downfall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new economic and political models in eastern Europe, is the linkage between economic and political liberalization. What does the Mexican case suggest about its strategy of concentrating on opening its markets, which then may create conditions favorable to

political development? Indeed, is there a causal linkage between economic and political liberalization? If so, what lessons can be offered by the Mexican transition?<sup>47</sup>

A seventh reason Mexico may offer some useful comparisons is the transition taking place between national and local political authorities. Long dominated by a national executive branch in both the decision-making process and the allocation of resources, Mexico has witnessed, since the first opposition-party victory at the state level in 1989, an increasing pattern of decentralization and deconcentration of political control at the state and local level, as the National Action Party and the Democratic Revolutionary Party won more elections.<sup>48</sup> Now that Mexico has evolved into a three-party system on the national level, and the National Action Party controls the executive branch, how is it responding to PRI- and PRD-controlled local and state governments? How are these patterns affecting the process of governance, as distinct from electoral competition? The potential implications of such change from the bottom up offer many insights into structural political relationships in Mexico and the rise of federalism.

Finally, most scholars believe that Mexico's path along a political transition to democracy differed from many other countries in the 1980s and 1990s. For example, Steve Morris has argued in his cogent analysis of recent political scholarship that Mexico's democratic reforms occurred over a lengthy period. The incumbent party permitted, indeed sometimes initiated, institutional changes in the electoral process. These processes in turn encouraged opposition parties to mobilize their supporters. Second, political parties played a crucial role in the Mexican transformation. These parties operated within the electoral context created by a one-party monopoly. Although that electoral system generated peculiar characteristics within the opposition parties' structures, making them less flexible than would be the case in a typical competitive electoral arena, the parties were able to survive and successfully initiate and accomplish system reforms, allowing them ultimately to defeat the governing party. Third, Mexico's transformation occurred from the bottom up, in which state and local forces provided a firm grass-roots base for national political change. The growth of opposition-party control at the municipal level trained a new generation of leadership, altered voter behavior and partisan support, and increased demands for the decentralization of power.<sup>49</sup>

Mexico presently is shifting from a transition to democracy to a complex process of consolidation or deepening of democratic patterns of behavior, including fresh institutional relationships among the branches of government. This consolidation process raises questions about the account-

ability of leadership, the legitimacy of democracy in meeting citizen expectations, and their respect for opposing parties and actors.

Definitions of consolidation and democratic deepening abound. In the Mexican context, the clearest presentation of these two terms has been offered by Steven Barracca. Barracca suggests that consolidation refers exclusively to "a low probability of democratic breakdown. More specifically, I suggest that a democratic regime can be considered consolidated when a political system is free of factors that can be demonstrated to *clearly* and *directly* lead to a return to non-democratic rule."<sup>50</sup> Most definitions of this term are much broader and more ambiguous. Widely offered criteria for testing the broader definitions of democratic consolidation include such variables as the level of socioeconomic equality; the behavior, structure, and role of institutions; the routine practice of democratic politics; and the citizenry's view of the democracy as legitimate. Many of these characteristics have been criticized by students of recently democratically transformed societies, including Russia, as being far too demanding.<sup>51</sup>

The deepening of democracy in Mexico involves numerous tasks. These include establishment of the rule of law, strengthening of the federal judiciary, campaign finance reform, expansion of other actors, decentralization of decision-making, and increased accountability across institutions. The degree to which Mexico has implemented these changes, and the difficulties it has encountered, can be compared with the experiences of other countries engaged in similar reforms.

## CONCLUSION

To summarize, then, approaching politics from a comparative perspective offers many rewards. It allows us to test political models against one another; it enables us to learn more about ourselves and our own political culture; it offers a means for examining the relationship between political and economic development and the distribution of wealth; and it identifies the common interests of rich and poor nations and what they do to solve their problems.

Scholars have interpreted Mexico's political system in different ways. This book argues that the system is democratic, but is in consolidation; is dominated by a declining presidency, with legislative and judicial branches growing in influence; is built on a contradictory political culture that includes liberal and authoritarian qualities; is characterized by international economic

features embedded in its domestic structures; is affected psychologically and politically by its proximity to the United States; and reflects the growing significance of new actors, including NGOs and state and local governments. Mexico offers unique opportunities for comparative study because of its political continuity and stability, historic one party-dominant system, civil-military relations, unique separation of church and state, peaceful democratic transition, and nearness to a powerful, wealthy neighbor.

In the next chapter, the importance for Mexico of time, place, and historical roots is examined in greater detail and contrasted with the experiences of other countries. Among these elements are its Spanish heritage, the role of the state, nineteenth-century liberalism and positivism, the revolution, and U.S.-Mexican relations.

## NOTES

1. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), 59.
2. Compare, for example, the number of academic course offerings and textbooks available on Europe and European countries with those representing other, especially Third World, regions and societies.
3. Peter Klarén, "Lost Promise: Explaining Latin American Underdevelopment," in *Promise of Development: Theories of Change in Latin America*, ed. Peter Klarén and Thomas J. Bossert (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986), 8.
4. See for example, the glowing statement in the *Washington Post*, that Salinas "has proved to be as radical in his own way as the revolutionaries who galloped over Mexico at the beginning of the century." May 17, 1991.
5. For Salinas's views in English, see the interview "A New Hope for the Hemisphere," *New Perspective Quarterly* 8 (Winter 1991): 8.
6. Roderic Ai Camp, "Citizen Attitudes Toward Democracy and Vicente Fox's Victory in 2000," in *Mexico's Pivotal Democratic Election*, Chappell Lawson and Jorge Domínguez, eds. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 25-46.
7. The clearest presentation of this argument, in brief form, can be found in Gabriel Almond, "Capitalism and Democracy," *PS* 24 (September 1991): 467-73.
8. In the World Values Survey (a collaborative survey of forty countries in 1981 and again in 1990, available in data format from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Ronald Inglehart, Institute for Social Research, directed the North American project), 1990, data from Mexico show that approximately 60 percent of the population chose economic growth as most important, compared with approximately 25 percent who selected increased political participation. Similar results have been repeated in every major survey taken through 2000.
9. On a presidential level, most Mexicans have not yet made the connection, or if they have, it is not significant to their voting. See Jorge Domínguez and James

McCann, "Whither the PRI? Explaining Voter Defection from Mexico's Ruling Party in the 1988 Presidential Elections," paper presented at the Western Political Science Association meeting, March 1991, 23-24. They follow up this argument in "Shaping Mexico's Electoral Arena: The Construction of Partisan Cleavages in the 1988 and 1991 National Elections," *American Political Science Review* 89 (March 1995): 39-40, and in their *Democratizing Mexico: Public Opinion and Electoral Choices* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

10. "Latin American Economies: A Disappointing Performance," *Latin American Economic Policies*, 9 (Fourth Quarter 1999), 2.
11. It has been argued, as a general rule, that as countries achieve advanced industrial economies, greater economic equality will be achieved. See Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), 57. Also see Dan LaBotz's statement that real minimum wages for Mexicans declined 44 percent between 1977 and 1988, in *Mask of Democracy: Labor Suppression in Mexico Today* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 19.
12. Roger D. Hansen, *The Politics of Mexican Development* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971), especially "Trends in Mexican Income Distribution," 72ff.
13. Sidney Weintraub, *A Marriage of Convenience: Relations Between Mexico and the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 36; and Wayne Cornelius, "Foreword," in *The Politics of Economic Restructuring: State-Society Relations and Regime Change in Mexico*, ed. Mario Lorena Cook, Kevin J. Middlebrook and Juan Molinar Horcasitas (La Jolla, Calif.: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, UCSD, 1994), xiv-xv.
14. "Población, pobreza y marginación," *Este País* (April 1999), 15.
15. "Democracy Through Latin American Lenses," Grant, Hewlett Foundation, principal investigator, Roderic Ai Camp, June, 1998.
16. "Democracy Through U.S. and Mexican lenses," Grant, Hewlett Foundation, principal investigator, Roderic Ai Camp, September, 2000.
17. Of course, this is true worldwide. Unfortunately, the problems seem less severe when these groups are the primary victims. Americas Watch, *Implausible Deniability, State Responsibility for Rural Violence in Mexico* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1997), 15-18.
18. Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), 156ff.
19. Frederick Turner, *The Dynamics of Mexican Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968).
20. Within the region, Mexico ranks about in the middle. "The Dangers of Diversity," *Latin American Economic Policies*, 10 (First Quarter 2000), 6.
21. The classic argument for this was presented by Barbara Ward, *The Rich Nations and the Poor Nations* (London: Hamilton, 1962).
22. Jeff Faux, "No: The Biggest Export Will Be U.S. Jobs," *Washington Post Weekly Edition*, May 13-19, 1991, 8.
23. For empirical evidence of these patterns from 1990-1993, see Ronald Inglehart, Miguel Basáñez, and Alejandro Moreno, *Human Values and Beliefs: A*

*Cross-Cultural Sourcebook* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999). For an update from 1999 to 2002, see Ronald Inglehart et al., *Human Beliefs and Values: A Cross-Cultural Sourcebook* (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 2004).

24. See one commissioner's statement that this is a source of bilateral problems in the blue-ribbon Report of the Bilateral Commission on the Future of United States-Mexican Relations, *The Challenge of Interdependence* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1989), 237; these findings are reinforced empirically in Roderic Ai Camp, ed., *Citizen Views of Democracy in Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001).

25. Some of these issues have been examined by Diane E. Davis, *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994); and Viviane Brachet-Márquez, "Explaining Sociopolitical Change in Latin America: The Case of Mexico," *Latin American Research Review* 27 (1992): 91-122.

26. For example, Susan K. Purcell, "Decision-Making in an Authoritarian Regime: Theoretical Implications from a Mexican Case Study," *World Politics* 26 (October 1973): 28-54.

27. Terry Lynn Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America," *Comparative Politics* 23 (October 1990): 1-21.

28. Peter M. Ward and Victoria E. Rodríguez, "New Federalism, Intra-governmental Relations and Co-governance in Mexico," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 31 (1999): 673-710.

29. Kevin Sullivan and Mary Jordan, "Mexican Supreme Court Refuses to Take Back Seat," *Washington Post*, September 10, 2000, A31.

30. Ruth Spalding, "State Power and its Limits: Corporatism in Mexico," *Comparative Political Studies* 14 (July 1981): 139-61.

31. An excellent analysis of this relationship can be found in Ruth Berins Collier, *The Contradictory Alliance: State-Labor Relations and Regime Change in Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California International and Area Studies, 1992).

32. For reactions to the intervention of the International Monetary Fund, see Rick Wills, "The IMF's Economic Role Causes Controversy," *El Financiero International Edition*, October 6, 1997, 8. Fifty-six percent of Mexicans believe that U.S. influence over Mexico is excessive. "Mexico's Economic Situation Survey," *El Norte/Reforma* poll of 1,100 urban Mexicans with a  $\pm 3$  percent margin of error, 1995. See *Dallas Morning News*, November 5, 1995, 3.

33. Roderic Ai Camp, *Mexico's Mandarins: Crafting a Power Elite for the Twenty-first Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); and Sarah Babb, *Global Experts: Economists in Mexico, from Nationalism to Neoliberalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

34. Octavio Paz, *The Other Mexico: A Critique of the Pyramid* (New York: Grove Press, 1972), 45. Paz noted the existence of "one fundamental characteristic of the contemporary situation: the existence of two Mexicos, one modern and the other underdeveloped. This duality is the result of the Revolution and the development that followed it: thus, it is the source of many hopes and, at the same time, of future threats."

35. Roderic Ai Camp, "Democracy through Mexican Lenses," *The Washington Quarterly*, 22, no. 3 (Summer 1999), 240.

36. "Latin America Losing Faith in Democracy," *Los Angeles Times*, April 22, 2004, A3.

37. See Octavio Paz's classic, *The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico* (New York: Grove Press, 1961).

38. For an overview of these issues, see Kevin Middlebrook's review essay "Dilemmas of Change in Mexican Politics," *World Politics* 41 (October 1988): 120-41.

39. See Dale Story, *The Mexican Ruling Party, Stability and Authority* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 9ff; John J. Bailey, *Governing Mexico: The Statecraft of Crisis Management* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988).

40. This is nicely explained in Gary Wynia, *The Politics of Latin American Development*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 28ff.

41. For greater detail about the causes, see Roderic Ai Camp, *Generals in the Palacio: The Military in Modern Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

42. Karl Schmitt, "Church and State in Mexico: A Corporatist Relationship," *Americas* 40 (January 1984): 349-76.

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44. For some examples of noneconomic variables, see Clark W. Reynolds and Carlos Tello, *U.S.-Mexico Relations: Economic and Social Aspects* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1983).

45. Rodolfo de la Garza, "National Origin vs. Socialization: Are Hispanics More 'Democratic' Than Mexicans?" Paper presented at the Conference on Democracy and Political Learning in Mexico and the United States, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 2001.

46. For various insights into this, from the points of view of an American and Mexican, see Robert A. Pastor and Jorge G. Castañeda, *Limits to Friendship: The United States and Mexico* (New York: Vintage Press, 1989).

47. For an extensive discussion of the Mexican case, see Riordan Roett, ed., *Political & Economic Liberalization in Mexico, at a Critical Juncture* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1993), 17-94. The most imaginative comparative analysis is Juan D. Lindau and Timothy Cheek, eds., *Market Economics & Political Change: Comparing China and Mexico* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998).

48. See especially "The Politics of Public Administration," in *Opposition Government in Mexico*, ed. Victoria Rodríguez and Peter M. Ward (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995). The editors also provide an excellent case study in their *Policymaking, Politics, and Urban Governance in Chihuahua* (Austin: LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, 1992).

49. Stephen D. Morris, "Mexico's Long Awaited Surprise," *Latin American Research Review* 40 (2005): 418-21.

50. Steven Barracca, "Democratic Consolidation and Deepening in Mexico: A Conceptual and Empirical Analysis," paper presented at the Latin American Studies Association, March 2003, 3.

51. See, for example, Stephen E. Hanson, "Defining Democratic Consolidation," in *Postcommunism and the Theory of Democracy*, ed. Richard D. Anderson, Jr., et al. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 126–51.

## 2

### *Political–Historical Roots: The Impact of Time and Place*

The political life of all those states which during the early years of the last century arose upon the ruins of the Spanish Empire on the American mainland presents two common features. In all those states, constitutions of the most liberal and democratic character have been promulgated; in all, there have from time to time arisen dictators whose absolute power has been either frankly proclaimed or thinly veiled under constitutional forms. So frequently has such personal rule been established in many of the states that in them there has appeared to be an almost perpetual and complete contradiction between theory and practice, between nominal and the actual systems of government.

CECIL JANE, *Liberty and Despotism in Spanish America*

Understanding politics is not just knowing who gets what, where, when, and how, as Harold D. Lasswell declared in a classic statement years ago, but also understanding the origins of why people behave the way they do. Each culture is a product of its own heritage, traditions emerging from historical experiences. Many aspects of the U.S. political system can be traced to our English colonial experiences, our independence movement, our western frontier expansion, and our immigrant origins. Mexico has had a somewhat similar set of experiences, but the sources of the experiences and their specific characteristics were quite different.

#### THE SPANISH HERITAGE

Mexico's political heritage, unlike that of the United States, draws on two important cultural foundations: European and indigenous. Although large

numbers of Indians were never absorbed into the conquering culture in New Spain, a vast integration process took place in most of central Mexico. Conversely, British settlers encountered numerous Native Americans in their colonization of North America, but they rarely intermarried with them and thus the two cultures never blended. Racially, African blacks played an important role in some regions; politically, this was a limited role because of the small numbers brought to New Spain, the colonial Spanish viceroyalty that extended from Central America to what is now the United States Midwest and Pacific Northwest.

Mexico's racial heritage, unlike that of the United States, has a mixed or *mestizo* quality. In the initial absence of Spanish women, the original Spanish conquerors sought native mistresses or wives. In fact, cohabiting with female royalty from the various indigenous cultures was seen as an effective means of joining the two sets of leaders, firmly establishing Spanish ascendancy throughout the colony. The Indian-Spanish offspring of these unions at first were considered socially inferior to Spaniards fresh from Spain and the Spanish born in the New World. Frank Tannenbaum describes the complex social ladder:

With the mixture of races in Mexico added to by the bringing in of Negroes in sufficient numbers to leave their mark upon the population in certain parts of the country, we have the basis of the social structure that characterized Mexico throughout the colonial period and in some degree continues to this day. The Spaniard—that is, the born European—was at the top in politics, in the Church, and in prestige. The *criollo*, his American-born child, stood at a lower level. He inherited most of the wealth, but was denied any important role in political administration. The *mestizo* and the dozen different *castas* that resulted from the mixtures of European, Indian, and Negro in their various degrees and kinds were still lower.<sup>1</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, mestizos reached a new level of social ascendancy through their numbers and control over the political system.

Early Mexican political history involved social conflicts based on racial heritage. Moreover, large indigenous groups were suppressed, exploited, and politically ignored. The prejudice with which Indians were treated by the Spanish and mestizo populations, and the mistreatment of the mestizo by the Spanish contributed further to the sharp class distinctions that have plagued Mexico.<sup>2</sup> Social prejudice was transferred to economic status as well, with those lowest on the racial scale ending up at the bottom of the economic scale. The degree of social inequality ultimately contributed to the independence movement, as the New World-born Spanish (*criollos*) came to resent their second-class status relative to the Old World-born Spanish (*peninsulares*). It contributed even more significantly to the Mexican Revolution of 1910, in

which thousands of downtrodden mestizo peasants and workers and some Indians joined a broad social movement for greater social justice.

All societies have some type of social structure. Most large societies develop hierarchical social groups, but from one society to another the level of deference exacted or given varies. In the United States, where political rhetoric, beginning with independence, focused on greater social equality, class distinctions were fewer and less distinct.<sup>3</sup> In Mexico, in spite of its revolution, the distinctions remain much sharper, affecting various aspects of cultural and political behavior. For example, a major study of U.S. intellectuals found that 40 percent of the younger generation were from working-class backgrounds. By contrast, in Mexico, fewer than 5 percent fell into this social category.<sup>4</sup> In the political and economic realms, lower-income groups are rarely represented in influential, leadership roles. Only among Catholic clergy and the military do such individuals exist in larger numbers.<sup>5</sup> In addition, lower-income groups have limited protection from abuses by governmental authorities and rarely receive equal treatment under the law. In the United States differences exist in the legal treatment of rich and poor, but they are fewer, and the gap between them is much smaller than in Mexico.

The Spanish also left Mexico with a significant religious heritage: Catholicism. Religion played a critical role in the pre-Conquest Mexican indigenous culture and was very much integrated into the native political processes. In both the Aztec and Maya empires, for example, religion was integral to political leadership. The Spanish were no less religious. Beginning with the Conquest itself, the pope reached some agreements with the Spanish crown. In these agreements, known collectively as the *patronato real* (royal patronate), the Catholic Church gave up certain rights it exercised in Europe for a privileged role in the Conquest generally and in New Spain specifically. In return for being allowed to send two priests or friars with every land or sea expedition, and being given the *sole* opportunity to proselytize millions of Indians, the church gave up its control over the building of facilities in the New World, the appointing of higher clergy, the collecting of tithes, and other activities. In other words, Catholicism obtained a monopoly in the Spanish New World.<sup>6</sup>

The contractual relationship between the Catholic Church and the Spanish authorities in the colonial period established two fundamental principles: the concept of an official religion, that is, only one religion recognized and permitted by civil authorities; and the *integration* of church and state. In the United States, of course, a fundamental principle of our political evolution is the *separation* of church and state. Moreover, many of the settlers who came to the English colonies came in search of religious freedom, not religious monopoly. As Samuel Ramos suggested,

It was our [Mexico's] fate to be conquered by a Catholic theocracy which was struggling to isolate its people from the current of modern ideas that emanated from the Renaissance. Scarcely had the American colonies been organized when they were isolated against all possible heresy. Ports were closed and trade with all countries except Spain was disapproved. The only civilizing agent of the New World was the Catholic Church, which by virtue of its pedagogical monopoly shaped the American societies in a medieval pattern of life. Education, and the direction of social life as well, were placed in the hands of the Church, whose power was similar to that of a state within a state.<sup>7</sup>

The consequences of Mexico's religious heritage have been numerous. It is important to remember that Catholicism was not just a religion in the spiritual sense of the word, but extended deeply into the political culture, given the influence of the church over education and social organizations, such as hospitals and charitable foundations, and its lack of religious competition.

One of the consequences is structural. In the first chapter, corporatism was identified as one of the traditional features of the political system. Corporatism extends back to the colonial period, when certain groups obtained special privileges from civil authorities, giving them preferred relationships with the state. Among these groups were clergy, military officers, and merchants. The most notable privileges received by the clergy were special legal *fueros*, or legal rights, allowing them to try their members in separate courts, where they were not subject to civil laws.<sup>8</sup> The Spanish established the precedent for favored treatment of specific groups. Once groups are thus singled out, they will fight very hard to retain their advantages. Much of nineteenth-century politics in Mexico became a battle between the church and its conservative allies on just this issue.

The monopoly of the church in New Spain was very jealously protected. No immigrants professing other beliefs were allowed in before Mexican independence. The church also took on another task for the state: ferreting out religious and political dissenters by establishing the Inquisition in the New World. The primary function of this institution was to identify and punish religious heretics, those persons who threatened religious beliefs as taught by church authorities, but in practice the Inquisition controlled publishing, assembled a book index that censored intellectual ideas from abroad, and fielded special customs inspectors.<sup>9</sup> These activities were not entirely successful, but in general the church and the civil authorities were intolerant of any other religious and secular thought. The Inquisition has been described in this fashion:

The belief that heretics were traitors and traitors were heretics led to the conviction that dissenters were social revolutionaries trying to subvert the politi-

cal and religious stability of the community. These tenets were not later developments in the history of the Spanish Inquisition; they were inherent in the rationale of the institution from the fifteenth century onward and were apparent in the Holy Office's dealings with Jews, Protestants, and other heretics during the sixteenth century. The use of the Inquisition by the later eighteenth-century Bourbon kings of Spain as an instrument of regalism was not a departure from tradition. Particularly in the viceroyalty of New Spain during the late eighteenth century the Inquisition trials show how the Crown sought to promote political and religious orthodoxy.<sup>10</sup>

The heritage of intolerance plagued Mexico during much of its post-independence political history. It has been argued that because culturally there had been little experience with other points of view and in promoting respect for them, accommodation was not perceived as desirable. Some analysts suggest that the Catholic religion's continuation as a dominant presence in spite of religious freedom and the existence of other faiths, encourages the persistence of intolerance. The applicability of that view in recent years requires reexamination in light of the Church's proactive posture on democratization.

To carry out the conquest of New Spain, the Spanish relied on armed expeditions and missionaries. Typically, once an area was made "safe" by an exploratory expedition, a permanent settlement around a mission and a *presidio*, or fort, was established. Some of the settlements were sited along a route known as the *camino real* (king's highway), which today is the old California Highway 1. The original mission towns are now among the most important cities in the Southwest: San Francisco (Saint Francis), San Diego (Saint James), Santa Barbara (Saint Barbara), Albuquerque, Tucson, and Santa Fe.

Originally, the authorities used Spanish armed forces; in the colonial period, American-born Spaniards began filling officer ranks as the government came to rely more heavily on the colonial militia. The armed forces were called on from time to time to protect the coast from French and British attacks, but the army was used primarily to suppress Indian rebellions and to keep internal order. It patrolled the highways to keep them free of bandits. Basically, then, it functioned as police, not as defenders against external enemies.

The military, like the clergy, received special *fueros* in New Spain. It too had its own courts for civil and criminal cases, but unlike the clergy, military officers were immune to civil prosecution.<sup>11</sup> Their favored status inevitably led to legal conflicts. Some historians have argued that one of the reasons for the disintegration of civil authority at the time of independence was declining respect caused by its inability to control military cases.

As in the case of the church, granting the military special privileges—which were passed on to the colonial militia before independence—created another powerful interest group. Their professional heirs in the nineteenth century wanted to retain the privileges. Furthermore, the close ties between military and civil authorities, and the unclear lines of subordination led to the blurring of distinctions in civil-military relations.<sup>12</sup>

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these patterns in civil-military relations and civil-church relations had a great impact on Mexico's political development. They complemented the corporatist heritage by establishing groups that saw their own interests, not those of society, as primary. These groups competed for political ascendancy, reinforcing the already-present social inequality by creating a hierarchy of interests and prestige.

To the legacies of corporatism, social inequality, special interests, and intolerance can be added the Spanish bureaucratic tradition. Critics tend to focus on the inefficiencies of the Spanish bureaucracy and the differences between legal theory and the application of administrative criteria.<sup>13</sup> In part, problems can be attributed to the distance between the mother country and the colonies, as well as to the distance between Mexico City, the seat of the viceroyalty of New Spain, established in 1535, and its far-flung settlements in Yucatán, Chiapas, and what is today the southwestern United States. A more important feature of Spanish religious and civil structures was their strongly hierarchical nature and centralization. Low-level bureaucrats lacked authority. Decisions were made only at the top of the hierarchy, with delay, inefficiency, and corruption as the outcome.<sup>14</sup>

The hierarchical structure of the Spanish state in the New World is no better illustrated than through the viceroy himself. The viceroy (*virrey*) was in effect the vice-king, a personal appointee of and substitute for the king of Spain. He had two sources of power: He was the supreme civil authority and also the commander in chief of the military. In addition, he was the vicepatron of the Catholic Church, responsible for the mission policies in the colonization process. Remember, this individual, along with a second viceroy in Lima, Peru, governed all of Spanish-speaking Latin America and the southwestern United States.

Upon its independence, the viceregal structure left Mexico with two political tendencies. First, the individual viceroys became extremely important, some serving for many years, completely at the whim of the crown. This shifted considerable political legitimacy away from Spanish institutions to a single person. The personalization of power tended to devalue the institutionalization of political structures, thereby enhancing the importance of political personalities. It also left Mexico with an integrated civil and reli-

gious/cultural tradition, complemented by an equally blended, hierarchical indigenous tradition of executive authority. Justo Sierra, a Mexican historian, described the viceroy's power and the church-state relationship:

The Viceroy was the king. His business was to hold the land—that is, to conserve the king's dominion, New Spain, at all costs. The way to conserve it was to pacify it; hence the close collaboration with the Church. In view of the privileges granted by the Pope to the Spanish king in America, it could be said that the Church in America was under the Spanish king: this was called the Royal Patronate. But the ascendancy that the Church had acquired in Spanish America, because it consolidated, through conversions, the work of the Conquest, made it actually a partner in the government.<sup>15</sup>

Spanish political authority was top-heavy, placing most of the power in the hands of an executive institution. The viceroy's decision-making authority had few restrictions. In many respects, the viceroy's self-developed political aura was equivalent to the *presidencialismo* described earlier. The Spanish did create an *audiencia*, a sort of quasi legislative-judicial body that acted as a board of appeals for grievances against the viceroy and could channel complaints directly to the crown, bypassing the viceroy. Also, the crown appointed its own inspectors, often secret, who traveled to New Spain to hear charges against a viceroy's abuse of authority. These *visitadores* were empowered to conduct thorough investigations and report to the crown.

The minor restrictions on viceregal powers did not mean there was a separation of powers, an independent judiciary, a legislative body, or decentralization. Some participation at the local level existed, but Mexico had no legislative heritage comparable to that found in the British colonies' colonial assemblies. Thus, it is not surprising that although Mexico quickly established a legislative body after independence, it functioned effectively for only brief periods in the 1860s and 1870s and again in the 1920s, remaining ineffectual and subordinate throughout most of the twentieth century until the 1990s.

Finally, another important Spanish political heritage is the role of the state in society. The strong authoritarian institutions in New Spain and the size of the Spanish colonial bureaucracy established the state as the preeminent institution.<sup>16</sup> The only other institution whose influence came close was the Catholic Church. Educated male Spaniards born in the New World essentially had three career choices: the colonial bureaucracy, the clergy (which appealed to only a minority), and the military. New Spain's private sector was weak, underdeveloped, and closed. The crown permitted little commercial activity among the colonies or with other countries. The monopolistic relationship between Spain and the colonies kept the latter

from developing their full economic potential. Michael Meyer and William Sherman characterized Spain's policies as

protectionist in the extreme, which meant that the economy in New Spain was very much restricted by limitations imposed by the imperial system. Thus the natural growth of industry and commerce was significantly impeded, because manufacturers and merchants in Spain were protected from the competition of those in the colony. In accord with the classic pattern, the Spanish Indies were to supply Spain with raw products, which could be made into finished goods in the mother country and sold back to the colonists at a profit. As a consequence, the character of the colonial economy in Mexico was essentially extractive.<sup>17</sup>

A long-term political consequence of a strong state and a weak private sector was the overarching prestige of the state, to the disadvantage of the private sector. Economically, then, the state was in the driver's seat, not because it controlled most economic resources, but because it provided the most important positions available in the colonial world. The same mentality developed in the twentieth century in other colonial settings. For example, Indians came to believe that the British civil service was the preeminent institution in India and that government employment would grant them great prestige.<sup>18</sup> In the same way, positions in the Mexican state bureaucracy were seen by many educated Mexicans as the ultimate employment, and so the competition for places was keen. One cultural theorist, Glen Dealy, argues that "public power like economic wealth is rooted in rational accumulation. Capitalism measures excellence in terms of accumulated wealth; *caudillaje* [Latin American culture] measures one's virtue in terms of accumulated public power."<sup>19</sup> This way of life did not end with the decline of the Spanish empire and Spain's departure from Mexico. Figures from the last third of the nineteenth century demonstrate that the government employed a large percentage of educated, professional men, suggesting again the limited opportunities in the private sector.

The Mexican state's importance can be explained by not only economic underdevelopment, but also by the status of the state in the New World. In other words, it was natural for Mexicans to expect the state to play an influential role. Not liking state intervention in their lives, similar to the feeling of most people in the United States,<sup>20</sup> Mexicans nevertheless came to depend on the state as a problem solver, in part because there was no institutional infrastructure at the local level or the same self-reliant thinking.

Spain bequeathed to Mexico an individualistic, cultural mind-set. North Americans, although characterized by self-initiative and independence, exhibited a strong sense of community. That is, throughout the western expansion, U.S. settlers saw surviving together as in the interest of the

group as well as in the interest of its members. Mexicans, on the other hand, exhibited a strong sense of self. This, combined with the sharper social-class divisions and social inequality, led to a preeminence of individual or familial preservation, unassociated with the protection of larger groups. The lack of communal ties reinforced the primacy of personal ties. It was a familiar phenomenon elsewhere in Latin America as well. In the political realm, it generally translates into *whom* you know rather than *what* you know. This statement is an almost universal truism, but whom you know gains in importance where access to authority is limited.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, the structural arrangements of the Spanish colonial empire and the distances between the colonies and the mother country and between the colonies themselves made for considerable dissatisfaction with the rules imposed. The Spanish settlers, and later their mestizo descendants, increasingly disobeyed orders from overseas. Sometimes they could justifiably assert that a law no longer applied to the situation at hand. At other times they would flout a law they found inconvenient. The inefficiencies inherent in the transatlantic management of possessions in two continents, built-in social inequalities, and the gap between Old World theory and New World reality meant the marginalization of Spain's laws in the Western Hemisphere. A lack of respect for the law and the importance of personal and familial interests were fundamental factors in Mexico's political evolution from the 1830s through the end of the twentieth century.

#### NINETEENTH-CENTURY POLITICAL HERITAGE

Shortly after its independence Mexico experimented briefly with a monarchical system, but the rapid demise of the three-hundred-year-old colonial structure left a political void. The only legitimate authority, the crown, and its colonial representative, the viceroy, disappeared. Intense political conflict ensued as various groups sought to legitimize their political philosophies. The battle for political supremacy affected the goals of the antagonists and influenced the process by which Mexicans settled political disputes. By the 1840s, Mexico had fluctuated between a political model advocating federalism, the decentralization of power similar to that practiced in the United States, and centralism, the allocation of more decision-making authority to the national government.

As was true of many Latin American countries, Mexico was caught between the idea of rejecting its centralized, authoritarian Spanish heritage and the idea of adopting the reformist U.S. model. The obstinacy of their

proponents kept political affairs in constant flux. Violence was a frequent means for settling political disagreements, which enhanced the presence and importance of the army as an arbiter of political conflicts, and consumed much of the government budget that might otherwise have been spent more productively.

By the mid-nineteenth century two mainstreams of political thought confronted Mexicans: conservatism and liberalism. Mexican liberalism was a mixture of borrowed and native ideas that largely rejected Spanish authoritarianism and tradition and instead drew on Enlightenment ideas from France, England, and the United States. Some of its elements included such basic U.S. tenets as guarantees of political liberty and the sovereignty of the general will. Among its principles were greater citizen participation in government, free-speech guarantees, and a strong legislative branch. Liberals complemented these principles with a concept known as Jeffersonian

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Mexican liberalism: an amalgam of basic concepts of political liberty and nineteenth-century laissez-faire economic principles.

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agrarian democracy. Jefferson had advocated encouraging large numbers of small landholders in the United States. His rationale was that people with property constitute a stable citizenry; having something to lose, they would vigorously defend the democratic political process. The liberals also believed in classic economic liberalism, the philosophy pervading England and the United States during the same period. Economic liberalism of this period referred to the encouragement of individual initiative and the protection of individual property rights.<sup>22</sup>

Mexican conservatives held to an alternative set of political principles. Whereas an examination of Liberal ideas reveals that most of them were borrowed from leading thinkers and political systems foreign to Mexico's experience, the Conservatives praised the reform-minded Bourbon administration of the Spanish colonies prior to independence and emphasized a strong central executive. They argued for a strong executive because it would follow naturally after centuries of authoritarian colonial rule, and because the postindependence violence in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s seemed to be part of a larger struggle between anarchy and civilization in Latin America. Without forceful leadership, Mexico would succumb to disorder and remain underdeveloped economically.<sup>23</sup>

The conservatives favored policies promoting industrialization, stressing light manufacturing rather than expansion of the small-landholder class. Mexico desperately needed capital, much of which had fled after indepen-

dence and during the chaotic political period that followed. Both conservatives and liberals looked approvingly on foreign investment and encouraged policies that would attract outside capital, particularly to mining and struggling industries such as textiles.<sup>24</sup>

Neither the conservatives nor the liberals gave much attention to the plight of the Indians. Because the thinkers in both camps generally were *criollos* of middle- and upper-middle-class background, their primary concerns were the maintenance of social order and the interests of their classes. Although the conservatives essentially ignored the Indians, the liberals sought to apply their philosophy of economic individualism to the Indian system of communal property holding, believing it to be an obstacle to development.

Liberals and conservatives clashed most violently on the role of the Catholic Church. The liberals believed, and correctly so, that the church, as an integral ally of the Spanish state, conveyed support for the hierarchical, authoritarian, political structure.<sup>25</sup> Essentially, it was the church's control of education and nearly all aspects of cultural life that permitted its influence. The conservatives, on the other hand, saw the church as an important force and worked toward an alliance with it.

Because the liberals viewed the church as a staunch opponent and as the conservatives' political and economic supporter, they wanted to reduce or eliminate altogether its influence. They introduced the Ley Lerdo (Lerdo law) on June 1, 1856, essentially forcing the church to sell off its large landholdings, which at that time accounted for a sizable portion of all Mexican real estate. But the law did not have its intended consequences. The church traded land for capital, thereby preserving a source of economic influence and at the same time enlarging the already substantial estates of the buyers.<sup>26</sup> The liberals also attacked the church's special privileges, which had been left inviolate by the 1824 constitution immediately after independence. They eliminated its legal *fueros* and placed cemeteries under the jurisdiction of public authorities.<sup>27</sup>

From this brief overview, we can see that each side had something useful to offer. Yet their unwillingness to compromise and the intensity with which they held their opinions led to a polity in constant disarray. The battles between conservatives and liberals culminated in the War of the Reform (1858-1861), in which the victorious liberals imposed, by force, their political views on the defeated conservatives. These views are well represented in the constitution of 1857, a landmark political document that influenced its revolutionary successor, the constitution of 1917.

The issue of church versus state, or the supremacy of state over church, was a crucial element of the conservative-liberal battles and a focus of nine-

teenth-century politics. The leading liberals of the day saw the classroom as the chief means of social transformation, and the church's control in that arena as undesirable, and so decided to establish secular institutions. To implement this concept, President Benito Juárez appointed in 1867 a committee under Gabino Barreda, an educator who set down some basic principles for public education in the last third of the nineteenth century. The liberals hoped to replace church-controlled schools with free, mandatory public education, but their program was never fully implemented. Most important, they introduced a preparatory educational program, a sort of advanced high school to train future leaders in secular and liberal ideas.

By 1869 the liberals succeeded in defeating the conservatives' forces. Their unwillingness to compromise and their introduction of even more radical reforms—particularly those associated with suppressing the Catholic Church, and incorporated into the 1857 constitution—impelled the conservatives and their church allies to take the unusual step of seeking help from abroad. This ultimately led to the French intervention of 1862–1867, and an attempt to enthrone a foreign monarch, Austrian archduke Ferdinand Maximilian. The liberals were nearly defeated during this interlude, but under Benito Juárez's leadership they ultimately won and executed the archduke.

The liberals reigned from 1867 to 1876. This brief period is important because it gave Mexicans a taste of a functioning, liberal political model. The legislative branch of government exercised some actual power. The successors to Benito Juárez lacked the political skills and authority to sustain the government, and their experiment came to an end with the successful revolt of Porfirio Díaz, a leading military figure in the liberal battles against the French.<sup>28</sup>

Díaz's ambition and his overthrow of Juárez's collaborators introduced a new generation of liberals to leadership positions. These men, most of whom were combat veterans of the liberal-conservative conflicts and the French intervention, were *moderate* liberals, distinct from the radical orthodox liberals of the Juárez generation. Díaz and the moderate liberals paved the way for the introduction of a new political philosophy into Mexico: positivism. As described by historian Charles Hale,

Scientific or positive politics involved the argument that the country's problems should be approached and its policies formed scientifically. Its principal characteristics were an attack on doctrinaire [radical] liberalism, or "metaphysical politics," an apology for strong government to counter endemic revolutions and anarchy, and a call for constitutional reform. It drew upon a current of European, particularly French, theories dating back to Henri de Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte in the 1820s, theories that under the name of positivism had become quite generalized in European thought by 1878. Apart

from the theoretical origins of their doctrine, the exponents of scientific politics in Mexico found inspiration in the concrete experience of the contemporary conservative republics of France and Spain and in their leaders.<sup>29</sup>

The motto for many positivists in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America was liberty and progress through peace and order. The key to Mexican positivism, as it was implemented by successive administrations under Porfirio Díaz, who ruled Mexico from 1877 to 1880 and 1884 to 1911, was order. After years of political instability, violence, and civil war, these men saw peace as a critical necessity for progress. Their explanation for the disruptive preceding decades centered on the notion that too much of Mexico's political thinking had been based on irrational or "unscientific" ideas influenced by the spiritual teachings of the church and that alternative political ideas were counterproductive. As Díaz himself suggested, "all citizens of a republic should receive the same training, so that their ideas and methods may be harmonized and the national identity intensified."<sup>30</sup>

Building on the philosophy of their orthodox liberal predecessors, the Díaz administrations came to believe that the most effective means for conveying rational positivist thought, or this new form of moderate liberalism, was public education. Education therefore became the essential instrument for homogenizing Mexican political values. It would turn out a new generation of political, intellectual, and economic leaders who would guide Mexico along the path of material progress and political development. Preeminent among the public institutions was the National Preparatory School in Mexico City, which enrolled children of regional and national notables. Its matriculation lists read like a roll of future national leaders.<sup>31</sup>

The acceptance of positivist ideas by the moderate liberals ultimately led to the dominance of order over liberty and progress. Indeed, it can be argued that after decades of civil conflict, positivism became a vehicle for reintroducing conservative ideas among Mexico's liberal leadership. Díaz increasingly used the state's power to maintain political order, allowing economic development to occur without government interference. His government encouraged the expansion of mining and made generous concessions to foreigners to obtain investment.

The Porfiriato, as the period of Díaz's rule is known in Mexico, had significant consequences that led to the country's major social upheaval of the twentieth century, the Mexico Revolution of 1910, and numerous political and social legacies. Díaz attacked two important social issues: the relationship between church and state and the role of Indians in the society.

Ironically, the Catholic Church regained considerable influence during the liberal era. Even Benito Juárez realized after Maximilian's defeat that pursuit of radical antichurch policies would only generate further resistance

and disorder. Díaz pursued a pragmatic policy of reconciliation in the 1870s, separating church and state, but permitting the church to strengthen its religious role as long as it remained aloof from secular and political affairs.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the two parties achieved a *modus vivendi*, although the state remained in the stronger position, and the 1857 constitution retained repressive, antichurch provisions.

Díaz's attitude toward the Indians was also significant because it reflected a broader attitude toward social inequality. He and his collaborators, as did the original liberals, saw the Indians as obstacles to Mexican development. They applied the provisions of the law forcing the sale of church property to the communal property held by Indian villages, accelerating the pace of sales begun by the orthodox liberals in the 1860s. But the positivists were not satisfied with this economic measure. Many of them accepted the notion, popular throughout Latin America at the time, that Indians were a cultural and social burden and were racially inferior.<sup>33</sup> To overcome this racial barrier, they proposed introducing European immigration, in the hope of wiping out the indigenous culture and providing a superior economic example for the mestizo farmer.

To ensure that immigration would take place, the Mexican government passed a series of colonization laws in the 1880s that granted generous concessions to foreigners who would survey public lands. By 1889 foreigners had surveyed almost eighty million acres and had acquired large portions of the surveyed acreage at bargain-basement prices. For the most part, however, these people were not typical settlers; rather, they, like the Mexicans who purchased church and Indian lands, were large landholders. Two million acres of communal Indian lands went to them and to corporations. Hence, the colonization laws not only increased the concentration of land in the hands of wealthy Mexicans and foreigners, but antagonized small mestizo and Indian farmers, who became a force during the Mexican Revolution.

Díaz implemented policies that improved the country economically, but the primary beneficiaries were the wealthy at home and abroad. The laboring classes, generally mestizo in origin, benefited little from the politics of peace. Díaz focused on a small group of supporters and ignored the plight of most of his compatriots. Even middle-class mestizos, who rose to the top of the ladder politically by 1900, were limited in their abilities to share in the economic goods of the Díaz era. As two recent historians of Mexico suggested,

The structure of Mexican society during the Porfiriato consisted of a number of levels that must be noted in order to understand the social dynamics of the

era. Large holders of commercialized agriculture land constituted the top of the pyramid. Land provided the economic core as well as status. From this base large landholders diversified into manufacturing, mining, or other profitable activities. An elite, allied with national and regional political groups, with business and personal connections to foreign capitalists and investors, formed an interlocking socioeconomic and political directorate. They used their political, economic, and social influence to reinforce their position. Economic concessions, contracts, and other forms of political patronage fell to this group. They negotiated among themselves for a share of the political power and economic fruits of modernization.<sup>34</sup>

To understand Mexican politics in the twentieth century, in the postrevolutionary era, it is even more important to explore the political heritage left by Díaz and his cronies. In the first place, although church and state were separate and the lines were more firmly drawn between secular and religious activities, Díaz maintained fuzzier relationships between the state and two other important elements, the army and the private sector.

In effect, Díaz established the pattern for civil-military relations that characterized Mexico until the 1940s. Because he himself was a veteran of so many civil conflicts, it was only natural that he recruited many of his important collaborators, on both the national and state level, from among fellow officers.<sup>35</sup> Military men occupied many prominent positions. Although the presence of career officers in the top echelon declined across Díaz's tenure as they were replaced by younger civilian lawyers, no clear relationship of subordination between civil and military authorities was established (see Table 2-1). Díaz left a legacy of shared power and interlocking leadership.<sup>36</sup>

The unclear lines between military and civilian political power were duplicated between politicians and the business elite. It is the nature of a capitalist system to have an exchange of leaders between the economic and political spheres, as in the United States, but such linkages in an authoritarian political structure, where access to power and decision making is closed, can produce potentially significant consequences. Díaz, who had control over most of the important national political offices, used appointments to reward supporters or as a means to co-opt opponents. At no time since 1884 has any administration had stronger elite economic representation in political office than under Díaz. Approximately a fifth of all national politicians from 1884 to 1911, with the peak in 1897, were businessmen. For most of the twentieth century they made up fewer than 10 percent of Mexico's public figures.<sup>37</sup> Giving these positions, especially at the provincial level, to members of prominent families, further closed paths of upward social mobility to less-favored groups, especially the mestizo middle class.<sup>38</sup>

**Table 2-1** Career Military Officers in National Politics

Presidential Administration	Military Officers (%)	Presidential Administration	Military Officers (%)
Díaz		Portes Gil	14
1884-1889	54	Ortiz Rubio	41
1889-1893	46	Rodríguez	33
1893-1897	32	Cárdenas	27
1897-1901	16	Avila Camacho	19
1901-1905	11	Alemán	8
1905-1910	9	Ruiz Cortines	14
1910-1911	35	López Mateos	15
De la Barra	27	Díaz Ordaz	7
Madero	26	Echeverría	11
Huerta	61	López Portillo	6
Carranza	49	De la Madrid	4
Obregón	40	Salinas	6
Calles	30	Zedillo	2

By the time Díaz began his third term as president in 1888, he had succeeded in controlling national elections, although he had not created a national electoral machine similar to that of the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR), established in 1929, and its successors. He continued to hold elections to renew the loyalty of the people to his leadership and to allow him to reward his faithful supporters with sinecures as federal deputies (congressmen) and senators. His control was so extensive that occasionally he chose the same person for more than one elective office.

Building on the original conservative philosophy and the colonial heritage, Díaz reversed the tenuous decentralization trend begun under President Juárez. He accomplished this structurally by decreasing the powers of the legislative and judicial branches, making them subordinate to the executive branch and to the presidency specifically. He also strengthened the presidency as distinct from the executive branch.

Díaz went beyond aggrandization of political authority in the executive branch and the presidency by strengthening the federal government or state generally. He did this by expanding the federal bureaucracy. Between 1876 and 1910 the government payroll grew some 900 percent. In 1876 only 16 percent of the middle class worked for the government; by 1910 the figure was 70 percent.<sup>39</sup> As in the colonial period, the private sector was not incorporating new generations of educated Mexicans; rather, their careers were being pursued within the public sector, notably the federal executive. Díaz provided the twentieth century with a dominant state, an apparatus that most

successful Mexicans would want to control because it was essential to their economic future.

Because Díaz held the presidency for some thirty years, a personality cult developed around his leadership. His collaborators conveyed the message that progress, as they defined it, was guaranteed by his presence. His indispensability enhanced his political maneuverability. On the other hand, Díaz put in place a political system that was underdeveloped institutionally. In concentrating on his personality, political institutions failed to acquire legitimacy. Even the stability of the political system itself was at stake because continuity was not guaranteed by the acceptability of its institutions, but by an individual person, Díaz.

The Porfiriato also reinforced the paternalism handed down from the political and social culture of the precolonial and colonial periods. Díaz's concessions to favored people, providing them with substantial economic rewards, encouraged dependence on his personal largesse and the government generally. This technique, which he used generously to pacify opponents and reward friends, produced corruption at all levels of political life. It encouraged the belief that political office was a reward to be taken advantage of by the officeholder rather than a public responsibility. The political cultures of many other countries are similarly characterized to a greater or lesser degree.

Against his most recalcitrant foes, Díaz was willing to use less ingratiating techniques. Toward the end of his regime, press censorship became widespread. As a whole, he favored a controlled, complimentary press to counter criticism from independent sources. If threats or imprisonment were not sufficient to deter his opponents, he resorted to more severe measures. Typically, lower social groups were the victims of violent suppression. A notorious example of this policy was the treatment of the Yaqui Indians in northwestern Mexico, who rebelled after influential members of the Díaz administration began seizing their lands. The Yaquis were subjected to brutalities and were forced into what were in effect concentration camps, and many were deported to Yucatán, where most perished in forced labor on the henequen plantations in the hot tropical climate.<sup>40</sup>

As Mexico emerged from the first decade of the twentieth century, it acquired a political model that drew on Spanish authoritarian and paternal heritages. Like the viceroys before him, but without reporting to any other authority, Díaz exercised extraordinary power. He built up a larger state apparatus as a means of retaining power, and although he strengthened the role of the state in society, he did not legitimize its institutions. While he did succeed in building some economic infrastructure in Mexico, he failed to

meet social needs and maltreated certain groups, thereby continuing and intensifying the social inequalities existing under his colonial predecessors. His favoritism toward foreigners caused resentment and contributed to the rise of nationalism after 1911. The lack of separation between civilian and military leadership left Mexicans unclear about the principle of civilian supremacy and autonomy, an issue that would confront his successors. Finally, although the moderate liberals/converted positivists replaced orthodox liberals and, in many cases, substituted conservative principles for their original political ideas, the excluded liberal followers who remained faithful to the cause rose up once again after 1910.<sup>41</sup>

#### THE REVOLUTIONARY HERITAGE: SOCIAL VIOLENCE AND REFORM

It can never be forgotten that contemporary Mexico is the product of a violent revolution that lasted, on and off, from 1910 through 1920. The decimation of its population—more than a million people during the decade—alone would have left an indelible stamp on Mexican life. The revolution touched all social classes, and although it did not affect all locales with the same intensity, it brought together the residents of villages and cities to a degree never achieved before or since. In the same way that World War II altered life in the United States, the revolution brought profound changes to Mexican society.

The causes of the revolution have been thoroughly examined by historians. They are numerous, and their roots can be found in the failures of the Porfiriato. Among the most important to have been singled out are foreign economic penetration, class struggle, land ownership, economic depression, local autonomy, the clash between modernity and tradition, the breakdown of the Porfirian system, the weakness of the transition process, the lack of opportunity for upward political and social mobility, and the aging of the leadership.<sup>42</sup> Historians do not agree on the primary causes nor on whether the 1910 revolution was a “real” revolution, that is, whether it radically changed the social structure.<sup>43</sup>

In my own view, the revolution introduced significant changes, although it did not alter social structures to the degree one expects of a major social revolution on a par with the Cuban, Soviet, or Chinese revolutions.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, to understand Mexican political developments in the twentieth century, it is necessary to explore the ideology of the revolution and the political structures that emerged in the immediate postrevolutionary era.

Ideologically, one of the best ways to understand the diverse social forces for change is to trace the constitutional provisions of 1917 to the precursors and revolutionary figures. Among the most important precursors, Ricardo Flores Magón and his brothers offered ideas leading up to the revolution and revived the legitimacy of orthodox liberalism by establishing liberal clubs throughout Mexico.<sup>45</sup> This provided a basis for middle-class participation in and support for revolutionary principles. Flores Magón and his adherents published a newspaper in exile in the United States, *La Regeneración*, banned in Mexico. Many prominent political figures in the revolution, including General Alvaro Obregón, cited its influence on their attitudes. Perhaps more than in any other area, Flores Magón offered arguments in support of workers' rights, establishing such principles as minimum wage and maximum hours in strike documents and Liberal Party platforms.<sup>46</sup> He also advocated the distribution of land, the return of communal (*ejido*) properties to the Indians, and the requirement that agricultural land be productive.

Politically, the most prominent figure in the pre- and revolutionary eras was Francisco I. Madero, son of wealthy Coahuilan landowners in northern Mexico, who believed in mild social reforms and the basic principles of political liberty. He founded the Anti-Reelectionist Party to oppose Porfirio Díaz. A product of his class, he did not believe in structural change but did believe in equal opportunity for all.<sup>47</sup> His *Presidential Succession of 1910*, the Anti-Reelectionist Party platform, and his revolutionary 1910 Plan of San Luis Potosí advocated three important political items: no reelection, electoral reform (effective suffrage), and revision of the constitution of 1857. The most important of Madero's social and economic ideas concerned public education; he believed, as did the orthodox liberals, that education was the key to a modern Mexico.

More radical social ideas were offered by such revolutionaries as Pascual Orozco, who later turned against Madero; Francisco Villa; and Emiliano Zapata. Orozco, who expressed many popular social and economic views, some complementary to those of Flores Magón, also called for municipal autonomy from federal control in response to Díaz's centralization of political authority. Villa, from the northern state of Chihuahua, did not offer a true ideology or program, but the policies he implemented in the regions under his control reflected his radical social philosophy. In Chihuahua, for example, he nationalized large landholders' properties outright and, because of his own illiteracy (he learned to read only late in life), instituted a widespread primary school program. Zapata, who came from the rugged state of Morelos just south of Mexico City, fought largely over the issue of land. His ideology, expressed by his collaborators, appeared in his famous Plan de Ayala.<sup>48</sup>

With the exception of Madero, these men offered few specific political principles. Consequently, the political ideology of the revolution, with the possible exception of effective suffrage and no reelection, emerged piecemeal, either in the constitutional debates at Querétaro, before the writing of the 1917 constitution, or from actual experience.

One of the most important of these themes was Mexicanization, a broad form of nationalism. Simply stated, Mexico comes first, outsiders second. In the economic realm, it can be seen in placing Mexicans instead of foreigners in management positions, even if the investment is foreign in origin. An even more important expression of economic nationalism occurred in regard to resources: the formalization of Mexican control. With few exceptions, at least 51 percent of any enterprise had to be in the hands of Mexicans. But after 1988, desperate for foreign investment, the government loosened up many restrictions in most economic sectors.

Mexicanization spread to cultural and psychological realms. On a cultural level, the revolution gave birth to extraordinary productivity in art, music, and literature, in which methodology was often as important as the content. In the visual fields, the Mexicans revived the mural, an art form that could be viewed by large numbers of Mexicans rather than remain on the walls of private residences or inaccessible museums.<sup>49</sup> Political cartoons during and after the revolution blossomed. In literature, the social protest novel—the novel of the revolution—came to the fore. Often cynical or

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Mexicanization: a revolutionary principle stressing the importance of Mexicans and Mexico, enhancing their influence and prestige.

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highly critical, these works castigated not only the failures of the Porfiriato, but the apparent failures of the revolutionaries too.<sup>50</sup> Musicians paid attention to the indigenous heritage, even composing the classical *Indian Symphony*, whose roots lie in the native culture. Ballads and popular songs flourished throughout Mexico as each region made its contributions.<sup>51</sup>

Mexicanization also affected a line of intellectual thought known as *lo mexicano*, which was concerned with national or cultural identity, and pride in Mexican heritage. Henry Schmidt, one of the most insightful students of the Mexican cultural rebirth, assessed its impact:

The 1910 Revolution generated an unprecedented expansion of knowledge in Mexico. At the same time as it lessened the tensions of an unresponsive political system, it ushered in a new age of creation. If the post-Revolutionary political development cannot always be viewed favorably, the efforts to reorient thought toward a greater awareness of national conditions at least merit

commendation. Thus the 1920's is known as the period of "reconstruction" and "renaissance," when the country, having undergone its most profound dislocation since the Conquest, attempted to consolidate the gains its people had struggled for since the waning of the Porfiriato.<sup>52</sup>

Another important theme of the revolution was social justice. Economically, although not expressed specifically in the constitution, this included a fairer distribution of national income. Socially, and called for by nearly all revolutionary and intellectual thinkers, it involved expanded public education. Madero wanted to improve access. Many others promoted education as an indirect means to enhance economic opportunity, particularly for the Indians, whose integration into the mainstream mestizo culture could thereby be accomplished. A leading intellectual, José Vasconcelos, who made significant contributions to Mexican education, praised a coming "Cosmic race," suggesting that a racial mix would produce a superior, not inferior, culture.<sup>53</sup>

The revolution did not react adversely to a strong state. Instead, building on the administrative infrastructure created under the Porfiriato, postrevolutionary regimes contributed to its continued expansion. Yet unlike Díaz, the revolution heralded a *larger state role*, giving the state responsibilities not expected of a government before 1910. According to Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer, the construction of a new state incorporated "the first bold attempts at developing the state as an instrument of economic, educational, and cultural action and regulation."<sup>54</sup> For example, as a consequence of Mexicanization, the state gained control over subsoil resources and eventually became the administrator of extractive enterprises. The phenomenal growth in the value of the nation's oil in the 1970s cast the state in an even more important role. When the state nationalized foreign petroleum companies in 1938, it established national and international precedents elsewhere.<sup>55</sup> In later periods, the state came to control such industries as fertilizers, telephones, electricity, airlines, steel, and copper. In the mid-1980s the trend gradually began to be reversed.

The revolution stimulated the political liberalism that had lain dormant under the ideology of positivism during the last twenty years of the Porfiriato. Freedom of the press was revived during the revolution. The media underwent a regression in the 1920s, and although censorship continued to raise its head, the conditions under which the media operated were much improved. The most important principle of political liberalism—increased participation in governance expressed through effective suffrage—was given substance in Madero's election in 1911, probably Mexico's freest, but never returned to that level until 1997.<sup>56</sup>

The political mythology of the revolution, "Effective Suffrage, No Reelection," was stamped on official government documents until the 1970s.

Effective suffrage remains an ideal, but is close to being achieved in practice. On the other hand, no reelection, with but a few exceptions in the 1920s and 1930s, has become the rule. When General Alvaro Obregón tried to circumvent it in 1928 by forcing the congress to amend the constitution to allow him to run again after a four-year hiatus, he was elected but then assassinated before taking office. No president since has tried the maneuver. No elected executive, including mayors and governors, repeats officeholding, consecutively or otherwise. Legislators may repeat terms, but not consecutively, a concept introduced in the 1930s.

The revolution also had an extraordinary influence on Mexico's political leadership after 1920. Half the national political leaders born between 1870 and 1900 had participated in this violent event. Among those who held national office for the first time, 47 percent had fought on the side of the revolutionaries, 9 percent in opposition to these forces, and 2 percent on both sides. Presidents Alvaro Obregón (1920–1924) and Plutarco Elías Calles (1924–1928), as well as Díaz, recruited many of their wartime cronies. Through 1940, the presidents who succeeded them were, with one exception, generals who had fought in these battles, often under these two predecessors. As the data in Table 2-2 illustrate, veterans continued to dominate Mexican administrations from 1914 through 1934. As might be expected, the 1910 revolution introduced a different type of politician as well, one whose social origins were quite distinct from those of his noncombatant contemporary. In effect, the revolution reintroduced the importance of working-class origins among Mexico's leadership, since 72 percent of the public figures who were combat veterans were from working-class families, compared with only 34 percent who had middle- and upper-class back-grounds.

Another revolutionary outcome was the changed relationship between church and state. Once again, the seeds of orthodox liberalism appeared in the constitutional debates. Many of the revolutionaries eyed the church with

**Table 2-2** Revolutionary Experiences of National Politicians

Presidential Administration	Experience (%)				Total
	Revolutionary	Antirevolutionary	Both	None	
Madero, 1911–1913	28	4	4	64	100
Huerta, 1913–1914	5	48	8	39	100
Convention, 1914–1915	77	0	0	23	100
Carranza, 1914–1920	71	0	0	29	100
Obregón, 1920–1924	61	1	1	37	100
Calles, 1924–1928	56	1	1	42	100
Portes Gil, 1928–1930	58	0	0	42	100
Ortiz Rubio, 1930–1932	54	0	0	46	100
Rodríguez, 1932–1934	56	0	0	44	100

severe distrust and reinstated many of the most restrictive provisions advocated by the early liberals. Until 1992 these provisions could be found, unchanged, in the constitution. They include removing religion from primary education (Article 3), taking away the church's right to own real property (Article 27), and secularizing certain religious activities and restricting the clergy's potential political actions (Article 130). No clergy of any faith were permitted in their capacity as ministers to criticize Mexican laws or even to vote.

The breakup of large landholdings is also a primary economic and social product of revolutionary ideology. As part of the redistribution of land in Mexico after 1915, the government made the Indian *ejido* concept (village-owned lands) its own, distributing land to thousands of rural villages to be held in common for legal residents, who obtained use rights, not legal title, to it.<sup>57</sup> In effect, the government institutionalized the indigenous land system that the liberals and positivists had attempted to destroy. This structure remained unchanged until 1992.

The revolution also introduced a change in attitude toward labor. For the first time, strikes were legalized, and the right to collective bargaining was sanctioned. Provisions regarding hours and wages, at least for organized labor, were introduced. The 1917 constitution was the first to mention the concept of social security, although it was not implemented until 1943. Organized labor helped General Obregón defeat president Venustiano Carranza in the last armed confrontation of the revolutionary decade.

Finally, although this list is incomplete, the revolution gave greater emphasis to a sense of constitutionalism. In a political sense, constitutionalism provides legitimacy for a set of ideas expressed formally in the national document. It is not only a reference point for the goals of Mexican society after 1920, as a consequence of the revolution, but it also identifies the basic outline of political concepts and processes. The constitution of 1917 itself took on a certain level of prestige. Although many of its more radical social, economic, and political provisions are observed more in abeyance than reality, its contents and its prestige together influenced the values of successive generations.<sup>58</sup>

#### THE POLITICS OF PLACE: INTERFACE WITH THE UNITED STATES

The proximity of the United States has exercised an enormous influence on Mexico. As I argue, "The United States constitutes a crucial variable in the very definition of Mexico's modern political culture."<sup>59</sup> Beginning with inde-

pendence, the political leaders who sought solutions emphasizing federalism, and later the decentralizing principles of liberalism, borrowed many of their concepts from U.S. political thinkers and documents. In fact, the intellectual ideas provoked by U.S. independence from England provided a fertile literature from which independence precursors could also borrow.

The destiny of the two countries became intertwined politically in more direct ways as a consequence of the annexation of Texas, a northern province of New Spain. Immediately after Mexico won independence, large numbers of Americans began to settle in Texas, quickly outnumbering the Mexicans there. The differences within Texas between Mexicans and Americans and between Texas and the Mexican government led to armed conflict. The Mexican army under General Antonio López de Santa Anna lay siege to the Alamo in February 1836, but was routed from Texas later that year. Texas remained independent of Mexico until 1845, when the United States, by a joint congressional resolution, annexed it. This provoked another conflict, one with even more serious repercussions.<sup>60</sup>

Desirous of more territory, President James Polk used several incidents as a pretext for war. In 1846, U.S. troops drove deep into Mexico's heartland and, in addition to occupying outlying regions of the former Spanish empire in New Mexico and California, seized the port of Veracruz and Mexico City. In the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed on February 2, 1848, Mexico ceded more than half its territory to the United States. Seven years later, the Mexican government, again under Santa Anna, sold the United States a strip of land (in what is now southern Arizona and southern New Mexico), known as the Gadsen Purchase, although this time it was not done under duress.

The war left a justifiably bitter taste in the mouths of many Mexicans. As has been suggested, "The terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo are among the harshest imposed by a winner upon a loser in the history of the world."<sup>61</sup> More than any single issue, the terms established a relationship of distrust between the two nations. Physical incursion from the north took place twice more. Voices in the United States always seemed to call for annexations. Even as late as the first decade of the twentieth century, California legislators publicly advocated acquiring Baja California.

During the Mexican Revolution the United States repeatedly and directly or indirectly intervened in Mexican affairs. The intense personal prejudices or interests of its emissaries often determined U.S. foreign policy decisions. Henry Lane Wilson, ambassador during the Madero administration (1911–1913), played a role in its overthrow and in the failure to ensure the safety of Madero and his vice-president, who were murdered by counter-revolutionaries led by Felix Díaz and Victoriano Huerta. Huerta established himself in power, and the violent phase of the revolution began in earnest. President Woodrow Wilson removed the U.S. ambassador and sent personal

emissaries to evaluate Huerta. He decided to channel funds to the Constitutionals, revolutionaries who had remained loyal to Madero and to constitutional government. But after a minor incident involving U.S. sailors in the port of Tampico, Wilson used it as a pretext to order the occupation of the port of Veracruz, resulting in the deaths of numerous Mexicans.<sup>62</sup>

Wilson's high-handedness produced a widespread nationalistic response in Mexico that nearly brought Wilson's intention—to oust Huerta from the presidency—to naught. Mexicans alive at the time of the occupation recall discontinuing classes in English, switching back to Mexican cigarettes, and throwing away their Texas-style hats in symbolic protest. Young men as far away as Guadalajara, in western Mexico, readily joined volunteer companies to go fight the Americans.<sup>63</sup> But Huerta fell, and the North Americans did not invade and, indeed, soon left Veracruz.

After the Constitutionals' victory under Carranza, rebel chieftains began to bicker among themselves. They divided into two major camps: one led by Francisco Villa and Emiliano Zapata and the other by Álvaro Obregón and Carranza. After several major battles, Obregón defeated Villa's forces. In March 1916, after remnants of Villa's forces moved north and attacked Columbus, New Mexico, Wilson ordered a punitive expedition under General John "Black Jack" Pershing against Villa. The U.S. forces battled the Constitutionals, never caught Villa, and remained in Mexico until 1917.<sup>64</sup>

From this necessarily brief selection of historical examples, it is clear that Mexicans have reason to distrust the United States and to have created an extremely strong sense of nationalism, especially directed toward its northern neighbor. The economic, political, and cultural exchanges between the two countries, especially since the 1920s, have given rise to issues common to Mexico's relations in all parts of the world, as well as others peculiar to relations between Mexico and the United States. The geographic proximity of two such culturally and economically different societies has had numerous consequences for domestic politics and their respective national security agendas. These issues will be examined in a broader perspective in a later chapter. For now, I just want to emphasize that Mexico's nearness to the United States has noticeably affected its political and economic history and development.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout its recent history, Mexico, as both a colony and an independent nation, established patterns that have contributed heavily to the development

of its political model. Some of the more important remnants from the Spanish colonial period are the conflicts of social class, exacerbated by sharp social divisions. Catholicism, introduced as the official religion of the Spanish conquerors, has been equally significant. Its monopoly encouraged a cultural intolerance of other ideas or values and enabled a symbiotic, profitable relationship between the state and the church. The Spanish also fostered a strong sense of special interests, granting privileges to other selected groups, including the military, and ultimately contributing to a particularized civil-military relationship. These elements led to corporatism, an official relationship between important occupational groups or institutions and the state. The Spanish, through their own political structure, especially the viceroy, imposed three hundred years of authoritarian, centralized administration. Great powers accrued to the executive, to the neglect of other government branches. Restrictive economic policies discouraged the growth of a strong colonial economy, thus shoring up the role of the state versus that of an incipient private sector. The state's power and prestige attracted New Spain's most ambitious citizens.

Many features of the colonial period were further enhanced after independence. The conflicts between the liberals and conservatives, driven by an intolerance of countervails, produced ongoing civil war and anarchy. Although Mexico experimented briefly with a more decentralized form of government, authoritarian qualities were back in the saddle by the end of the nineteenth century. The presidency replaced the viceroyship in wielding power, and President Díaz expanded the size and importance of the executive branch, thereby continuing to enhance the state's image. Díaz introduced political stability and some economic development, yet he perpetuated the social inequalities inherited from the Spanish period. He also made sure that the military would have a large voice in the political system, leaving unresolved the matter of military subordination to civilian authority. The Spanish paternal traditions remained.

The revolution reactively introduced changes but in many respects retained some of the basic features from the previous two periods. One important innovation was Mexicanization, an outgrowth largely of Mexico's exploitation by foreigners and especially its proximity to the United States. Mexicanization strengthened Mexican values and culture as well as political nationalism. The revolution altered Mexicans' political rhetoric and social goals of legitimizing the needs and interests of lower-income groups and Indians. Yet instead of reducing the role of the state, it made the state into an even more comprehensive institution. The revolution also revived important principles of orthodox liberalism, including political liberties, suppression of the church's secular role, and decentralization of authority,

but a decade of civil violence and the need for effective leadership in the face of successive rebellions in the 1920s discouraged implementation of a federal, democratic system. Instead, the revolution left Mexico with a heritage of strong, authoritarian leadership, and military supremacy. Even so, it established the importance of constitutionalism, even if many of the constitution's liberal provisions were never enforced. The legitimacy of its concepts provided the basis for political liberalization under Presidents Salinas and Zedillo (1988–2000).

Finally, Mexico's long, troublesome relationship with the United States has implications for its political evolution and the functioning of its model. The level of the United States's economic influence in Mexico, and the United States seizure of more than half of Mexico's national territory, prompted Mexican nationalism and anti-Americanism. Mexico has had to labor under the shadow of its internationally powerful neighbor, a psychological as well as a practical, political burden. Historical experience and geographic proximity influenced many domestic policy decisions and perhaps subtly encouraged a strong, even authoritarian regime that could prevent the kind of instability and political squabbling that had left Mexico open to territorial depredation.

## NOTES

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16. *La formación del estado mexicano* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1984); Juan Felipe Leal, "El estado y el bloque en el poder en México," *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales* 35 (October-December 1989): 12ff.
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18. Edward A. Shils, *The Intellectual Between Tradition and Modernity: The Indian Situation* (The Hague: Mouton, 1961).
19. Glen Dealy, *The Public Man: An Interpretation of Latin American and Other Catholic Cultures* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), 8.
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21. For an excellent discussion of this in contemporary Mexico, see Larissa Lomnitz, "Horizontal and Vertical Relations and the Social Structure of Urban Mexico," *Latin American Research Review* 17 (1982): 52.
22. For the views of a leading theoretician, and the larger context of liberalism in Mexico, see Charles A. Hale's *Mexican Liberalism in the Age of Mora, 1821–1853* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968).
23. For many interesting interpretations of the origins of authoritarianism, see John H. Coatsworth, "Los orígenes del autoritarismo moderno en México," *Foro Internacional* 16 (October-December 1975): 205–32; and Lorenzo Meyer, "The Origins of Mexico's Authoritarian State, Political Control in the Old and New Regimes," in *Authoritarianism in Mexico*, eds. Luis Reyna and Richard Weinert (Philadelphia: ISHI, 1977), 3–22.

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31. *Inscripciones*, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Escuela Nacional Preparatoria, official registration records.
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38. For excellent case studies of these interlocking economic-political families, see Mark Wasserman, *Persistent Oligarchs: The Political Economy of Chihuahua, Mexico* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993); and Gilbert Joseph and Allen Wells, "Yucatán: Elite Politics and Rural Insurgency," in *Provinces of the Revolution: Essays on Regional Mexican History, 1910–1929*, eds. Thomas Benjamin and Mark Wasserman (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990).

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41. A nice comparison between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be found in Aldo Flores-Quiroga, "Legitimacy, Sequencing, and Credibility," in *The Divine Charter, Constitutionalism and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Mexico*, ed. Jaime Rodríguez (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 339–50.
42. This latter variable has been strongly emphasized. However, more careful empirical examination suggests the following conclusion: "Future analysis of continuity and turnover in Mexico and elsewhere needs to examine the interrelationship between generational and individual political mobility to determine which, if either, is a more useful variable of political upheaval. I am suggesting that *intra-generational* mobility, measured by access to political office for the first time, may be far more significant in explaining political stability and instability than *generational* access to power, measured by age cohort alone." See my *Political Recruitment Across Two Centuries*, 45.
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53. José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica: Misión de la raza iberoamericana* (Paris: Agencia Mundial de Librerías, 1925).
54. Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer, *In the Shadow of the Mexican Revolution: Contemporary Mexican History, 1910–1989* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 78.
55. Paul Sigmund, *Multinationals in Latin America: The Politics of Nationalization* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 81.
56. The August 1994 presidential elections could be said to have been the most successful in the level of participation and the degree of integrity on election day until the July, 2000 contest. However, the larger electoral setting in which these elections occurred left much to be desired, especially since the conditions were favorable to the government party. An excellent discussion of this can be found in "Mexico's Electoral Aftermath and Political Future," *Memoria* of the papers presented at a binational conference, University of Texas, Austin, September 2–3, 1994 (Austin: Mexican Center, Institute of Latin American Studies, 1994).
57. For an account of these developments, see Eyer N. Simpson's classic, *The Ejido: Mexico's Way Out* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937); Nathan Whetten, *Rural Mexico* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), the most comprehensive picture of land-tenure conditions; Paul Lamartine Yates, *Mexico's Agricultural Dilemma* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1981). In 1992, the Mexican government introduced radical reforms in the *ejido* land structure. See Claire Poole, "Land and Life," *Forbes*, April 29, 1991, 45–46, and *El Financiero International*, March 30, 1992, 11.
58. The best discussion of this consequence can be found in Frank Brandenburg, *The Making of Modern Mexico* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 10–11. For the state's role in evolving a revolutionary myth, see Thomas Benjamin, *La Revolución: México's Great Revolution as Memory, Myth and History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000).
59. John H. Coatsworth and Carlos Rico, eds., *Images of Mexico in the United States* (La Jolla, Calif.: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, UCSD, 1989), 10.
60. For background, see Karl M. Schmitt, *Mexico and the United States, 1821–1973: Conflict and Coexistence* (New York: Wiley, 1974), 51ff.
61. Josefina Vázquez Zoraida and Lorenzo Meyer, *The United States and Mexico* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 49.
62. Robert E. Quirk, *An Affair of Honor: Woodrow Wilson and the Occupation of Veracruz* (New York: Norton, 1962), 95ff.
63. Interview with Ernesto Robles Levi, Mexico City, May 21, 1985.
64. For a firsthand account of this experience by a U.S. officer on the expedition, see Colonel Frank Tompkins, *Chasing Villa* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Military Service Publishing Company, 1934).