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Author(s): Joseph L. Klesner

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The End of Mexico's One-Party Regime

Joseph L. Klesner, *Kenyon College*

Vicente Fox's unexpected victory in Mexico's July 2, 2000 presidential elections put a definitive end to Mexico's one-party regime. Until now the longest ruling party in the world, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) failed to turn out those who have traditionally voted for PRI in numbers adequate to match the millions of Mexicans who voted for change by supporting Fox. The Fox win means that Mexico has accomplished the rare feat of ending an authoritarian regime by voting it out of office, an event that comes at the end of a process of building an electoral opposition to the former ruling party that stretches back nearly a quarter century. However, while Fox defeated his PRI rival, Francisco Labastida, by a healthy six-point margin—42.5 to 36.1% of votes cast—he failed to sweep in a majority of legislators from his Alliance for Change (a coalition of Fox's National Action Party [PAN] and the Mexican Green Party [PVEM]). Thus, Fox faces a congress in which he will need constantly to build majorities to support his legislative program and in which the threat of a deadlock will loom continually.

Fox's victory reflects the new competitiveness in Mexican politics. Once able to expect to gain 70% of the votes, PRI garnered about half of the ballots in the 1988 and 1994 presidential elections, and took less than 40% of votes in the 1997 mid-term congressional elections. In 1997, though, PRI's most threaten-

ing rival was not Fox's PAN but the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who won the Mexico City mayor's race that year (Klesner 1997) and who ran as PRD's presidential candidate in 2000, his third outing as the left's standard bearer. In the 1990s, opposition candidates from both PAN and PRD have won the municipal presidencies of most of Mexico's largest cities and many of its provincial capitals. Before the July 2000 elections, PAN politicians governed six of the nation's 32 states and PRD officials governed five, mostly in coalition with other parties. In July 2000, PAN added two gubernatorial seats while PRD's Andrés Manuel López Obrador retained for his party the position of *jefe de gobierno* in the Federal District, the equivalent of mayor of Mexico City. Three parties effectively compete for power in Mexico now, where one once governed with little more than token opposition. PAN's unprecedented success in the July balloting, however, has its two rivals reeling with internal conflicts about how to react to the changes in Mexican politics.

What was at stake in Mexico's 2000 presidential and congressional elections? How can Vicente Fox's surprising victory over the daunting PRI be explained? What will be the consequences of the Fox win for Mexican democracy? I will briefly explore each of these questions.

The Election of 2000: The Stakes and the Campaign

The Centrality of Regime Issues

From the beginning of his unofficial campaign for president in July 1997, Vicente Fox made clear that his quest for office was inspired by the desire to throw PRI out of office. Mexico's parties do differ on policy prescriptions. Fox's PAN, for instance, has a more conservative

orientation on social issues (improving church-state relations, banning abortion, and regulating sexuality) than does PRI, although the two parties' leaders have been close on economic policy views for more than a decade. Since the mid-1980s, however, the primary cleavage issue in Mexican politics has been the future of the one-party regime (Molinar Horcasitas 1991). Indeed, although journalists and scholars usually label PAN center-right because of its social conservatism and its support for market-based economic restructuring and PRI as centrist because of its secularism and its long history of supporting a large state role in the economy, ordinary Mexicans fix PAN to the left of PRI because they see PRI as favoring the status quo, in regime terms.¹

PRI's hegemony began when it was founded as the National Revolutionary Party in 1929. The party took on a corporatist organizational structure when President Lázaro Cárdenas (father of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas) renamed it the Party of the Mexican Revolution in 1938, with "pillars" for the peak associations of peasants, workers, and the "popular sector" (primarily teachers and state bureaucrats). The party took on its current name in 1946, the same year that the Mexican congress passed a highly restrictive electoral law that gave PRI the capacity to cancel the registration of its rivals and essentially oversee its own elections by controlling the Federal Electoral Commission (now known as the Federal Electoral Institute [IFE]) (Molinar Horcasitas 1991). From the 1940s until the late 1970s, the party spectrum included PRI, PAN, and a couple of minor parastatal parties. PRI hegemony was based on a lack of rivals in the vast Mexican countryside and an ability to manipulate the electoral results in the cities if and when PAN put up a stiff challenge.

In 1997, the former ruling party suffered its worst defeat to date

Joseph L. Klesner is professor of political science and director of the International Studies Program at Kenyon College. His research has focused on Mexican electoral politics and has appeared in several edited volumes as well as Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos, Comparative Politics, PS, and Latin American Research Review. He has been supported by Fulbright grants, Kenyon College faculty development grants, and a research grant from the American Political Science Association.

TABLE 1
Mexican Presidential Election Results, July 2, 2000

	Votes	Percentage	Adjusted Percentage
Vicente Fox (Alliance for Change)	15,988,740	42.5	43.4
Francisco Labastida (PRI)	13,576,385	36.1	36.9
Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (Alliance for Mexico)	6,259,385	16.6	17.0
Gilberto Rincón Gallardo (Democracia Social)	592,075	1.6	1.6
Manuel Camacho (PCD)	208,261	0.6	0.6
Porfirio MuZoz Ledo (PARM)	157,119	0.4	0.4
Unregistered	32,457	0.0	0.0
Nullified	789,838	2.1	–
Total	37,604,260	99.9	99.9
Turnout		64.0	

Source: Instituto Federal Electoral (www.ife.org.mx).

when the opposition parties denied PRI a majority in the Chamber of Deputies, forcing then-President Zedillo to govern in the context of divided government. That victory, combined with the win by Cárdenas in the 1997 Federal District election and several major triumphs in gubernatorial and municipal elections by PAN and PRD candidates from 1995 onward, created the sense that PRI could be beaten. Still, entering the 2000 presidential race, PRI officials hoped to count on a major economic recovery² and their party's long record of governing the nation to pull out just one more presidential win.

Seeking to capitalize on the sense that PRI was now vulnerable to defeat, Fox crafted his campaign message to emphasize the regime issue. Fox's campaign slogan, "*Ya es la hora del cambio*" ("Now is the hour of change"), was usually abbreviated to the simple word "*Ya*" on posters, which in this context translates roughly to "Enough already!" The "Y" in *Ya* could be formed by raising one's arm and forming a "V" with one's fingers in Winston Churchill's universally-understood victory symbol. Lowering the index finger—which Fox did publicly on at least one occasion—would indicate to PRI the Fox campaign's true feelings toward the ruling party.

A very high percentage of voters (43%) reported to the Mexico City

newspaper *Reforma's* exit pollsters that the main reason they voted as they did was "for a change" (see Table 2). Among the issues ranked at the top of citizens' concerns about their nation has been corruption.³ In surveys conducted over the past five years, more than half of Mexicans reported that they had little or no confidence in any of the major national institutions (the government, congress, the police, political parties, the mass media) except the Catholic Church (Klesner 2000). Fox effectively tapped into Mexicans' frustrations about their political regime when he made it his main theme.

The Emergence of Modern Campaigns

Throughout the campaign, Fox emphasized that his goal was to remove PRI from the presidency and, thereby, transform the Mexican regime. To do that, he adopted a variety of strategies novel in the Mexican context. He openly sought his party's presidential nomination more than two years before the formal nomination stage. To help finance this precampaign and to gain new supporters, Fox created an organization called Amigos de Fox outside the structure of the PAN. Amigos de Fox remains an enigma both in the scale of its financial contributions to Fox, which certainly counted

in the millions of dollars (Espinosa 1998), and in the number of its adherents, which Fox at one point said was 4.5 million (Torre 2000). Amigos de Fox represented a major effort to transcend the financial and human limitations of Mexico's opposition parties by building a mass, nonpartisan association dedicated to electing a single politician.

Fox also sought to court friends among the political elite. His campaign team included several Mexican intellectuals, most notably Jorge Castañeda and Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, leftist political analysts and activists who saw in Fox an opportunity to evict PRI from the presidency. Other prominent intellectuals and non-PAN opposition politicians declared their support of Fox late in the campaign. This willingness to draw in political supporters from across the political and partisan spectrum reinforced in some PAN leaders a suspicion of Fox. For the Mexico City-based PAN leadership, Fox represented the quintessential "barbarian of the North," a businessman who had joined the party during the economic crisis of the 1980s, who lacked a consistent and elaborate ideology, and who demonstrated a willingness to abandon the formalities of Mexican political discourse while on campaign (Dillon 1999).

Indeed, Fox, a former head of Coca-Cola de México and an entrepreneur in the shoe-making and agro-export industries of his native state of Guanajuato, which he governed from 1994 until 1999, led a rollicking campaign—another of his new contributions to Mexican politics. He dressed in what we would call Western gear—boots, jeans, an open-collared shirt, a cowboy hat, and a giant "Fox" belt buckle—to emphasize his popular roots and to argue that he has been a working man all his life. Political commentators and his opponents dwelt on what they regarded as the vulgar language Fox used on the stump. He did not shy away from openly questioning his main rival's manhood, calling Labastida a "sissy" and "shorty" (Fox is 6'6" while Labastida is almost a foot shorter), and he always emphasized that Labastida was

TABLE 2
The Political and Attitudinal Bases of Fox's Victory

	Labastida	Fox	Cárdenas	Total
Interest in Campaign				
Much	33	49	16	47
Some	37	44	16	30
Little	39	39	19	17
None	44	36	17	5
Main Reason for Vote				
For a change	15	66	18	43
Always vote for the same candidate	50	28	18	9
Obligation	56	31	13	2
Custom	82	12	5	7
He's the least bad	40	37	20	4
Loyalty to the party	79	8	12	5
Candidate's proposals	42	37	17	22
Other	43	34	22	6
Don't know	55	27	14	2
Welfare beneficiaries				
Yes	56	27	16	15
No	32	48	17	83
Don't know	28	54	28	2
Evaluation of President Zedillo				
Approve	47	38	12	66
Disapprove	11	60	26	29
Don't know	28	47	21	5
Vote in 1994				
Zedillo (PRI)	65	25	8	36
Fernández (PAN)	5	88	6	18
Cárdenas (PRD)	6	30	61	13
Did not vote	31	50	16	24

Source: Reforma Investigación 2000. N = 3,313.

a career politician in the graft-ridden PRI while he had had to struggle against corruption as a businessman. Negative campaigning had never been a major element of Mexican electoral politics, but it entered in a massive way in 1999–2000.

The parties' capacities to run modern, media-intensive campaigns received a major boost between the last presidential election in 1994 and the 2000 race when the 1996 electoral reform made available ample public monies, both for ordinary operations and to finance campaigns (split 50-50 into those two broad areas). In addition, Mexican electoral law now limits private funding of parties and campaigns to 49% of the total a party receives from the IFE and it requires that 90% of the campaign be financed by the public monies. The public funds are distributed to the parties based on a com-

plex formula that seeks to reward the parties somewhat in proportion to their relative popularity (as measured by the last election), and the distributions have been generous. For example, PRI received almost US\$100 million of total public funding in 2000, half of which it could spend on its campaigns, and it could raise almost another \$50 million from private sources.⁴ The result was that Mexico was awash in campaign money,⁵ and that campaign money was directed especially to television, where the evening's soap operas and newscasts were financed by the usual detergent commercials and by spots for presidential candidates whose production values rivaled those of U.S. candidates.

PRI had not built its hegemony on slick television advertising, however, even though it learned how to

run a modern campaign in the 1990s. The 2000 campaign posed an intriguing question: Could the modern public relations-driven campaign of Fox overcome the organizational advantages of an incumbent party that had built clientelist networks throughout the nation over the previous 70 years? Given PRI's reputation for getting out the votes of those who had little reason to voluntarily support the ruling party, many journalists and officials for nongovernmental organizations worried that the party's clientelistic practices would yield victory yet again. Both Mexican and foreign newspapers and NGOs focused much attention on what they alleged was an effort by PRI officials to use governmental resources to buy the votes of recipients of governmental aid or to coerce poor voters into casting ballots for the ruling party out of fear that government programs would be canceled in communities that voted for the opposition.⁶ Ample evidence suggests that PRI officials did attempt to buy and coerce voters (Global Exchange 2000b). However, despite concerns about the PRI's organizational advantages on election day, the PRI apparatus obviously did not carry the election for its candidate.

Explaining the Fox Victory

Who Voted for Fox?

In part, as Wayne Cornelius (2000) has argued, "Demographic trends have finally caught up with the PRI." PRI's base of electoral support is in rural areas and poor states, populated with older voters who remember the years of the "Mexican miracle," with illiterates and peasants who are easily coerced, and with housewives who have traditionally feared change (Klesner 1993). However, a smaller and smaller share of Mexico's population matches this profile. Mexico is now more than 75% urban; its electorate is populated with 12 million voters who could not vote six years ago; most Mexicans work in the industrial or service sectors; and the illiteracy rate is only about 10%. Urban

TABLE 3
The Social Bases of Fox's Victory

	Labastida	Fox	Cárdenas	Total
Gender				
Male	32	47	20	52
Female	40	43	14	48
Age				
18–24	32	50	17	18
25–29	34	47	16	16
30–34	34	49	15	15
35–39	37	47	12	13
40–45	35	41	20	11
45–50	37	44	18	8
50–54	40	46	13	6
55–59	43	32	24	5
60+	42	35	22	8
Education				
None	46	30	21	8
Primary	46	35	18	34
Secondary	34	49	15	22
Preparatory	28	53	16	21
University	22	60	15	15
Employment				
Public sector	37	41	19	18
Private sector	31	53	15	26
Self-employed	36	42	19	24
Student	19	59	17	5
Housewife	43	41	15	25
Region				
North	37	50	12	23
Center-West	37	48	12	18
Center	34	43	20	35
South	37	41	20	24

Source: Reforma Investigación 2000. N = 3,313.

voters are less easily herded to the polls and forced to vote for the ruling party than are peasants; young voters don't remember any part of the Mexican miracle, and thus feel no need to thank PRI for its efforts; and educated citizens are more apt to seriously consider alternatives to the way they or their parents have voted in the past.

As Table 3 indicates, Fox walked away with the youth vote, especially that of students, while Labastida scored much better with the elderly. Fox's advantage over his PRI rival among those with higher levels of education approached three to one. Housewives continued to favor Labastida, but by a close margin. Fox's ascendance was particularly notable among private sector employees and students, while those in the public sector were more likely than their privately-employed counterparts to

stick with PRI, although even among state employees the PAN candidate came in first. Cárdenas, like Labastida, did better among the elderly, those with lower levels of education, and those employed in the public sector than their younger, better educated, privately-employed counterparts. These trends are not new; they continue voting patterns first observed in 1994. In 2000, however, Fox was able to convince larger shares of each of the social groups that have traditionally supported the opposition to vote for him.

Fox also gained the votes of those who paid close attention to the campaign and of those who said the main reason they cast their votes as they did was "for a change" (see Table 2). Indeed, recent studies of Mexican voting behavior have concluded that socioeconomic and demographic characteristics explain the

vote less well than voters' attitudinal structure (Domínguez and McCann 1996). Fox's campaign advisors seem to have appreciated this insight as they sought to convert those who voted PRD in recent elections to Fox by urging them to cast a *voto útil*, a strategic vote to oust PRI. As Table 2 shows, Fox took 30% of those who voted for Cárdenas in 1994. Likewise, those who had voted against the Labastida nomination in the PRI primary presented an opportunity to Fox. *Reforma's* exit poll found that 53% of those who had voted for Madrazo in November's primary chose Fox in July. Of course, those who disapproved of President Zedillo's job performance were relatively easy picking for the PAN candidate.

The Critical Role of Turnout

A key to explaining the Fox triumph comes from turnout statistics. In the federal electoral districts carried by the congressional candidates of the Alliance for Change, turnout averaged 66.2%. In contrast, participation only reached an average of 59.6% in the districts won by PRI deputy candidates and 63.1% in those taken by the Alliance for Mexico. PRI had built its hegemony on its capacity to turn out voters in rural Mexico. In July 2000, it failed at this essential task.

The overall turnout rate in July 2000 reached 64%, a respectable rate of participation, but not historically high by Mexican standards. In 1994, a crisis year, turnout was 78%. A rigorous, multivariate analysis of survey data gathered during the 2000 presidential election season indicates that those more likely to turn out on July 2, 2000 were older voters, those with higher incomes, those who attend church more often, those who report high interest in politics, those who followed the campaign closely, and, importantly, those who perceived that the electoral results would be respected (Klesner and Lawson 2001). In short, Mexico's profile of electoral participation now mirrors that of more established democracies, whereas in the past voter turnout was high where the PRI's organs of

TABLE 4
Composition of the Mexican Congress, 2000–03

	Chamber of Deputies				Senate			
	Vote %	District Seats	PR Seats	Total Seats	Vote %	State Seats	PR Seats	Total Seats
Alliance for Change	38.3	141	82	223	38.1	38	13	51
PAN				208				46
PVEM				15				5
PRI	36.9	131	78	209	36.7	47	13	60
Alliance for Mexico	18.7	38	40	68	18.9	11	6	17
PRD				53				15
PT				9				0
Other alliance parties				6				2
Other parties	3.8	0	0	0	3.1	0	0	0
Nullified	2.3	–	–	–	2.3	–	–	–
Total	100.0	300	200	500	100.0	96	32	128

Source: Instituto Federal Electoral (www.ife.org.mx).

PAN = National Action Party

PVEM = Ecological Green Party of Mexico

PRI = Institutional Revolutionary Party

PRD = Democratic Revolutionary Party

PT = Labor Party

clientelist control operated most effectively—among the poor and the politically disengaged.

Consequences for Mexican Democracy

This election will have unprecedented impacts on Mexico's political development whether or not Fox governs successfully. His election ends the one-party hegemony of PRI and it likely will bolster democratic values among the Mexican citizenry. Indeed, during the course of the presidential campaign, Mexicans' perceptions of how democratic their country is grew markedly. In the Mexico 2000 panel study, for instance, 41% of respondents considered the nation to be democratic in February. The share grew to 44% in May, 48% in June, and 63% in mid-July, after Fox's victory.⁷ I cannot explore all of the consequences of this election for Mexican democracy, but I will consider three broad areas of challenges Fox will face during his six-year term: divided government, the party system, and pressing political issues.

Divided Government, Again

More Mexicans split their tickets in 2000 than ever before, with the result that the congressional candidates for the Alliance for Change received considerably fewer votes than their presidential standard bearer. A divided legislature in both houses is the outcome (see Table 4). The Alliance for Change took the largest number of seats in the Chamber of Deputies (223), but Fox's own party will only have 208 of those deputies while PRI will have 209. In the Senate, in contrast, PRI took the first plurality with 60 seats, Fox's coalition took 51, and the Alliance for Mexico took 17. PRI's greater success in Senate contests can be attributed to the unusual rules by which senators are chosen. In effect, the PAN/PVEM coalition finished third in nine states, mostly in the south, gaining no seats in those states, while PRI finished third only in the Federal District (Mexico City).⁸ This outcome leaves Fox's coalition 13 seats short of half the seats in the Senate.

Even if the Alliance for Change had won a majority in each chamber, Fox would not have enjoyed the

same level of party discipline exhibited by PRI legislators over the years, especially given that some members of his coalition would belong to PVEM. With divided houses, his challenge will be yet greater. Although Fox has opened his cabinet and made other high-level appointments to highly qualified individuals regardless of partisan affiliation, such an effort to reach out to other parties to staff the executive branch may mean little for executive-legislative relations. Fox certainly will not be able to form a coalition in the congress to support his government, nor need he do so given that Mexico does not have a parliamentary regime. Both PRI and PRD legislators have promised that they will be in opposition to Fox, although some leaders of each party have indicated a willingness to work with the new government on an issue-by-issue basis (Dresser 2000; Mercado 2000), a practice followed by Zedillo during the 1997-2000 legislature (Casar 2000). If Fox can build links to PRI positions on economic policy and to PRD positions on issues of political reform and the restructuring of the state, he should be able to pursue his legislative

agenda without undue constraints. Much, however, depends on the discipline of each of those parties' legislative delegations. Finally, I should note that Fox governed in Guanajuato with a state legislature in which PAN had no majority, so he has experience leading a divided government.

Future of the Party System

The discipline of PRD and PRI representatives will be a key political issue because the July election has produced deep fissures in each party. While Cárdenas and the PRI's Manuel Bartlett, a leader of more traditional party bosses, both came out with early statements that their parties would not cooperate with Fox (Dillon 2000; Sandoval 2000), neither speaks for all his party's members.

The underlying problem for PRI is that it was not created to contend for power but simply to be the party that would always be in power. The party has been inclusive in terms of the social origins of its recruits and their ideological orientations for decades. That approach served PRI well when it governed, but it may produce incoherence when the party joins the opposition. Recognizing this problem, some PRI leaders, including southern governors like Tabasco's Roberto Madrazo, have urged the party to abandon the neoliberalism of Salinas and Zedillo and to return to the party's populist and economic nationalist roots (Cornelius 2000). Others associated with Labastida and PRI's technocratic wing are less willing to give up the globalizing orientation that has recently characterized the party. These tensions may cause PRI to split into two or more parties and could make it easier for Fox to find enough PRI legislators to support his initiatives.

Since its July defeat, the former ruling party has suffered more setbacks than successes in state-level elections. In Chiapas, once a bastion of the party, a coalition of eight opposition parties including both PRD and PAN defeated PRI's candidate in August. In September, however, PRI won back three important municipalities in Veracruz it had lost

three years ago. A hard-fought gubernatorial contest in Tabasco in October poised the hand-picked candidate of Madrazo against a PRD challenger in a race that everyone understood would shape the future of PRI. A clear victory for Madrazo's candidate would have given him an upper hand in the struggle to lead PRI into the twenty-first century. Unfortunately for Madrazo, the Tabasco election was marked by many irregularities and the federal electoral authorities overturned the PRI candidate's 1% margin of victory. An interim governor has been named. Meanwhile, in the large state of Jalisco, where PAN had held the state government, PRI's candidate narrowly failed to win the November gubernatorial race and PAN retained the statehouse.

PRD also faces difficulties. Cárdenas failed in his third bid for the presidency and his 16.6% of the vote was a full 2% below that of his coalition's congressional candidates. Although other PRD leaders have avoided blaming Cárdenas personally for the party's defeats in July, outside observers have argued that the party needs new leadership more able than Cardenas to forge links with a society rapidly embracing globalization. But Cárdenas, who still espouses revolutionary nationalism, is the central figure holding the party together. If he steps down, the rivalries of the leaders of its factions could tear PRD apart. Party President Amalia García recently stated that she spends 85% of her time dealing with internal disputes (Fine-man 2000).

PAN, too, will confront challenges even as Fox ascends the presidency. Fox's relations with other party leaders have been mixed at best (Jáquez 2000), and many aspiring office-seekers from PAN were disappointed when Fox carried out his promises to staff his administration with individuals from the private sector and all parties. He will not be the party leader in the way that PRI presidents were party heads. PAN's national organization remains weak, but party governors seem to be building state-level organizations that could serve as bases for a

strengthened national apparatus, or rivals to it. How the Amigos de Fox will be integrated into the party apparatus also remains an issue (Montes and Vera 2000). Moreover, many PAN leaders worry that the party's identity will be compromised by the ascendance of the ideologically eclectic Fox. It should be pointed out, however, that PAN's ideological purity slowed its emergence as a modern catch-all party, which it now seems poised to become.

Just as PAN legislators may find Fox a poor standard bearer, Fox might find it difficult to deal with PAN legislators. Already, elements within the party have pushed political initiatives that Fox would prefer not to act upon. Most notably, the PAN-dominated state legislature of Guanajuato—the state Fox formerly governed—passed a bill in August outlawing abortions even for victims of rape. Fox said he would not promote a similar law at the national level (LaFranchi 2000). However, the upsurge of the socially conservative PAN will certainly bring moral issues onto the national agenda with greater polarization of the Mexican public likely to be one result. The emergence of such matters will give opposition leaders issues on which they can take stands clearly different from PAN, thereby preserving a support base and a reason for being.

Unresolved Issues and Policy Initiatives

Four additional issues deserve special mention. First, Fox campaigned on a promise to wipe out corruption and impunity. He will be under pressure to investigate corruption in past governments and to reopen criminal cases that many suspect previous governments closed in order to protect powerful PRI officials. Many Mexicans would also like to see former president Salinas prosecuted for corruption. Resolving old criminal cases and investigating corruption may be important in establishing a culture respectful of law and order in Mexico, but they will be politically costly to pursue and a burden on the time of the new administration. Fox may prefer to get on with the business of governing

and resolving other issues, such as the still-growing gap between the rich and the poor and the persistence of guerilla insurrections.

Mexico's neoliberal development strategy has aggravated the maldistribution of its income and wealth, both in personal terms and regionally. The north and center-west have prospered from the country's incorporation into the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), while the south has not. Peasants and urban poor who have been marginalized for decades have become more marginalized as globalization has proceeded. PRI's defeat brought with it expectations that an opposition president would be able to solve Mexico's development problems. These problems have proved intractable for decades, however, and Fox's PAN supports a market-based development strategy. Hence, any resolution of Mexico's distribution dilemma will not come soon and under Fox probably only as the result of the trickling down of any additional economic growth he can achieve. Fox has pledged to invest in education, a promising way to promote the betterment of Mexico's poor, but paying for improvements in education will be costly and Fox has already been criticized for stating that taxes must be increased (Pérez 2000; Sarmiento 2000).

In perhaps his most well-known (at least to audiences in the United States) policy statement, Fox suggested that the NAFTA arrangements be revised to permit freer flow of labor between Mexico and its northern neighbors. In general, Fox's business experience seems to lead him to prefer free trade, but his closest foreign policy advisors, Castañeda and Aguilar Zinser, now foreign minister and national security advisor, respectively, have been more skeptical of NAFTA. Fox, thus

far, has traveled broadly to visit foreign leaders and seems inclined to follow a foreign policy path more independent of U.S. interests than have his recent predecessors.

Fox also hopes to quell the insurgencies in Chiapas, Guerrero, and other southern states that have persisted over the past seven years. To the extent that opposition candidates can dislodge PRI hardliners from positions of power in those states and localities, Fox will face fewer barriers to social peace. PRI lost Chiapas' gubernatorial election to the candidate of an opposition alliance that includes all parties other than PRI in August 2000. Fox has promised to work with the new governor to bring peace to that troubled state. However, most of the guerrilla groups oppose the neoliberal development model on the grounds that it unjustly impoverishes the already poor peasants of southern Mexico. Since Fox does not propose to change the development model significantly, this cause of guerrilla unrest will likely remain. As its first significant act, Fox's government made overtures to the leader of the Chiapas rebels, Subcommandante Marcos, by withdrawing some troops from the state and dismantling military checkpoints. Peace talks have resumed (Thompson 2000).

Finally, Fox's most important policy initiatives will involve reforming the state itself. Even before his inauguration, he enpaneled a Commission for the Reform of the State and appointed Pofirio Muñoz Ledo to lead it. Muñoz Ledo is a former PRI and PRD leader who gave his support to Fox late in the presidential campaign. Reform of the state has at least three dimensions: disentangling PRI from the government, re-

organizing the executive branch, and strengthening Mexican federalism. The first task is necessary because Mexico has no merit-based civil service and no one really knows how deeply into the bureaucracy political appointments reach. Many Mexican bureaucrats have a technocratic orientation, which should suit PAN and Fox.

Fox has already stated that he will eliminate the Ministry of Agrarian Reform; Salinas ended agrarian reform a decade ago, so the ministry is superfluous. Another ministry he plans to restructure is the Attorney General's Office, where corruption and relationships with drug traffickers have undermined the administration of law. Part of the restructuring would include creating a Federal Agency of Investigation (modeled loosely on the FBI) to replace the Federal Judicial Police. The Ministry of the Interior (*Gobernación*) will also have to be restructured if Fox wishes to eliminate bastions of authoritarianism. Finally, PAN officials and Fox have advocated greater autonomy for Mexico's states and municipalities and achieving this will require a rearrangement of the nation's excessively centralized fiscal system.

Conclusion

Mexicans took a large step toward consolidating their democracy by electing Vicente Fox. In so doing, they have brought democracy to their nation by a peaceful and constitutional path, a rarity among countries in the region. Redoubts of authoritarianism do remain in the complex Mexican political system and dislodging them will pose a challenge to the new Fox administration. However, Mexicans have much about which to be proud as they open the twenty-first century.

Notes

1. On an 11-point scale, with 0 representing the far left and 10 the far right, respondents to a February survey placed the PRI at 6.8, the PAN at 5.5, and the PRD at 3.7. Those same respondents placed themselves at 6.5 (Mexico 2000 Panel Study, First Wave; N = 2370).

2. GDP grew by 3.7% in 1999 and is projected to grow by between 4.5 and 5% in 2000, according to the web site of the Finance Ministry (www.shcp.gob.mx).

3. In February 2000, Mexicans ranked corruption second, after poverty, when asked,

"What would you say is the most important problem that confronts the country today?"

4. For a thorough report on campaign finance, see Washington Office on Latin America (2000).

5. The IFE allocated 1.5 billion pesos of public

funds for the campaigns (more than \$150 million), and an identical amount for other party functions during 2000 (see de Swaan 2000).

6. See Global Exchange (2000a) and Corchado and Iliff (2000).

7. The question asked was "Do you consider that today Mexico is a democracy or is not a democracy?"

8. For the Senate, three senators are chosen in each state. The party winning the plu-

rality of Senate votes in a state is awarded two seats and the party finishing second gets the third. Thirty-two Senate seats (one-quarter of that body) are chosen from PR lists in a single national district.

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