



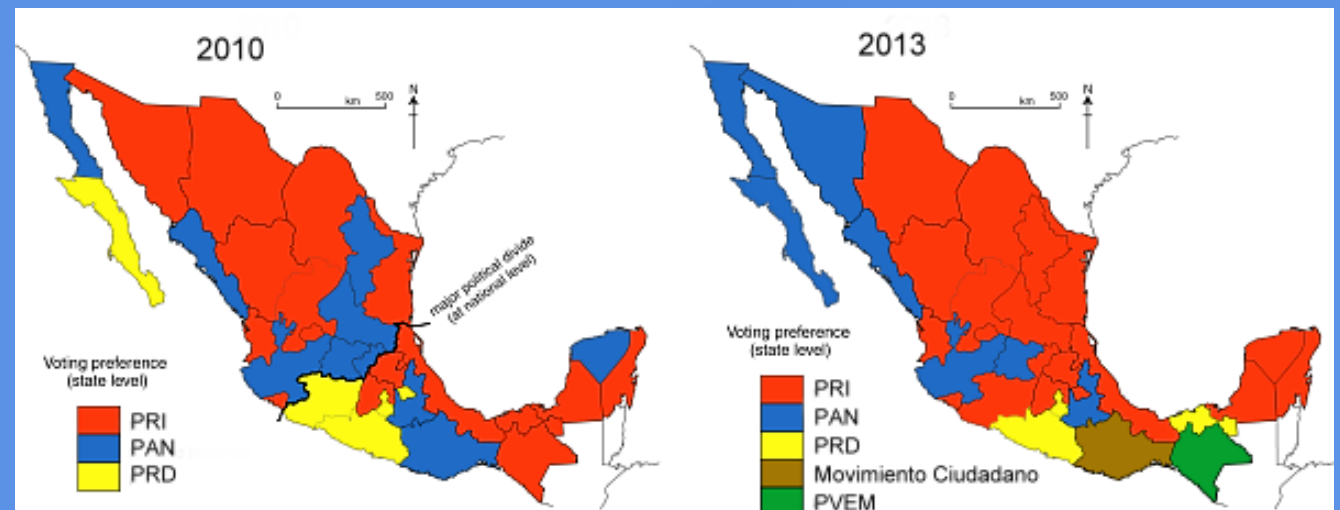
# Structure of Governance: Mexico

# Overview

- Current constitution adopted in 1917
  - Very similar to United States constitution
- Reliant on *Camarillas* system
  - Patron-Client system in which “patrons” gain support through the trade of favors and obligations
    - Still important but diminishing due to more fair elections and complicated urban centers
- Traditionally a state-corporatists state
  - Centralized authoritarian power that allows outside input
  - Classified as a middle developed state
- Universal suffrage for all over 18

# Major Political Parties

- PRI: small town or rural, less educated, older, poorer
- PAN: north, middle-class professional or business, urban, better educated, religious
- PRD: younger, politically active, from central states, some education, small town or urban, some middle class/older supporters



# Elections in Mexico

- Direct election for President, Senate (6yrs) , and Chamber of Deputies (3yrs)
- Elections monitored by Federal Electoral Institute (CFE)
  - Independence allows elections to be more free and fair
  - Elections prior to 1990 still viewed as highly corrupt
- Relatively high voter turnout
  - Highly influenced by Patron-Client system
- Senate (Upper House)
  - Three for each state (96) then 32 selected nationally in proportion to vote
  - Only allowed one consecutive term
- Deputies (Lower House)
  - 300 elected from states, then 200 selected nationally in proportion to vote

# Executive Branch

- Constitution establishes separation of powers but President is the *de facto* holder of power in Mexico
- Presidents are elected for a single six year term called a *sexenio*
  - Not eligible for reelection so presidents will often suggest their successor (*el dedazo*)
- Prior to 2000 the President had almost dictatorial powers
  - Challenges to the authority of the PRI have actually increased the legitimacy of laws passed since then



# Judicial Branch

- Operates at a federal level, but almost never goes against important or controversial topics or actions
  - Only independent in theory
    - Supreme court justices appointed by President and are subject to control by the President's party
    - Vincente Fox attempted to secure more autonomy for judiciary branch
  - Has the power of judicial review
  - Purpose of judicial branch mostly to protect freedoms



# The Legislative Branch

- Bicameral legislature divided between Senate and Chamber of Deputies
  - Senators seen as more prestigious
- During times of PRI the legislative branch was a rubber stamp supporter of president
  - Since 2000 the legislature has been much more divided
  - Division has lowered efficiency, but raised legitimacy



# Political Issues: Political Participation

- Long standing acceptance and response to public disapproval and protest
  - Ex. Zapatista Uprising of 1994
- Government fairly responsive to popular protests
  - Often involving protest leaders in making changes





# Political Issues: The Economy

- Income inequality
  - Very large wealth gap in Mexico
    - 51% live in poverty
  - Large sections of economy tied to oil
- The Mexican Miracle
  - 1940 -1960 rapid economic growth (6%) and industrial growth (9%)
  - Benefitted from Green Revolution
    - Wheat and corn yields increased to support population
  - Followed by debt crisis in 1980s (Debt accounted for 70% of GNP)
- Economy tightly connected to the US
  - 2008 economic disaster in Mexico connected to US recession
- Mexican Economy influenced by Supranational Organizations
  - WTO, IMF, NAFTA, World Bank

# Political Issues: Society

- Catholic Church has remained fairly influential in culture
  - Political restrictions slowly removed
- Media not as influential as in highly developed countries
- Social Divisions
  - Indigenous struggle for increased rights and recognition
  - Feminist movements starting in 1970s have lessened gender inequalities
- Mexicans highly nationalistic



# Political Issues: The Drug Trade

- Mexico has been large in the drug trade due to their proximity to the US
  - Cartels bribe politicians, police forces, and military officials
- Competition between cartels has led to widespread fighting across the country
  - Mexican citizens sometimes caught in fighting
  - Has led in increased military spending to combat cartels



# Political Issues: The Military

- Effective civilian leadership of the military has prevented military coups
- Military primarily involved in fighting drug trade and putting down protests/revolutions

