



Chapter Fourteen

Politics in Mexico

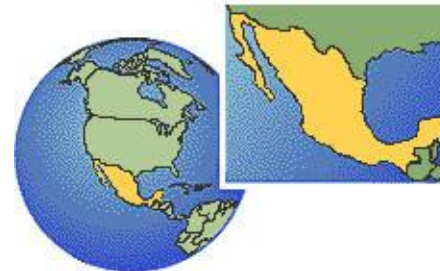
Comparative Politics Today, 9/e

Almond, Powell, Dalton & Strøm

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Country Bio: Mexico

- **Population:**
 - 106 million
- **Territory:**
 - 761,602 sq. miles
- **Year of Independence:**
 - 1810
- **Year of Current Constitution:**
 - 1917
- **Head of State:**
 - President Felipe Calderon Hinojosa
- **Head of Government:**
 - President Felipe Calderon Hinojosa
- **Language:**
 - Spanish, various Mayan, Nahuatl, Zapotec, and other regional indigenous languages
- **Religion:**
 - Nominally Roman Catholic 89%, Protestant 6%

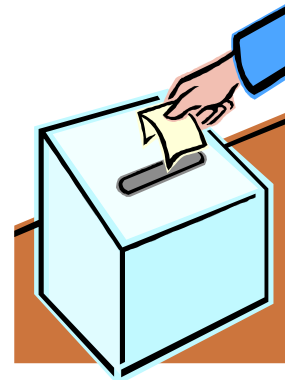


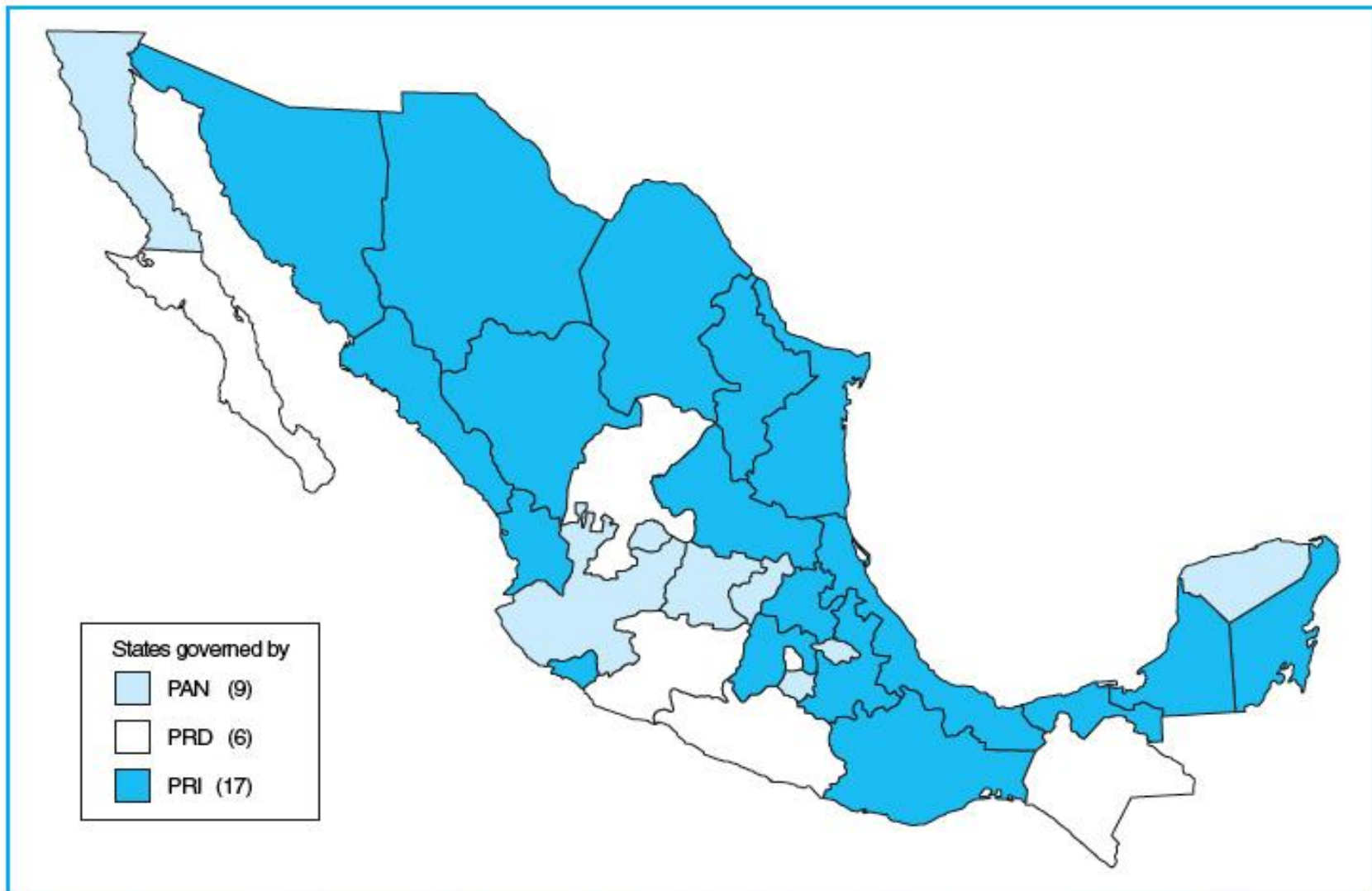
Background: Mexico

- 2006 presidential election- three strong candidates
 - Very close
 - Not typical; Usually election dominated by by the Partido Revolucionario Institutcional (PRI)
 - Economic crisis
- 1988 election brought a tidal wave of antigovernment voting
 - PRI got a bare majority

Background: Mexico

- 2000 election: Vincente Fox (PAN Party)
- 2006 PRI lost the presidency but retained control of half of the state governorships
- End result: Mexico has a more competitive, pluralistic political system, in which no single party is dominant but each of the three major parties has regional strongholds.





States Governed by Three Main Parties, July 2006*

FIGURE 14.1

*PAN-governed states were Aguascalientes, Baja California, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Morelos, Queretaro, San Luis Potosí, Tlaxcala, and Yucatan.

PRD-governed states were Baja California Sur, Chiapas, Distrito Federal, Guerrero, Michoacan, and Zacatecas.

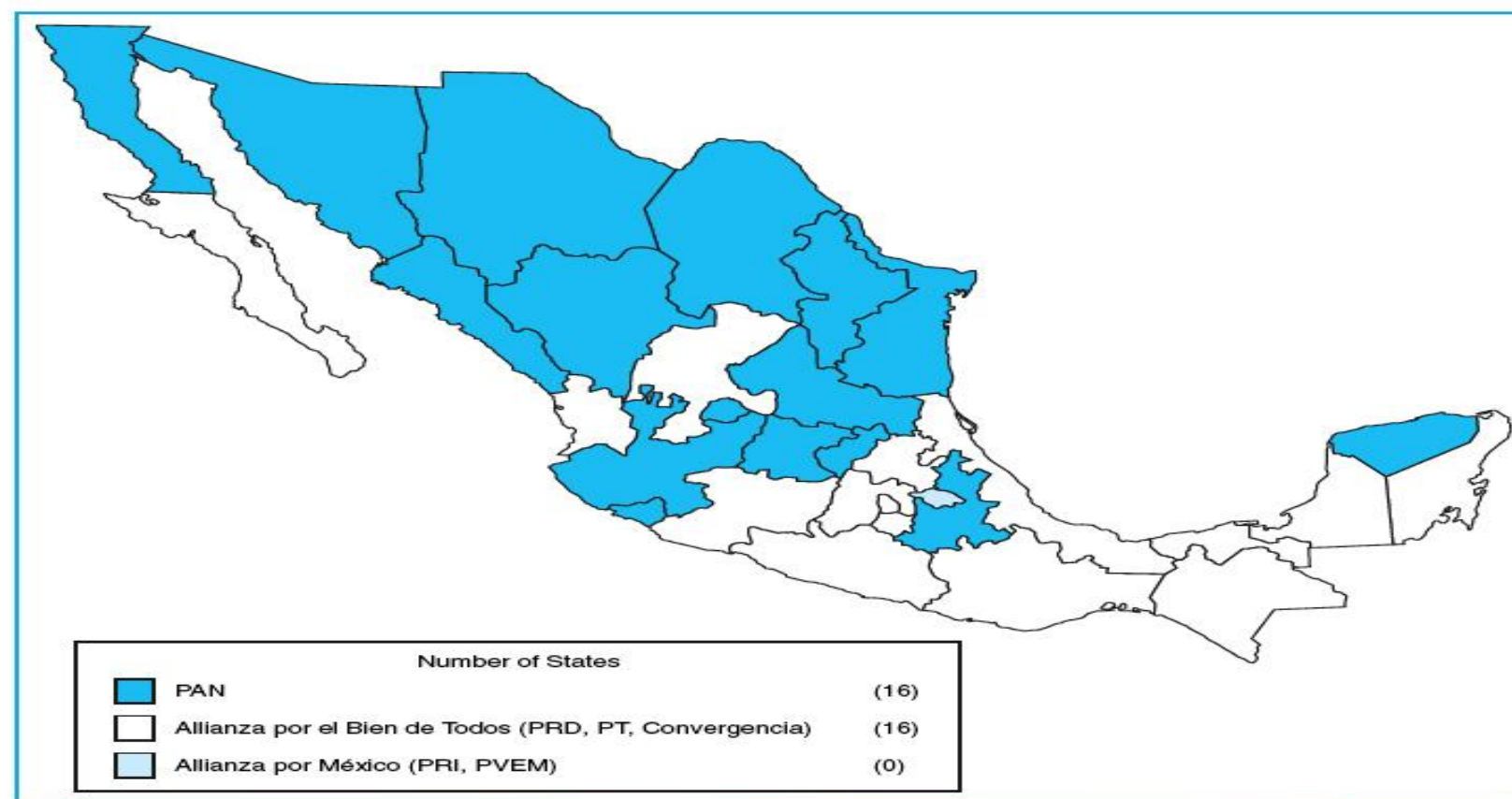
PRI-governed states were Campeche, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Colima, Durango, Hidalgo, Mexico, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Puebla, Quintana Roo, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, and Veracruz.

Votes for President of Mexico in 2006 (official district counts, including voters abroad)

TABLE 14.1

Candidate	Votes	% of Valid Votes
Felipe Calderón (PAN)	15,019,300	36.70
Andres Manuel López Obrador (PRD-PT-Convergencia)	14,767,438	36.09
Roberto Madrazo (PRI-PVEM)	9,302,801	22.73
Patricia Mercado (PASC)	1,129,737	2.76
Roberto Campa (Nueva Alianza)	401,932	0.98
Nonregistered candidates	298,018	0.73
Invalid votes	937,735	
Total votes	41,856,961	100.00

Source: Instituto Federal Electoral (<http://www.ife.org.mx>), 2006.



States Won by Presidential Candidates in 2006 Election

FIGURE 14.2

Current Policy Challenges

- Mexico's 21st century difficulties:
 - An economy that produces too few jobs to accommodate the number of people entering the job market
 - An educational system in need of modernization
 - A growing impoverished population
 - Half of Mexicans live below the official poverty line
 - Highly unequal distribution of income
 - Huge developmental gap between urban North, and rural, mostly indigenous South
 - Acute environmental problems
 - A criminal justice system that barely functions



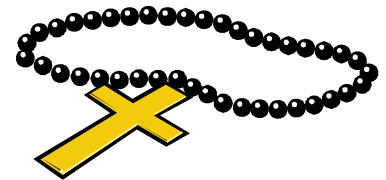
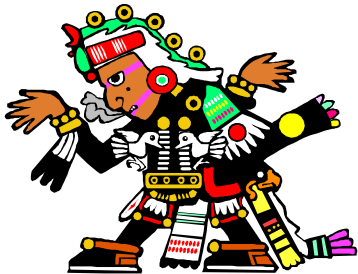
Current Policy Challenges

- Emerging policy challenges
 - Must catch up to its international trade partners/competitors
 - Modernize its agricultural sector
 - Renovate energy sector
 - Expand the tax base
 - Change election rules
 - Campaign finance



Historical Perspectives

- Colonial Perspectives
 - Indian civilizations
 - Decimated by disease; only small number left
 - Cortes and the Spanish Crown; Catholic Church
 - Conflict between church and state
 - Constitutions of 1857 and 1917 reduced this conflict



Key Political Events in Mexico

BOX 14.1

1810–1821	War of Independence against Spain	1968	Student protest movement challenges the government and is violently repressed (the “Tlatelolco massacre”)
1846–1848	War between Mexico and the United States	1970–1976	Presidency of Luis Echeverría
1910–1920	Mexican Revolution	1976–1982	Presidency of José López Portillo; period of the oil export boom
1917	New constitution issued, incorporating Revolutionary goals and ideals	1981–1982	Drop in world oil prices and rising interest rates cause economic collapse; Mexico unable to service its external debt
1924–1928	Presidency of Plutarco Elías Calles	1982–1988	Presidency of Miguel de la Madrid
1927–1929	Cristero Rebellion (Catholic Church vs. State)	1988–1994	Presidency of Carlos Salinas de Gortari
1928	Alvaro Obregón elected president, assassinated a few months later	1994	North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) goes into effect; peasant rebellion erupts in the state of Chiapas; PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio assassinated and replaced by Ernesto Zedillo; peso sharply devalued, provoking a deep economic crisis
1928–1934	“Jefe Máximo” Plutarco Elías Calles rules from behind the scenes, under several provisional presidents (the “Maximato” period)	1994–2000	Presidency of Ernesto Zedillo
1929	Plutarco Elías Calles establishes Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR)	1997–2000	PRI loses majority control in the Chamber of Deputies
1934–1940	Presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas	2000	PRI loses the presidency for the first time in 71 years
1938	President Cárdenas reorganizes PNR, which becomes the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM); Cárdenas nationalizes oil industry	2000–2006	Presidency of Vicente Fox
1939	Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) founded	2006	PAN wins the presidency again and a plurality in both houses of Congress; closeness of the presidential result provokes large-scale protests and a partial recount
1940–1946	Presidency of Manuel Avila Camacho	2006–2012	Presidency of Felipe Calderón
1946–1952	Presidency of Miguel Alemán		
1946	PRM is restructured, renamed the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)		
1952–1958	Presidency of Adolfo Ruiz Cortines		
1958–1964	Presidency of Adolfo López Mateos		
1964–1970	Presidency of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz		

Historical Perspectives

- Revolution and its aftermath
 - 1910 first of the great “social revolutions” that shook the world
 - In Mexico revolution originated with the ruling class
 - Anti-Porfirio Diaz and local bosses and landowners
 - Led by Francisco Madero
 - Zapata
 - Pancho Villa
 - Diaz’s dictatorship disintegrated into warlordism

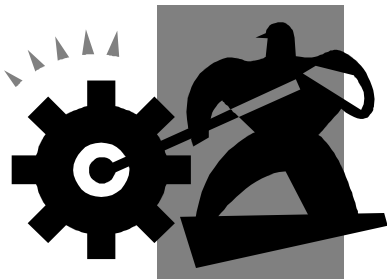
Historical Perspectives

- After first decade of revolution progress made
 - Constitution of 1917
 - Principle of state control over all natural resources
 - Subordination of the church to the state
 - The government's right to redistribute land
 - Rights for labor
 - Took two decades to implement



Historical Perspectives: The Cardenas Upheaval

- Elites maintained control during the 1930s
 - But era of massive social and political upheaval
 - Lazaro Cardenas (1934-1940)
 - Encouraged urban workers and peasants to demand land and higher wages
 - Wave of strikes, protests, and petitions for breaking up large rural estates.
 - Most disputes settled by the government in favor of labor
 - Nationalization of oil companies
 - Creation of large organizations for labor and peasants
 - Fundamentally reshaped political institutions
 - Presidency: primary institution of the political system
 - Sweeping powers but limited six year term
 - By 1940 more Mexicans included in the national political system



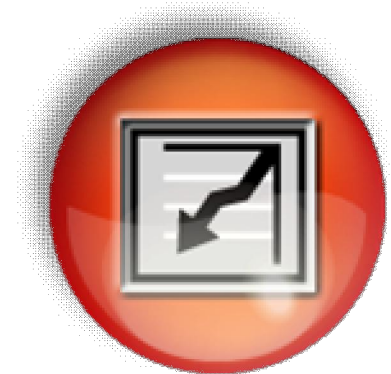
Historical Perspectives: The Era of Hegemonic Party Rule

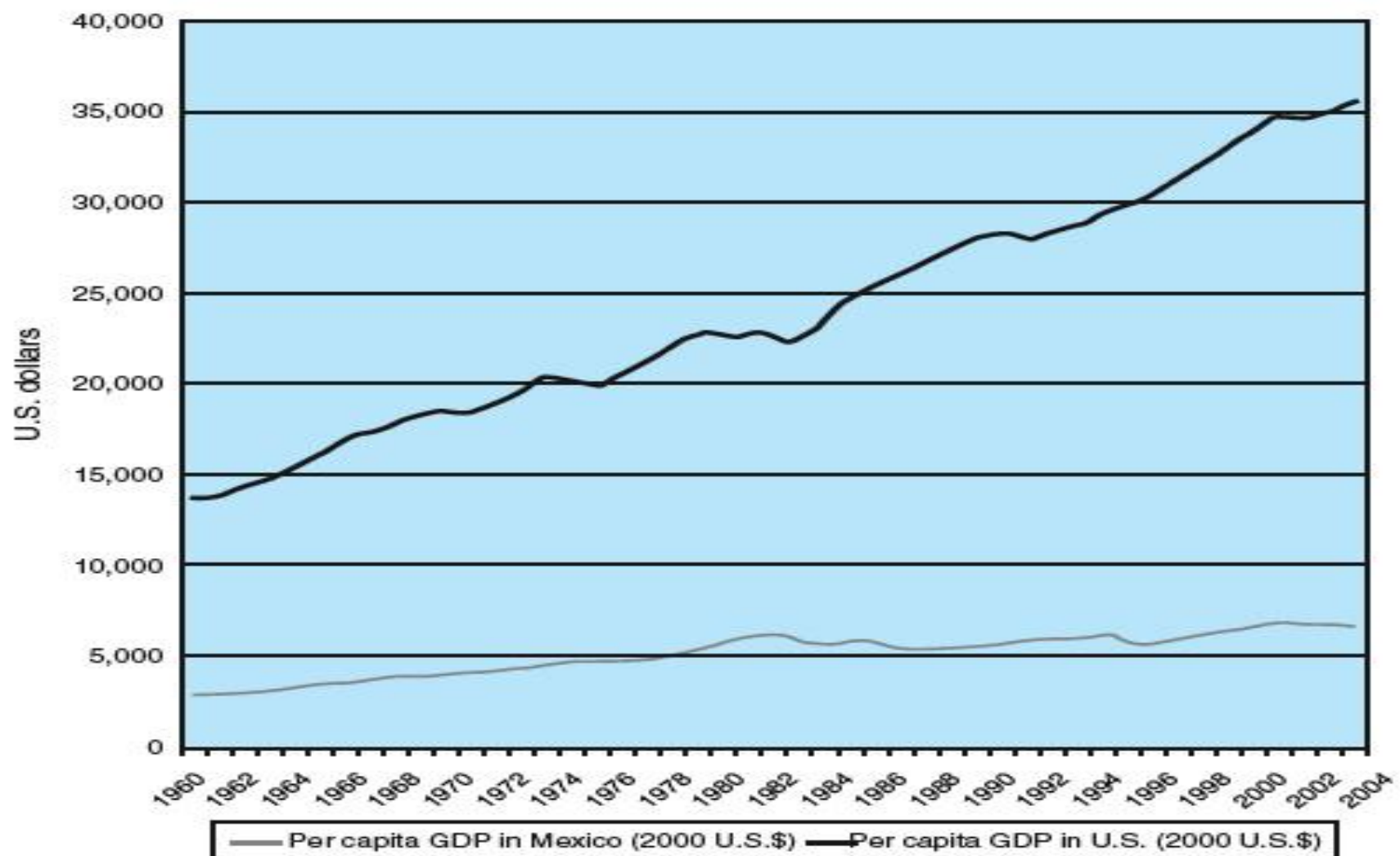
- Cardenas political system
 - Remarkably durable
 - PRI would become the world's longest continuously ruling party (with the fall of the Soviet Communist Party)
- In the 1970s concerns arose
 - President Ordaz "dirty war"
 - Execution of more than 700 alleged enemies of the state
 - Good news: discovery of massive oil and natural gas resources, but this collapsed and so did support for reform
 - Economic crisis in the 1980s
 - Carlos Salinas
 - Chiapas rebellion; Colosio assassination
 - 1994 Zedillo: PRI retained control



Historical Perspectives: The End of PRI Dominance

- Shortly after the 1994 election, economic troubles returned
 - Capital flight
 - Deep recession





GDP per Capita Growth in Mexico and the United States 1960–2004

FIGURE 14.3

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, www.inegi.gob.mx, 2006.

Historical Perspectives: The End of PRI Dominance

- Ex-President Salinas publicly criticized Zedillo and his cabinet and went into defacto exile in Ireland
 - Zedillo made Salinas the scapegoat for the crisis
- PRI appeared to be in a state of decomposition
 - Defeat of its presidential candidate in 2000
 - Third place finish in presidential election in 2006
 - Retreated to its regional strongholds; status as a national party in jeopardy

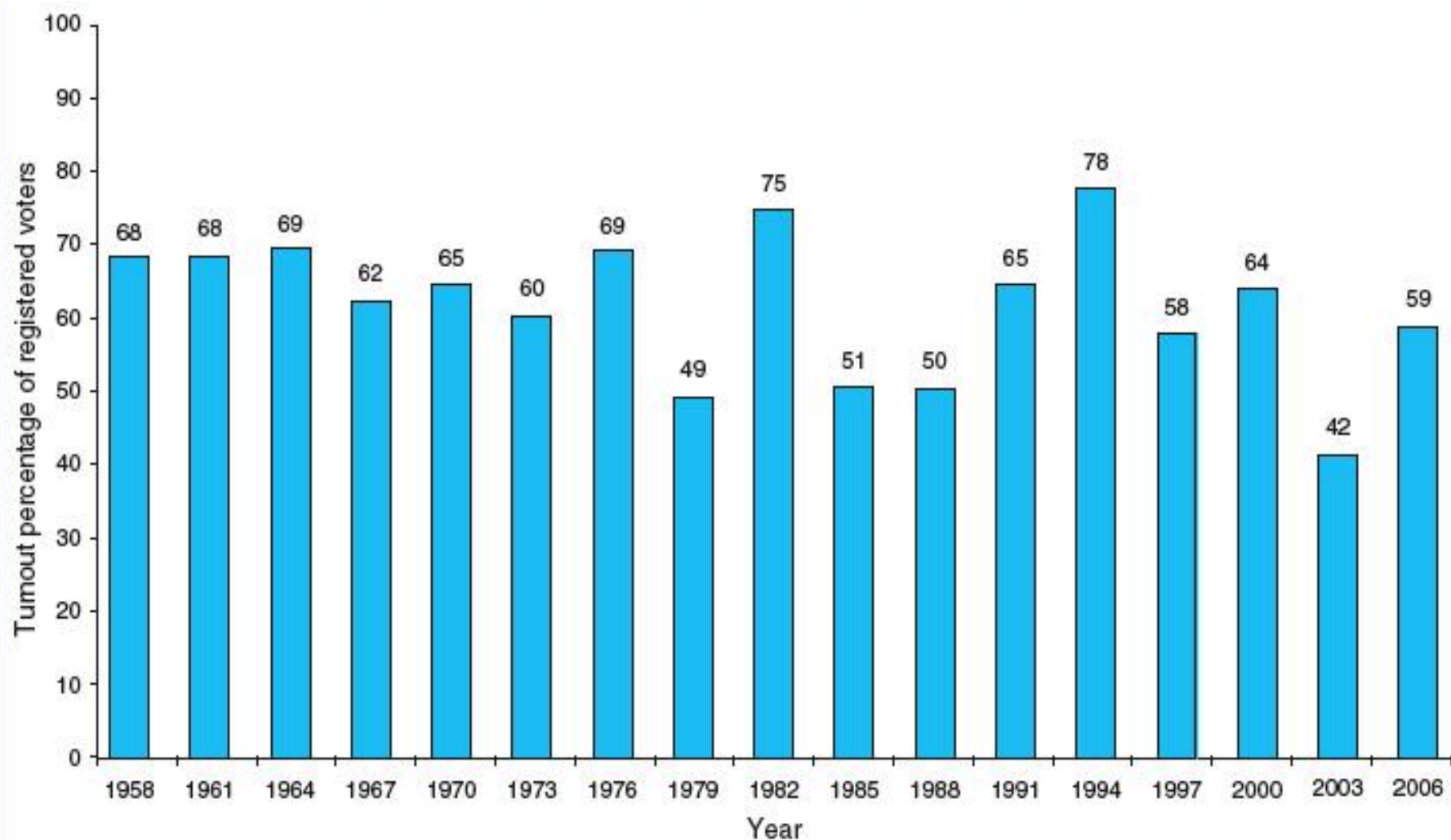
Historical Perspectives: International Environment

- Proximity to the United States
 - A powerful presence in Mexico
 - 2,000 mile border
 - Labor and resources in Mexico
- History
 - Annexation of Texas in 1845
 - Mexican-American War
 - U.S. seized half of Mexico's national territory
 - Railroads and mining
 - Intertwined economies
 - Immigration
 - NAFTA



Political Culture and Socialization

- Mexicans are highly supportive of the political institutions that evolved from the Mexican Revolution
- Endorse the democratic principles of the Constitution of 1917
- Critical of government performance
- Pessimistic about their ability to affect election outcomes
- Evaluate candidates on performance
- Growing distrust of Congress and the political parties



Turnout of Registered Voters in National Elections, 1958–2006*

FIGURE 14.4

*Beginning in 1970, the legal voting age was lowered from 21 to 18.

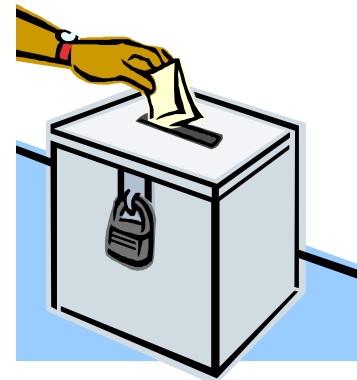
Source: Data from Comisión Federal Electoral for 1958–1991; from Instituto Federal Electoral for 1994–2006.

Political Culture and Socialization

- Mass Political Socialization
 - Pre-adult political learning
 - Family
 - Schools
 - Catholic Church
 - Adult political learning
 - Personal encounters with government functionaries and the police
 - Proliferation of popular movements
 - Mass media
 - Print media
 - Television

Political Culture and Socialization

- Political participation is of two broad types:
 - Ritualistic, regime-supportive activities
 - Voting and attending campaign rallies, for example
 - Petitioning or contacting of public officials to influence the allocation of some public good or service
 - By law voting is obligatory
 - Voting turnout
 - Closeness of 2006 presidential vote



Political Structure and Institutions

- Nature of the regime? One-party democracy evolving toward “true” democracy? Authoritarian regime?
 - Hybrid: part-free, part authoritarian
 - Democratic breakthrough election of 2000
- On paper: a presidential system, three autonomous branches of government with checks and balances, and federalism with considerable autonomy at the local level
- In practice: decision-making highly centralized; president dominated the legislative and judicial branches

Political Structure and Institutions

- Federalism
 - Political centralism
 - 31 states and the Federal District
 - Each one divided into municipios headed by a mayor and a council
 - Each layer of government successively weaker
 - “Struggle against centralism”
 - New federalism

Political Structure and Institutions: The Legislative Branch

- Federal Congress has two houses:
 - A 128 member upper chamber, the Senate
 - A 500-member lower house, the Chamber of Deputies
- Both employ a mixed-member system
 - Some of the members are elected by plurality vote in SMD
 - Others are elected by a system of compensatory proportional representation on closed-party lists
- Electoral rules for Senate and Chamber of Deputies
- Mixed-member system effects on the party system
 - Complicates creating majorities

Composition of the Mexican Congress, 2006–2009

TABLE 14.2

	Seats Won by Plurality Vote	Seats Won by P. R. System	Total	Percentage
Chamber of Deputies				
Partido Acción Nacional (PAN)	137	69	206	41.2
Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD) ¹	90	36	126	25.2
Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) ²	63	41	104	20.8
Partido Verde Ecologista de México (PVEM) ²	2	17	19	3.8
Convergencia ¹	5	11	16	3.2
Partido del Trabajo (PT) ¹	3	13	16	3.2
Nueva Alianza	0	9	9	1.8
PASC	0	4	4	0.8
Total	300	200	500	100
Senate				
Partido Acción Nacional (PAN)	41	11	52	40.6
Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) ²	27	6	33	25.8
Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD) ¹	23	6	29	22.7
Partido Verde Ecologista de México (PVEM) ²	2	4	6	4.7
Convergencia ¹	3	2	5	3.9
Partido del Trabajo (PT) ¹	0	2	2	1.6
Nueva Alianza	0	1	1	0.8
Total	96	32	128	100

¹Alianza por el Bien de Todos

²Alianza por México

TABLE 14.3

Party Cohesion in the Chamber of Deputies: Party Votes, 1997–2006 (percentages)

		PRI	PAN	PRD	PVEM	PT
57th Legislature	Mean	99.6	92.2	92.8	97.5	88.9
(1997–2000)	s.d.	1.3	12.6	13.9	8.0	16.4
58th Legislature	Mean	90.0	94.3	91.5	95.8	97.3
(2000–2003)	s.d.	13.3	12.6	15.5	9.3	9.7
59th Legislature	Mean	90.5	98.4	95.2	96.4	96.7
(2003–2006)	s.d.	11.9	6.1	9.2	9.8	11.2

Note: Data for the 57th Legislature begins October 8, 1988. Party votes are roll calls in which at least one party dissented from the rest. Party cohesion is the percentage of the party voting with the majority of that party; "s.d." is the standard deviation.

Source: For the 57th Legislature, Jeffrey A. Weldon, "Institutional and Political Factors in Party Discipline in the Chamber of Deputies, 1998–2002," presented at the First Latin American Political Science Congress, Salamanca, Spain, July 2002. Data for the last two legislatures calculated by Weldon. From the *Diario de los Debates* and *Gaceta Parlamentaria* of both Chambers.

Political Structure and Institutions: The Legislative Branch

- Presidential vetoes
 - Can take to forms
 - Regular veto, in which the president expresses his rejection of a bill
 - Corrective veto, in which the president requests that Congress amend the bill, usually because of technical errors in the text
 - In either case, Congress can insist on the original text of the bill by a two-thirds vote, after which the president must publish the legislation



Sponsorship and Approval of Public Bills in the Chamber of Deputies,
1988–2006

TABLE 14.4

Legislature	% of Deputies from President's Party	Sponsor*	% of Total New Bills Introduced	% of Total Bills Approved	% of Sponsor's Bills Approved
54th (1988–1991)	52	Executive	22.8	65.1	98.6
		Deputies	77.2	34.9	15.6
		Other	0.0	0.0	—
		Total	100.0	100.0	34.5
55th (1991–1994)	63	Executive	42.4	62.6	98.5
		Deputies	56.3	36.5	38.5
		Other	1.3	0.9	50.0
		Total	100.0	100.0	50.0
56th (1994–1997)	60	Executive	33.8	74.2	98.9
		Deputies	61.7	24.2	16.2
		Other	4.5	1.7	16.7
		Total	100.0	100.0	42.7
57th (1997–2000)	48	Executive	10.1	31.0	90.0
		Deputies	81.9	59.6	20.8
		Other	7.9	9.4	32.2
		Total	100.0	100.0	28.6
58th (2000–2003)	41	Executive	6.8	23.7	89.9
		Deputies	77.3	57.7	18.4
		Other	15.8	18.6	30.0
		Total	100.0	100.0	24.9
59th (2003–2006)	30	Executive	2.8	8.6	73.2
		Deputies	85.8	72.0	19.6
		Other	11.4	19.4	38.0
		Total	100.0	100.0	23.3

*"Other" includes bills introduced by state legislatures, revenue bills presented in the lower chamber by senators, and bills that originated in the Senate that had been introduced there by senators. Executive bills that originated in the Senate are classified under the "Executive" category.

Source: *Diario de los Debates* and the *Gaceta Parlamentaria* of the Chamber of Deputies. Data compiled at ITAM under the direction of Jeffrey Weldon.

Political Structure and Institutions: The Legislative Branch

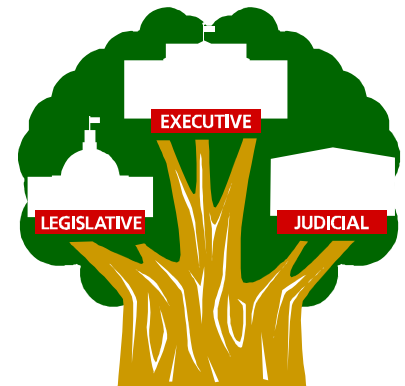
- Powers of the Chambers
 - Each has exclusive powers and areas of specialization
- Party discipline
 - Very strong; each party generally votes as a bloc

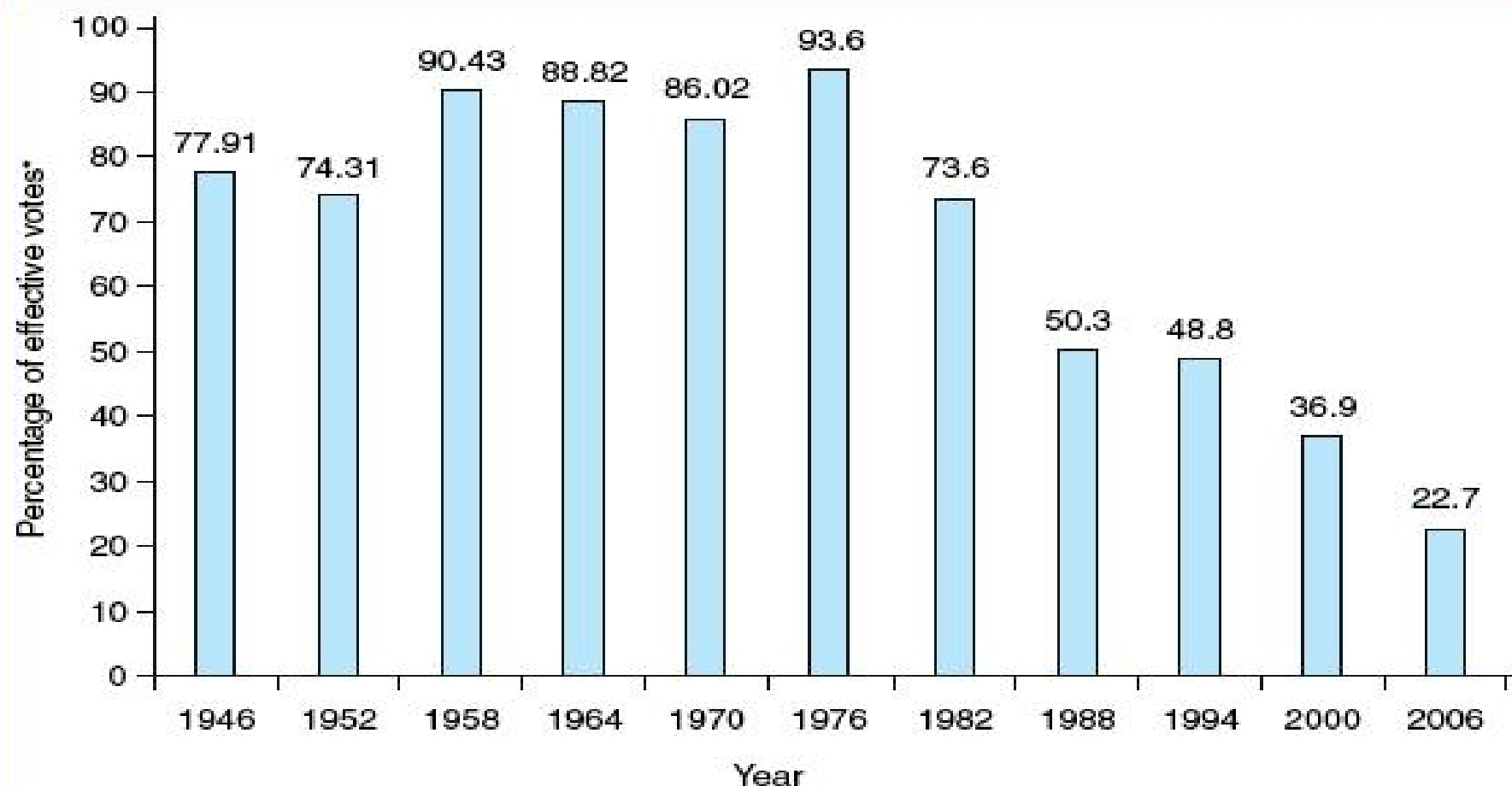
Political Structure and Institutions: The Executive Branch

- More dominant political actor in Mexico for the greater part of the twentieth century
- Possessed broad range of unwritten but generally recognized “metaconstitutional” powers

Political Structure and Institutions: The Executive Branch

- During the PRI's seven decades of rule at the national level, three factors were required to create strong presidentialism:
 - The president's party had to have a majority in both chambers of Congress.
 - There must be high levels of discipline in the majority party of Congress.
 - The president must be considered the leader of his party.
- Zedillo and recasting of the presidency
- Executive-legislative relations
 - New dynamics emerge
 - More combative





Support for PRI's Presidential Candidate, 1946–2006

FIGURE 14.6

*Percentage base includes annulled votes and those cast for independent candidates.

Note: The 1976 PRI candidate, José López Portillo, ran virtually unopposed because the PAN failed to nominate a candidate. The only other significant candidate was Valentín Campa, representing the Communist Party, which was not legally registered to participate in the 1976 election. More than 5 percent of the votes were annulled.

Source: Data from Comisión Federal Electoral, 1946–1988; and Instituto Federal Electoral, 1994–2006.

Recruiting the Political Elite

- Who becomes one of Mexico's political elite?
 - Recruited predominantly from the middle class
 - 1982-2000 mostly people born or raised in Mexico City
 - Postgraduate education, especially at elite foreign universities and in disciplines such as economics and public administration
 - Vincente Fox favored persons with nongovernmental experience and who had no political party affiliation.
 - Calderon had an MA in economics and public administration (latter from Harvard) and had extensive party experience.
 - Kinship ties
 - Political inbreeding?

Interest Representation and Political Control

- Corporatist system
- The official party itself was divided into three sectors:
 - Labor Sector
 - Peasant Sector
 - Popular Sector
 - Each sector dominated by one mass organization
- Some groups did not need representation through the major party, but dealt with government directly.
 - Military, Catholic Church, foreign and domestic entrepreneurs
- Patron-client relationships/networks

Political Parties

- The Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)
- The Partido Accion Nacional (PAN)
- The Partido de la Revolucion Democratica (PRD)

Political Parties: Shifting Social Bases

- Dramatic shift in the 2006 election
- PRI's most dependable base before 2006 was the rural voter; did well with women and older voters.
- In 2006 PRD's Obrador did best among rural voters.
- PAN did best among urban voters prior to 2006, but in 2006 PRD finished ahead of PRI for the urban vote.

Party Choice in 2006 Presidential Election, by Demographic Attribute (percentages)

TABLE 14.5

	PAN	PRI	PRD	Others
Type of Locality				
Urban	40	20	35	5
Rural	31	28	36	3
Region				
North	43	27	24	6
Center-West	46	20	27	4
Center	34	15	44	7
South	27	29	40	4
Gender				
Male	36	22	37	2
Female	38	23	32	4
Age				
18–29	38	21	34	6
30–49	38	21	35	4
50	34	26	37	2
Education				
None and Primary	34	29	33	3
Secondary	37	21	35	5
University	42	14	38	5
Annual Income (dollars)				
Under \$2,161	31	30	34	4
\$2,162–\$4,321	32	24	39	4
\$4,322–\$7,021	36	21	37	5
\$7,022–\$9,938	43	16	36	4
Above \$9,939	50	14	30	5

Source: Nationwide exit poll conducted by *Reforma* newspaper (Mexico City), 3 July 2006.

Political Parties: Shifting Social Bases

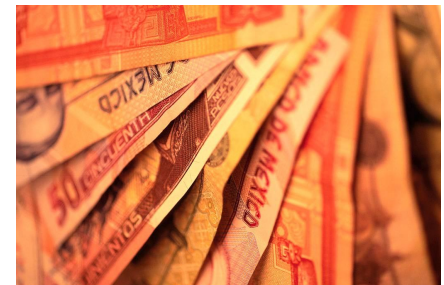
- PRD did well among women in 2006. Women were focused on economic stability.
- Education mattered less in 2006.
- Social class mattered less as well.
- Regional divides seemed to define the 2006 election.

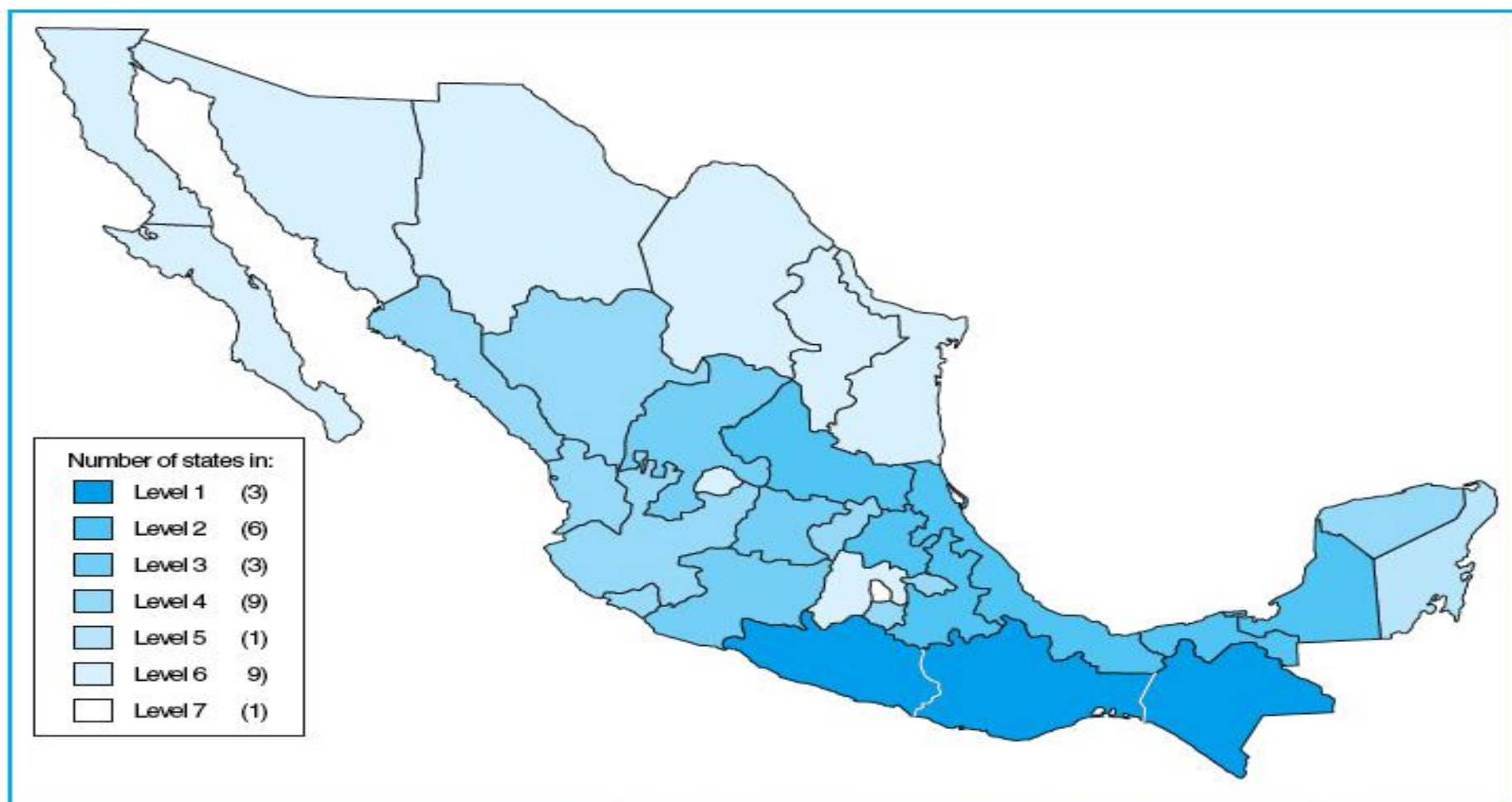
Government Performance

- Promoting economic growth and reducing poverty
 - Under Mexico's four most recent presidents, the government has implemented a neoliberal economic development model
 - Freer rein to market forces; objective- a technocratic free-market revolution
 - Privatization
 - Considerable spending on welfare at the same time
 - Safety net for short term "losers" from neoliberal economic policies
 - Segura Popular

Government Performance

- Financing development and controlling inflation
 - Salinas' financial problems
 - Created illusions of prosperity
 - Zedillo's inexperienced and inept economic team
 - Fox: fiscal restraint and good fortune





Levels of Social Well-Being by State, in 2000

FIGURE 14.7

Level 1: Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca

Level 2: Campeche, Hidalgo, Puebla, San Luis Potosí, Tabasco, Veracruz

Level 3: Guanajuato, Michoacán, Zacatecas

Level 4: Colima, Durango, Jalisco, Morelos, Nayarit, Querétaro, Sinaloa, Tlaxcala, Yucatán

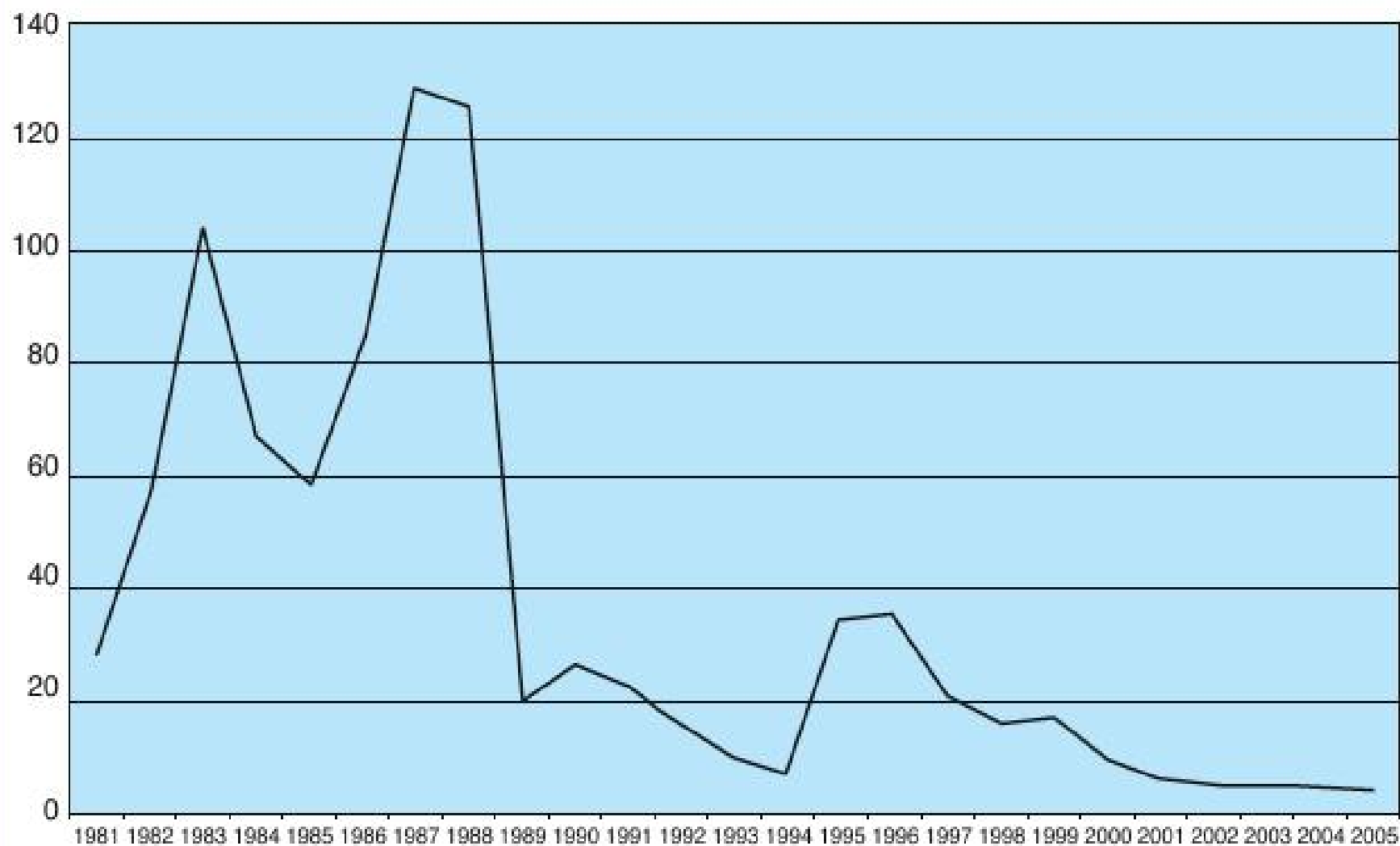
Level 5: Quintana Roo

Level 6: Aguascalientes, Baja California, Baja California Sur, Coahuila, Chihuahua, México, Nuevo León, Sonora, Tamaulipas.

Level 7: Distrito Federal

Note: Level of social well-being is measured by characteristics of dwellings (have electricity, refrigerator, television, concrete vs. dirt floors, sewerage connection, private bathroom; number of rooms; use something other than firewood or coal for cooking) and population characteristics (percentage economically active; literate; 6–19-year-olds who attend school; receive health care; live in urban area; average number of children born to women over age 12).

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, www.inegi.gob.mx.



Inflation Rate, 1981–2005

FIGURE 14.8

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, www.inegi.gob.mx, 2006.

Government Performance



- Establishing the rule of law
 - Greatest failure of all
 - Cannot deal with street crime
 - 3/4's of crimes go unreported; why? Citizens' low expectations that the perpetrators will be caught and punished.
- Remedies
 - Real progress only by addressing root causes

Mexico's Political Future

- Transition to democracy
 - Elections are as democratic and transparent as nearly any other country in the Americas
 - Talk of changing the Constitution of 1917 to weaken the presidency and strengthen the Congress
 - Should be classified a democracy
 - One of the best functioning in Latin America

