

Mexico: Government Structure

- I. Mexican Constitution (1917)
 - A. Clearly defines rights
 - B. Federal structure, checks and balances
 - C. Longer and more clearly defined (Napoleonic legal system)
 - D. Easier Amendment process
- II. Executive Branch
 - A. President
 - 1. How elected: Popularly elected for a sexenio- six year term (no two ballot system)
 - 2. Role: Head of government and state:
 - 3. Powers: initiate legislation, international, run government, appointments
 - 4. Informal power- through party can dominate other branches and states
 - 5. Impeachment: same as US
 - B. Cabinet- Appointed by president, heads of departments (most important is the Interior- law and order)
 - C. Bureaucracy
 - 1. Large- 5% of population (local, state, federal, and parastatal)
 - 2. Moderate salary (good path to middle class but also can be bribed)
 - 3. Patron-client system to get good jobs
- III. Legislative Branch: Congress of the Union
 - A. **Senate** (upper house)
 - 1. Represents the 31 states and 1 Federal District (Mexico City)
 - 2. Each state elects 3 senators: two (together in a party) through FPTP plurality and one for the first minority
 - 3. 32 senators are elected through proportional representation (128 total)
 - 4. Six year term, no reelection
 - B. **Chamber of Deputies** (lower house)
 - 1. 300 “Majority Deputies” are elected through single-member districts
 - 2. 200 “Party Deputies: are elected through PR

3. 3 year terms, no reelection

C. Policy Making

1. Constitutional lawmaking is similar to the US: both houses of Congress with signature or veto by president
2. President and bureaucracy have played the central role because of the power PRI and patron-clientalism
3. Becoming more pluralist (used to be very corporatist)
4. Congress used to be rubber-stamp but now is a check on power (especially with three competition parties)

IV. Judiciary

A. Supreme Court

1. 11 Justices (rotating 4 year president), serve a 15 year term
2. Given strong constitutional power like judicial review (given 1994) but only recently started exercising them

B. Court system is developing but suffers from corruption, limited experience with civil rights, and crime

V. State and Local Government

A. Governors: elected to 6 year terms by their states

B. Local legislatures: direct elections

C. Power to create laws, enforcement for their state as long as it complies with federal law

D. Though Federal structure, Mexico was very centralized until the decline in the power of the PRI (still controls majority of states)

VI. Other Institutions

A. Military

1. Had strong policy making power under early caudillos
2. Is clearly underneath the civilian government (no coups)
3. Has been used within the country to combat unrest (drug and uprisings like Zapatista)

B. **Parastatals**- autonomous (or semi) government owned industries

1. Until 1980, major part of the economy (over a thousand: investment, electricity, farm subsidies, etc)
2. **Pemex**- national oil company
3. Most have been privatized (less than 200)

4. Debate about whether to make them more competitive, independent, or allow FDI