Institutionalizing the Revolution

1917 to 2000 CE
Stability or Repression?

- PRI → party of those who supported the 1910 revolution
  - BROAD range of political types → socialists, liberals, etc.
  - Development of sexenio → extra-constitutional process of presidents choosing their successors
  - No PRI candidate lost the presidential elections for 80 years

- “Mexican miracle?”
  - Continued GDP growth of 3-4% per year between WWII and 1968
  - Tied to nationalization of oil production (PEMEX)

- Tlatelolco massacre, 1968
  - Economic growth, but limited political freedoms → UNAM & other students in Mexico City protest
  - Government uses military to break up protests 10 days before Olympics → unknown number of deaths
Student protest at la Plaza de las Tres Culturas prior to the arrival of the military. October 2, 1968.

Military forces clear the square.
Erosion of Authority and the PRI

• Economic stagnation of 1970-80s
  • Oil markets decline in 1980s
  • MASSIVE earthquake in 1985 → 5k dead? 30k? 45k?
  • “Out of the disaster emerged the realization that a viable civil society existed in Mexico. This revelation also caused many to consider why they needed a centralized state that so obviously could not care for its people. As a consequence, the opposition movements pointed to the government's shortcomings and advanced candidates for the greater goal of defeating the PRI” (Kirkwood).

• 1988 election: “Se cayó el sistema”
  • Widespread electoral fraud by PRI to ensure election of Carlos Salinas

• Problems in 1994:
  • Zapatista (EZLN) uprising, Jan. 1, 1994 → NAFTA
  • Assassination of presidential candidate Luis Donoldo Coloseo (March)
  • Mexican peso crisis (December)
    • Government devalues peso to try & limit international concerns about political instability
    • Sent government into a default on loans
Contemporary Transitions

2000 CE to Present
Rise Political Pluralism

- Election of 2000 → Vicente Fox
  - Partido Acción Nacional (PAN)
  - Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD)
- Mexico now defined by outside groups as democratic, as there is significant electoral competition
- Narrow election in 2006 → Felipe Calderón (PAN)
  - Contested by PRD candidate, Manuel López Obrador
- Divide between local & national politics
  - PRI still dominant in municipal politics
Rebirth of the PRI?

• Election of 2012 → Enrique Peña Nieto (PRI)
  • Reaction against PAN’s lack of success with cartels and violence?
  • Demonstrates fluidity of Mexican electorate
  • Redefinition of the PRI?

• Serious problems:
  • Loss of majority in legislature, leading to political stagnation
  • Serious questions about corruption and ability to manage cartel violence
AMLO and the Present

- **Election of 2018 → Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO)**
  - **Leftist populist**, formerly part of both PRI and PRD, now a member of MORENDA (National Regeneration Movement)
  - Won with 53% of the popular vote - first candidate to win with an outright majority since 1988
  - Policy proposal included:
    - Anti-corruption measures
    - Increased financial aid for students, pensions for the elderly
    - Ending the war on drugs
    - Constructing more oil refineries
    - Decentralization of government departments, increasing local control


