

Political culture of mexico

[Art & Culture](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Mexican Political Culture As once put by Mexican Nobel laureate Octavio Paz, Mexico is a land of “super-imposed pasts” (McCormick, p. 326). It continues to be and is seen as a melding pot of its European and Native American ideas about society, law and government. Its history has had a major influence on the political culture of Mexico, seen through years of revolution, violence and corruption. Mexico is considered a new democracy, but there is a tension still seen between democracy and authoritarianism.

The country we see today has impressive growth yet is still enduring poverty. It's a geographically diverse country, with a population of approximately 106 million people. Latin American political culture is seen as “elitist, hierarchical, authoritarian, corporatist and patrimonial.” Various economic pressures and calculated changes being made to the system of government are now challenging these traditions in Mexico, hopefully to ultimately restore the relationship between the government and people. (McCormick, pg. 33) Today, many of the politics we see in Mexico do still reflect the centralized and hierarchical system of the Aztecs, but we see much change in the country after the arrival of Europeans. Until the 15th century, native peoples inhabited the current Mexico. The Mayans and Aztecs built a surprisingly sophisticated empire with their own local governments, centralized taxes and court system and beyond. The Spanish arrived in 1519 and by the mid-sixteenth century all of what the native peoples had built had been conquered.

The Spaniards left Mexico with a huge influence; they brought religious heritage in Catholicism, which has gone beyond just a religion in Mexico and is embedded in their political culture. “Spanish Catholicism was based on

the idea that political authority emanated from God, and all lower levels of society had progressively less power and status. ” (McCormick, p. 334). We see this hierarchical influence still in Mexican political culture today, along with the elitism of the Native American society. The Virgin of Guadalupe is a strong symbol within the Mexican society and their Roman Catholic beliefs.

It is said that in December 1531, the Virgin Mary appeared on three occasions to a Christian Indian, Juan Diego, six kilometers north of Mexico City, and identified herself as Guadalupe. It is said that the Guadalupe symbol “ links family, politics and religion; the colonial past and the independent present; and the Indian and the Mexican. It reflects the salient social relationships of Mexican life and embodies the emotions they generate. ” (Merrill & Miro, Religion) Devotion to the Virgin Guadalupe remains strong even as Mexican society changes.

For example, in a national opinion poll found, nine out of ten Mexicans still continued to ask intercessions from the Virgin or another saint. (Merrill & Miro, Religion) Another huge aspect of Mexican political culture is the Constitution of 1917. Many Mexicans attribute the origins of the political system in Mexico to the Revolution of 1910-1920 and its Constitution of 1917. Unlike their American neighbors, the people of Mexico focus and look to the past, not the future, to their missed dreams and hopes.

Many people of Mexico support and have faith and pride in the Constitution of 1917, agree with the goals of the Revolution and support their political institutions. (McCormick p. 333) The Constitution is seen more as an outline of the goals Mexico has aspired for. They believe in the Constitution but

recognize it as a work in progress as it still contains many goals that have not been achieved, such as the goal of greater equality. The more Mexico strives towards democracy, the more we can begin to pin down and see the final handicaps that stand in between Mexico and democracy.

As Mexico has become wealthier, we see now that their middle class is further expanding and there are greater chances and hopes for political modernization, hoping to permanently stray from the corruption seen in the past. Mexico is a federal republic, but power has been traditionally centralized within the ruling political party. Political power in Mexican politics revolves commonly around *camarillas*, which is a network of people with common political interests, who have specific ties to a particular leader. Each group of *camarillas* has a single leader and through this, you find that everyone relies on one another for political advancement.

In a system like this, unfortunately personalities become more important than ideologies and policies in political matters and behavior. We see through this centralization how corruption in Mexican political history has been so common. Throughout the years of revolution and war, Mexican political culture has been hugely tarnished by seemingly credible evidence of corruption. There is a value of order over freedom. This is especially seen through the years of the PRI party regime, which held power for 71 years in Mexico.

Corruption was rampant, and it has created an intense distrust of government within Mexico, to the point that it is now extremely hard to introduce and collect taxes. 50% of all Mexican people still feel that they

have little political impact. Another big aspect of Mexican political culture is the idea of machismo. In short, it is assertive masculinity, seen most obviously in the political marginalization of women. (McCormick p. 336). Women in Mexico only won the right to vote in 1953 and still rarely move into positions of authority, especially within the government.

The inequality of women is seen predominantly throughout Mexico, with about 70% of all women in the mid-1990's employed in the tertiary sector of the Mexican economy, commonly with lower wages than those of men. The growing presence of women in the workforce contributed to changes in social attitudes, yet machismo is still a prevalent, traditional social attitude with most women in households subjected to control, domination and violence by men. The violence towards women is extremely apparent, seen in its boldest form in the city of Ciudad Juarez.

Over a period of 12 years, murders of over 300 women all went unsolved. We do still see machismo more broadly in Mexico, through political violence such as riots, kidnappings and conflicts related to the drug trade, which are already complex issues on their own. As previously mentioned the political culture in Mexico is still residing within a tension between democracy and authoritarian rule. It seems that as Mexico continues its expansion into democracy, we will eventually see changes to the traditions on what is political culture in Mexico today. Bibliography McCormick, John.

Comparative Politics in Transition. Sixth ed. Wadsworth Cengage Learning
Paras, Pablo. " The Political Culture of Democracy in Mexico: 2006. " The Political Culture of Democracy in Mexico: 2006 (2006): 1-198. Sitemason.

<https://assignbuster.com/political-culture-of-mexico/>

vanderbilt. edu. Dec. 2006. Web. Jan. 2010. Morris, Stephen D. " Corruption and Mexican Political Culture. " Corruption and Mexican Political Culture: 1-37. _Www. southalabama. edu/... /crptn%20and%20political%20culture. pdf_. Web. Jan. 2010. Tim L. Merrill and Ramon Miro, editors. Mexico: A Country Study. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1996.