

## Democracy and electoral reforms in Mexico

## Democracia y reformas electorales en México

**Ignacio Daniel Torres Rodríguez**

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla  
[ignacio.torres@correo.buap.mx](mailto:ignacio.torres@correo.buap.mx)

**Carlos Enrique Ahuactzin Martínez**

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla  
[carlos.ahua@correo.buap.mx](mailto:carlos.ahua@correo.buap.mx)

Recibido: 22/08/18 | Aceptado: 15/01/19

**RESUMEN:** En México, la arena electoral ha experimentado sustantivas transformaciones durante las últimas décadas. Ha transitado de una abrumadora etapa de dominación por parte del Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) a una competitiva lucha entre diversos partidos políticos, donde las alianzas electorales y la alternancia son un fenómeno recurrente. Este artículo busca explicar el cambio de sistema de partido hegemónico (con características autoritarias) a uno democrático multipartidista, estableciendo que la Modernización de la Administración Pública Mexicana, pero sobre todo, las reformas electorales, han favorecido la configuración de más y (mayormente competitivos) partidos políticos e instituciones electorales de carácter neutral. El argumento es construido con base en el análisis documental de las reformas electorales de 1977, 1986, 1990, 1996, y 2014, así como de los resultados electorales (locales y federales), concluyendo con las implicaciones del desarrollo del sistema político mexicano.

**PALABAS CLAVES:** democracia, sistema político, presidencialismo, reformas electorales, alianzas electorales.

**ABSTRACT:** In Mexico, the electoral arena has experienced substantial transformations throughout the last decades. It has changed from an overwhelming stage of domination by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) to a competitive struggle between diverse political parties, where pre-electoral coalitions (PECS) and political alternation are a recurrent phenomenon. This paper seeks to explain the switch from an hegemonic party system (with authoritarian characteristics) to a democratic multi-party system, by stating that the Mexican Public Administration's modernization, but especially the electoral reforms, have favored a phased configuration of a larger (and more competitive) number of parties and neutral electoral institutions. The argument is built upon the analysis of several documentary research, based on the 1977, 1986, 1990, 1996, and 2014 electoral reforms, federal and local electoral results, concluding with the Mexican political system's development implications.

**KEY WORDS:** democracy, political system, presidentialism, electoral reforms, pre-electoral coalitions.

## SUMMARY

I. Introduction. II. Theory: Democracy and Presidentialism. III. Methodology. IV. Interlacing the electoral reforms. V. Considerations on electoral competitiveness' increase. VI. Evolution of the Mexican Political System. VII. Conclusions. References.

## I. Introduction

In Mexico, political conditions and the electoral arena have experienced important changes over the last decades; particularly, have undergone a sinuous transition from an authoritarian regime combined along with an hegemonic party system, to a democratic presidentialist system characterized by the struggle between diverse political parties, where alternation and pre-electoral coalitions in the three governmental levels, comprise the key determinants of competition. Since the year 2000, Mexico has been categorized as a democratic country; nevertheless, said adjective may acquire an ambiguous meaning according to what is understood by *democratic*, and by analyzing empirical evidence through institutional and contextual factors. The democratization process is undeniable but might not be completely clear at first sight; therefore, causal explanations are needed determine if the country can be considered as democratic, by describing the processes involved in such changes, in order to assess elements and facts stressed by the old authoritarian habits within democratic conditions. This can be truly revealing to deepen on specific case studies like the Mexican, understanding current political realities.

Within the political system, in 1940, Mexico had a strong presidentialism in which the electoral system was loosely regulated and subordinated to the party, therefore, its permanent triumph was guaranteed. Since there was no real opposition, a unified government in which the legislative power served the president prevailed for many years. The president was as well, the formal leader of an extremely disciplined party and had the power to name the following PRI's presidential candidate, in other words: his successor in office (Weldon, 2002).

Over the years, while society became more diverse and social demands turned highly complex, the Mexican State absorbed and carried out an increasing number of duties and responsibilities. Intervention became larger and reached a saturation point, affecting public finances, and generating a bureaucratic structure, so numerous and inefficient regarding the multiplicity of the tasks performed.

In 1980, facing the imminent decline of the welfare-clientelist model, international pressure, and a negative aftermath in the economic arena, Mexico not only went through a democratization process, it also experienced the modernization of public administration: a new perspective of the governmental exercise, and an alternative conception of the relation between politics, public issues and citizens (Castelazo, 2009). Substantial part of these changes considered a significant reduction regarding structure and functions, less public expenditure and privatization schemes as the characteristics of an alternative style of government (Revueltas, 1993), combined along with the principles<sup>1</sup> of the New Public Management.

It has to be noted that the PRI (except in some exceptional local cases), held the monopoly of political power and managed to articulate broad corporatist networks and strong clientelist relations, issues quite profitable from the welfare state's perspective, considering that the economic public aids and resources destined for the population, were associated to the party and not the government. Thus, when the State structures and functions were resized and budgets limited to principles of rational utility, the hegemonic party faced an irreversible impossibility of maintaining control of the electorate in the country, and a huge threat to its internal stability. The need to democratize party competition and the neoliberal logic implicit in foreign and local politics, sooner or later, would not only confront the dismantled PRI with other parties in contention; as this party's structure was huge, the adjustment would inevitably cause internal competition between its own factions and key actors.

---

<sup>1</sup> Consistent in a rational logic resources exercise; professionalization of the public servers, client oriented public service, co-responsibility of the public action, market oriented competence principles, and decentralization on government action (Kalimullah et. al., 2012: 2-3).

Undoubtedly, the Mexican Welfare State's crisis, the increasing lack of political-electoral legitimacy, the implementation of the New Public Management principles and the PRI's weakening, certainly gave birth to some regulatory adjustments regarding the electoral authorities, proportional representation, political parties finance sources and their access to mass media, among others. Previous statements surely affirm the existence of democratic conditions in the country since the last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; nevertheless, how was this possible? What can explain the switch from a hegemonic party system to a democratic multiparty one? This is the research question the paper seeks to answer; nevertheless, the real contribution is to unhide the causal explanations behind, by showing the connection between apparently isolated elements and specific details about such *transformation*, in order to understand why Mexico still has many challenges to face around democracy.

## II. Theory: Democracy and Presidentialism

In general, a country can be in presence of democracy only if its political characteristics and institutions match with: a) open and competitive elections, b) alternation possibilities, c) universal suffrage, and d) freedom of speech and organization (Mainwaring, 1990: 4). Despite of the seminal discussion on which system provides more benefits, stability, and less problematic issues, in presidential systems there is an evident concentration of power in the executive, unlike than in parliamentary systems. Notwithstanding, two other relevant characteristics comprise democratic presidentialism: a) a head of government independently elected from legislative elections and b) president's election for a fixed time period (Mainwaring, 1990: 4-6). Although, the Mexican case is consistent with all six features stated previously, let us not forget that Mexico went through a long authoritarian stage before democracy; the challenge of this paper lies on showing the causal mechanism behind the system's transformation (See Table 1).

Table 1. Democratic Presidentialism vs. Mexican Presidentialism

Democratic Presidentialism	Mexico before 1988
Open and competitive elections	Open but not competitive
Alternation possibilities	Non alternation possibilities
Universal suffrage	Since 1953
Freedom of speech and organization	Freedom but not so many real opportunities for opposition
A head of government independently elected from legislative elections	Independently elected from legislative power, but had full control of it... No constitutional counterweight
President's election for a fixed time period	The president named his successor in office

Source: Own elaboration based on Mainwaring (1990) and Linz (1990)

As Linz (1990) states, presidentialism always has been correlated with the personalization of power, a gap between constitutional law and political practice, and relative inflexibility of the political process versus uncertainty and stability conditions. The following are a couple of theoretical elements of Mexican presidentialism, so they can be compared to the current institutions and reveal other insights that can explain particularity, about other democracies with similar constitutional and institutional designs.

Before democratic conditions in the country, presidentialism had a different approach, even though it includes several features of power concentration in the Executive, extraordinary powers (even called meta-constitutional) as available political resources were more than evident. The President made the most of discretionary decision making, ambiguous legal terms with regard to its limits, a highly dependent legislative power, the whole party at his service (since at the same time was the president of the only competitive party), unlimited resources to fulfill society's needs in order to maintain power, and the right to name its successor (Cosío, 1972).

These extraordinary powers certainly lead us to the next clue: *the official party*. After a political revolution, at the federal level, Mexico was governed by the same party for eight decades (1920-2000). Therefore, the PRI is another key element to be analyzed. Sartori (1980) developed serious academic efforts on classifying party systems around the world. Mexico caught his attention by sharing

with Poland the reduced category of hegemonic party system, with a minimal but a significant difference: The Polish party was considered as an ideological hegemonic party<sup>2</sup>, and the Mexican, as a pragmatic hegemonic one. Albeit the PRI based its discourse on the revolutionary values and causes, ideology was not present at all in its political action; unlike other parties, the PRI was very flexible upon dissent and the inclusion of brand new political groups. It concentrated almost every social sector within their corporate-clientelist structure, and it was a unified and enormously well organized and disciplined party (at the national and subnational level), so opposition would have the right but no real chance to compete (Weldon, 2002).

In synthesis, based on this theoretical approach the purpose of this work is to show how México's presidential system evolved from having *open but not competitive elections, non-alternation possibilities and dependence of legislative power with regard to the President* to a democratic presidential multi-party system, with competitive elections, alternation and a whole new president-independent legislative dynamics.

### III. Methodology

Being analyzed the differences between Presidentialism in democratic regimes and the Mexican presidential system elements before the attempts to democratize competition, the methodological procedure will consider three different and complementary stages. First, documentary analysis of the 1977, 1986, 1990, 1996, and 2014 electoral reforms has been performed in order to find the normative key transformations of the electoral system, with the purpose of extending partial explanations on the slow and democratization progress that Mexico has achieved. Second, about electoral competitiveness, expressed in alternation and pre-electoral coalitions as empirical manifestations of the phenomena, data on party coalitions behavior and electoral results, collected in previous literature as electoral results, is presented to emphasize how its consequences have placed

---

<sup>2</sup> Since Marxism was truly a dominant feature of party members and ruled public life in government and society.

electoral competition in a completely different level. Finally, holistic analysis of the Mexican political system's evolution unveils causality relations and how the context can determine and/or affect the variables, but especially, a linkage between them. Through historical facts, based on Easton's political system model (1957), categorized as inputs and outputs in separated periods, arguments on the evolution of the political system and lack of democracy beyond electoral competition will be extended.

#### **IV. Interlacing the electoral reforms**

Electoral reforms have played a very important role in Mexico's democratization. The way in which parties contend in the electoral arena is strongly related to the level of democracy the country has reached. Thus, such constitutional improvements reflect the will political actors had on leaving the authoritarian regime behind.

The electoral reform of 1977 was crucial, as it focused on "opening the party system, by giving entry to new political forces [...] and also opening spaces of party representation, recognizing opposition in a consistent manner" (Córdova, 2008: 658). The main contribution of this adjustment was the election of 100 representatives by proportional representation principle. Although the Institutional Revolutionary Party still had many advantages on their opponents, the rest of the parties not only began to have more participation; its rights had already been settled in the Constitution. However, impartiality in terms of the elections processes and results remained unattended (Decreto s/n de 1977). This gave birth to a tension between competition and the way in which the electoral processes were relieved.

As Woldenberg (2012) states, in 1986, despite the inclusion of these aspects in the rules of the game, the results of the elections were still manipulated, generating discomfort within the population and in the growing opposition partisan forces. Although the representation of the parties had been enlarged, the corresponding modifications to the Federal Electoral Commission were doubtful

since “the entire organization of elections was operated by the Secretary of Government” (Woldenberg, 2012: 27). In this reform, some regulation regarding the financing of political parties<sup>3</sup> was also considered for the first time, however, the determination still favored the PRI, since it granted financing proportionally to the number of votes and seats previously obtained by the parties. Nevertheless, this modification was substantial due to the increase from 100 to 200 representatives about the proportional representation principle (Decreto 30 de 1986).

Only a few years later, after the competitive and controversial federal election of 1988, where strong suspicions of electoral fraud were raised (García, 2011), the electoral reform of 1990 is presented as the reference for what Córdova (2008) labels as the incorporation of the citizen component in the electoral authority. The creation of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), along with a professional electoral service career (Decreto 5 de 1990), certainly would guarantee the skills and attitudes of electoral officials, and the existence of an electoral tribunal that would settle procedural conflicts, favoring strong foundations for electoral democracy, legitimate political competition and restored confidence in the electoral institutions.

However, the IFE’s development “showed problematic areas on legislation matters: a frequent contradictions between legal provisions and their political relevance, and a disproportion between the obligations given to parties and their capacities and structural weakness” (García, 2011: 82). Undoubtedly, the constitution of an autonomous regulatory entity represented enormous challenges; firstly, about reversing old habits in Mexican politics, and second, about IFE’s organization ability according to its ambitious goals, as well as reinvention skills to deal with uncertainty related to the possible future reconfiguration of the electoral arena. In addition, must be noted that the IFE still had some influence of the federal executive power, since its General Council was presided by the Secretary General of Government.

The reform of 1996 had as objective, to collectively agree on a regulatory

---

3 The emergent and inconsistent regulation allowed a patrimonial exercise of practically unlimited campaign resources.



framework for party competition with respect to financing and media access based on fair parameters (Decreto 15 de 1996). “The improvement in the conditions of competition in 1996 is perhaps the most visible and decisive effect of the reform that closed the long cycle of legal and constitutional changes in the search for a genuinely competitive party system” (Woldenberg, 2012: 56). This reform not only considered democratic statements around campaigns, it also crystalized a dialogue between the political forces and included the proportional representation principle in the Senate.

Minimal adjustments were made in the following years, nevertheless, the latest and most important reform is the one approved in 2014. This electoral improvement’s main objective was the *nationalization* of the electoral institution (Decreto 135 de 2014); the Federal Electoral Institute turned into the National Electoral Institute (INE). Therefore, in Mexico (being a federal country), the states conserve their autonomy to regulate their electoral rules, but with a substantive difference: from 2014, subnational processes will be homologated with the federal process and carried out between the local electoral institutions and the INE. The 2014 reform was designed in order to avoid the interference of the local executive in the processes and results (See Table 2).

Table 2. Achievements of each Reform

Reforms (year)	Achievements
1977	* 100 deputies (representatives) for the proportional representation principle (PR)
1986	* Vote-proportioned finance to political parties * 100 + 100 = 200 PR deputies (representatives) (40%)
1990	* Federal Electoral Institute (IFE)
1996	* Fair financing and media access framework for campaigns * 32 PR senators (25%)
2014	National Electoral Institute (INE)

Source: Own elaboration based on Decretos: s/n-1977; 30-1986; 5-1990; 15-1996; 135 de 2014 [H. Congreso de la Unión].

In synthesis, electoral reforms gave birth to the following elements that have configured a more democratic system: the inclusion and increase of the proportional representation principle in both cameras, the foundation of an electoral institute managed by citizens, and the achievement of legislation with regard to equitable resources and limits for the parties in contend; in other words, they favored competed elections and a whole new dynamic government formation and decision making (Peschard, 2008: 78). All consistent with the existent theoretical framework developed on presidential democracies, but affected by an authoritarian past, that certainly has to do with the ways in which Mexican political actors carry out their actions and how does parties compete or collaborate with others.

## **V. Considerations on electoral competitiveness' increase**

The Institutional Revolutionary Party's collapse, electoral reforms, and modernization of public administration in Mexico, opened the doors for new conditions in the electoral competition, as in the governments' configuration and exercise. One of the most emblematic consequences of transition to democracy in Mexico is the political turnover (present in all the three government levels). A quantitative study on Mexican elections has shown that the existence of fair electoral rules increases the probability of alternation. The marginal effect of the electoral rules on the turnover's probability reaches almost the 40 percent. The argument shows that institutional frameworks guarantee cleaner competition and minimizes the possibility of electoral fraud (Soto, 2012: 96).

The gradual democratic electoral development, from 1977 to 1989, crystallized in a total of 39 municipal government elections won by other parties than the PRI, while for the year 2000, the phenomena increased surpassing the 500 municipalities (Rodríguez, 2008: 12). After the federal alternation, this became even more evident, for example, for the 2008 municipal elections, out 1219 municipalities, 440 (36.1%) of them, experienced such change (Rodríguez, 2008). This allows us to infer that as the federal reforms increased, local contexts were (in many cases involuntarily) neglected by the (ex) hegemonic party. Logically, the consequences of political decentralization upraised firstly in the

local-municipal level.

In this sense, in 1989, “alternation at the subnational level occurred for the first time when the National Action Party’s (PAN) governor (state level) won the election obtaining a historical 52.3% of the votes” (González Ulloa, 2017: 52). Let us not forget that this happened only a year after the controversial 1988 federal election; the result certainly sent a clear message to political parties about the feasibility of winning elections, motivating them to improve their political-electoral performance; while for the electorate, said fact crystalized the real possibilities opposition had in achieving the victory.

Finally, at the federal level, turnover was not witnessed until the year 2000, and later, in 2012 with the return of the PRI to presidency. The last sentence shows that in minimum democratic conditions, any party can lose elections, gain power, recover and win; meaning that democratic conditions for electoral competitiveness constrain parties to use every available strategy to win elections. Unfortunately, these strategies and their informal features are not completely democratic or within the rule of law; a very important insight to consider in post-authoritarian regimes analysis.

The increase of electoral competitiveness has forced political parties to collaborate through the pre-electoral coalitions’ strategy, since “it allows opposition parties to increase their possibilities of defeating those who occupy government, while the party in government, join efforts to avoid losing elections” (Reynoso, 2011: 5). In fact, this figure was used in the year 2000, when PAN and PVEM won the presidency, and since then, has been present in every federal executive election.

At the state level, there has been a substantive percentage increase in their practice too: from 13 percent in Carlos Salinas’ period (1988-1994), to 38 percent in Ernesto Zedillo’s period (1994-2000), and 91 percent at the end of Vicente Fox’s period (2000-2006) (Reynoso, 2011: 13). In sum, from 1998-2011 (considered as the democratic era because the PRI had lost majority in congress) 75 of 125 contests had at least one PEC, which reveals, “an increasing trend in

the four periods analyzed reaching a constant presence in 2012” (Espinosa, 2013: 224). This argument is corroborated in 2016 and 2017, with a constant presence of coalitions in each one of the 15 governor elections (CIDAC, 2018). Data on pre-electoral coalitions’ percentage shows consistency with the development of the reforms, and as competitiveness has increased, parties have no other option than PECS to survive or achieve executive office (depending on the case). At the municipal, PECS are generally consistent with the joint forces at the state level; they had increased too, mainly in order to obtain general victories in the states.

Currently, there is a generalized increase and even a *normalization process* of this practice in the electoral arena and doubtlessly two different roles can be associated to PECS: they can be conceived as a fundamental factor for alternation or because of this process.

## VI. Evolution of the Mexican Political System

Understanding political reality implies a complex process of stringing together the environment and its effects, the institutional elements, and the process involved in their performance. In these lines, a complementary approach is used to describe the Mexican political system and provide a general *landscape* of its evolution, which will lead us to the challenges democracy is urged to face.

Easton (1957) argues that a political system is the set of political interactions that assigns values to a society. Their inputs (demands and support) are the *feedstock* crystallized in the outputs, and the energy supplied on the promotion of actions and decisions to be introduced in the political system. On the other hand, the outputs are expressed in decisions and policies that reconfigure, the previous demands, generating new ones, as the outcome of endogenous and exogenous factors.

The government system, the electoral system and the party system comprise “the substantial elements that make up a political system, its structure and its dynamics” (Nohlen, 1999: 3); the first two systems as institutional variables,

and the third as a product of social and political relations. The government system determines structures and dynamics about the exercise of power; the electoral system regulates competition (rules and requirements for the achievement of power), while the party system is understood as the interaction between political forces and their political power, due to institutional variables, but also affected by some other social and contextual elements, such as the electorate's preferences and its electoral behavior.

Back in 1946, in the postwar period, Mexico had a good positioning in the international system; a strong nationalist component and a promising development model known as the Mexican Miracle (Córdova, 1972). In said context, the *official party* (PRI) had consolidated its national dimension, achieved party unity, and managed to delimit and control all three sectors it represented: the factory workers, the small farmers and the popular sector<sup>4</sup>, through a precise corporatist structure. Social demands from the three major sectors were easily incorporated into the government's agenda, not only by their corporate leaders with strong ties with the PRI, but also by government officials, since each sector had the informal right to place party candidates and to occupy key positions in the public administration; all this in return of unconditional voting, and their role as conflicts' intermediary between government and society. In general terms, all demands were processed and satisfied almost immediately.

Upon a legitimacy crisis, the relative strengthening of the opposition, the internal partition of the *official party*, and the extremely competitive election of 1988, also considered as the end of the hegemonic party system (Valdés, 2004), internal and external conditions caused the fall of the PRI and made evident the first electoral manifestations of a democratic system. In addition, neoliberal policies and trade liberalization as measures to reverse economic crisis, became a brand new argument to persuade the voters of a discontent and more diverse Mexican society.

For 1988, in the rise of globalization, capital's internationalization,

---

<sup>4</sup> Replaced instead of the military sector, with the purpose of enhancing pacific resolutions; and since old militaries had become business men with extremely good political relations (Cosío, 1972).

a precarious economic situation, and the consequences of the controversial election, the PRI had no alternative but to agree with the design and approval of democratic competition mechanisms. Partisan opposition began to find success in the local political arena and in the formation of legislative power, while constitutional and citizen counterweights acquired a prominent role. Facing a much wider diversity of social sectors and neoliberal policies, social demands became not only more numerous, but more specific. Therefore, political offer was diversified in a much more competitive environment, while entrepreneurs and social movements leaders were also involved (due to their political power) and began to play the role of social demands supporters, a fact which represented high complexity of processing demands within a Mexican political system that no longer had the same characteristics than before. Along with the existence of a new multiparty system with larger representation in the congress, the decision-making process turned complicated and the political system found itself unable to satisfy every social demand.

Later, in 1997, the electoral reforms and the electoral behavior triggered the end of the Mexican presidentialism. For the first time, the PRI had not achieved majority in congress (Nacif, 2004), event that influenced the 2000 election PAN's victory, a party more associated to neoliberal policies, that would certainly be the citizens and international community's eye catcher, compelled to fulfill high expectations. At said point, uncertainty had been generated regarding: a) the PAN's inexperience about federal government and the performance of an untypical new president, b) the corruption levels and its role within politics, c) social and economic policies to be designed and implemented, and d) the possible eradication of national problems.

The new government assumed a big responsibility as it partially diverted attention from the former hegemonic party. Over the course of 12 years, the PRI succeeded in positioning a charismatic candidate like Enrique Peña Nieto for the 2012 electoral process and recovering the presidency (Olmeda and Armesto, 2013). However, his administration has been associated with violence and insecurity, and with the unpleasant repercussions of the structural reforms he promoted and managed to approve, making almost impossible for the PRI to maintain

the presidency. Undeniably, general democratic mechanisms, constitutional and citizen counterweights, and the formation of a multi-party system in fair conditions of contention, appear to be correlated with the uncertainty about electoral results and turnover according to the exercise of government; a quite common feature in developed political systems.

## VII. Conclusions

Institutional and regulatory changes mean substantial costs (Ongaro, 2008; Dussauge 2009); in that sense, the modernization of the public administration and the electoral reforms, had intentioned and unplanned effects due to implementation conditions and actors. In the first place, there is an evident divorce between electoral democracy and its inability to generate an effective public administration regarding effectiveness and continuity.

As Arellano (2000) states, public management in Mexico has been conceived as an appendix to the struggle for political power, where patrimonialism and public resources negotiation for personal benefits are deeply involved. Electoral competition, generating alternation determined mainly by PECS, is manufacturing administrations that do not extend the democratic exercise of elections to the executive functions, and where neither does joint policies between parties nor as government coalitions are guaranteed. Undoubtedly, since the 1980s, there is a tension between the ideals of the reforms and the political values within their practice, since electoral contend and executive roles had been characterized by a severe pragmatism, and strategies designed with the purpose of achieving power, and once having it, to use it for the sake.

Federalism in Mexico has changed too, although the institutional design of the country considers this characteristic, in contrast, “centralism was one of the distinguishing features of Mexican authoritarianism throughout the entire 20th century” (Peschard, 2008: 19). With the PRI’s debacle and the increase of political competitiveness, a new federalism was born. It followed the national guidelines in a general way, but found several opportunities in the local arena,

in order to maintain political control within the states (Peschard, 2008: 40). Decentralization ironically provoked a concentration of power at the subnational level, taking advantage of the constitutional autonomy federalism had given to the states, local elites set their own conditions to obtain perpetual power regarding the local executive. Those states in which the PRI has not granted alternation are the empirical test of said argument. And that is what the electoral reform of 2014, with the nationalization of the electoral body (INE), is trying to eradicate along with the interference of the local executive in electoral processes; not a quite simple problem to face considering the highly complex dynamics of concurrent multilevel elections, and the operation capacities of the Institutes.

Although parties now contend in democratic conditions of competition and government is carried out with collective decision-making principles, why can't they satisfy social demands?, would it be possible that the democratic struggle for power is consuming the actors, and reaching a non-processing specific demands stage?, or is there a lack of political vocation to serve the citizenship, posing personal and party's interests before the collective ones?

Outstanding electoral competitiveness that reforms have shaped, this paper invites to reflect on the need of re-thinking democracy; although electoral issues are important, it is necessary to "extend the democracy of authorization to a democracy of exercise, whose purpose is to guarantee in politicians and public servers some expected personal qualities and rules to organize their relations with the citizens" (Rosanvallon, 2015: 25). The ideal of democracy does not only consider solving the puzzle of a fierce electoral struggle, must now intend to fulfill the provision of quality public services and citizen satisfaction, and to impulse national problems resolution. Even though democracy is not the cure of every disease a country may have, certainly must be the way in which citizens must crystalize their preferences and satisfy their demands. The election of the political party or parties that must represent a part of society has to govern for the whole population. Therefore, the discussion lies now on the performance, governments must be demanded to comply concerning previous proposals and social needs, not mattering ideology but efficiency. That is the long road democracy must travel across in Mexico.



## References

- Arellano, D. (2000). Challenges for the New Public Management in Mexico: Patrimonialism and Colonial Values. *Ciencia Ergo Sum*, 7 (2), pp. 112-120.
- Castelazo, J. (2009). Reflexiones sobre modernización y modernidad político-administrativa. *Revista de Administración Pública: "La Modernización de la Administración Pública en México"*, 120, Vol. XLIV, No. 3, pp. 13-33. México. INAP.
- CIDAC (2018). *Resultados electorales 1985-2012* [base de datos]. url: <http://elecciones.cidac.org/>
- Córdova, A. (1972). La formación del poder político en México. México, Ediciones Era.
- Córdova, L. (2008). La Reforma Electoral y el Cambio Político en México. En Zovatto, D, y Orozco, J. (Coords.). *Reforma Política y Electoral en América Latina 1978-2007*. México. UNAM / IDEA International.
- Cosío, D. (1972). El Sistema Político Mexicano. Las posibilidades de cambio. Cuadernos de Joaquín Mortiz, México.
- Decreto s/n de 1977 [H. Congreso de la Unión] que reforma y adiciona los artículos 6º, 41, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 60, 61, 65, 70, 73, 74, 76, 93, 97 y 115 de la Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. url: [http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/ref/dof/CPEUM\\_ref\\_086\\_06dic77\\_ima.pdf](http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/ref/dof/CPEUM_ref_086_06dic77_ima.pdf)
- Decreto 30 de 1986 [H. Congreso de la Unión] por el que se reforman los Artículos 52; 53, Segundo Párrafo; 54, Primer Párrafo y Fracciones II, III y IV; 56; 60; 77, Fracción IV y Décimo Octavo Transitorio de la Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. url: [https://www.scjn.gob.mx/sites/default/files/cpeum/decretos\\_reformas/2016-12/00130002\\_5.pdf](https://www.scjn.gob.mx/sites/default/files/cpeum/decretos_reformas/2016-12/00130002_5.pdf)
- Decreto 5 de 1990 [H. Congreso de la Unión] por el que se reforman y adicionan los artículos 5, 35 fracción III, 36 fracción I, 41, 54, 60 y 73 fracción VI, base 3a. y se derogan los artículos

transitorios 17, 18 y 19, todos de la Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. url:[http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota\\_detalle.php?codigo=4651333&fecha=06/04/1990](http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=4651333&fecha=06/04/1990)

Decreto 15 de 1996 [H. Congreso de la Unión] por el que se reforman, adicionan y derogan diversas disposiciones del Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales; de la Ley Reglamentaria de las Fracciones I y II del Artículo 105 de la Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos; de la Ley Orgánica del Poder Judicial de la Federación; del Código Penal para el Distrito Federal en Materia de Fuero Común y para toda la República en Materia de Fuero Federal; del Estatuto de Gobierno del Distrito Federal; y se expide la Ley General del Sistema de Medios de Impugnación en Materia Electoral. url: <https://www.te.gob.mx/legislacion/media/pdf/5734c2cfa4ab3f4.pdf>

Decreto 135 de 2014 [H. Congreso de la Unión] por el que se reforman, adicionan y derogan diversas disposiciones de la Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, en materia política-electoral. [http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/proceso/docleg/62/216\\_DOF\\_10feb14.pdf](http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/proceso/docleg/62/216_DOF_10feb14.pdf)

Dussauge, M. (2009). Entre modelos y realidades: Enfoques teóricos para el estudio de las reformas administrativas. *Revista de Administración Pública: “La Modernización de la Administración Pública en México”*, 120, Vol. 44 (3), pp. 75-95. México. INAP.

Easton, D. (1957). An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems. *World Politics*, 9 (3), pp. 383-400.

Espinosa, O. (2013). Reseña: Diego Reynoso, La estrategia dominante. Alianzas electorales en los estados mexicanos 1988-2011, Buenos Aires, Flacso Argentina / Teseo, 2011, 298 pp. *Foro Internacional*, 53 (1), pp. 222-226.

García, M. (2011). Las reformas electorales a nivel federal en México. *El Cotidiano*, 166, March-April, pp. 79-91.

- González Ulloa, P. (2017). Alternancia en las elecciones subnacionales en México: síntoma de democratización? *Estudios Políticos*, 40, pp. 47-69.
- Kalimullah, N., Ashraf, K., and Ashaduzzaman, M. (2012). New Public Management: Emergence and Principles. *BUP Journal*, 1 (1), September, pp. 1-22.
- Linz, J. (1990). The perils of Presidentialism. *Journal of Democracy*, 1 (1), pp. 51-69. doi: 10.1353/jod.1990.0011
- Mainwaring, S. (1990). Presidentialism, Multiparty Systems, and Democracy: The Difficult Equation. *Kellogg Institute Working Paper*, 144.
- Nacif, B. (2004). Las relaciones entre los poderes ejecutivo y legislativo tras el fin del presidencialismo en México. *Política y gobierno*, 11 (1), pp. 9-41.
- Nohlen, D. (1999). Sistema de Gobierno, Sistema Electoral y Sistema de Partidos: opciones institucionales a la luz del enfoque histórico-empírico. México, Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación, Instituto Federal Electoral, Fundación Friedrich Naumann.
- Olmeda, J. y Armesto, M. (2013). México: El Regreso del PRI a la Presidencia. *Revista de Ciencia Política*, 13 (1), pp. 247-267.
- Ongaro, E. (2008). Introduction: the reform of public management in France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 21 (2), pp. 101-117. doi: 10.1108/09513550810855618
- Peschard, J. (2008). La Dimensión Federal de la Democratización Electoral. En Peschard, J. (Coord.). *El Federalismo Electoral en México*. UNAM-Miguel Ángel Porrúa.
- Reynoso, D. (2011). Aprendiendo a competir: alianzas electorales y margen de victoria en los Estados mexicanos, 1988-2006. *Política y gobierno*, 18 (1), 3-38.
- Revueltas, A. (1993). Las reformas del Estado en México: del Estado benefactor al Estado neoliberal. *Política y Cultura*, 3,

pp. 215-229.

Rodríguez, C. (2008). La alternancia municipal en México. *Working paper*, 52, México, CESOP.

Rosanvallon, P. (2015). El buen gobierno. Argentina, Manantial.

Sartori, G. (1980). Partidos y sistemas de partidos. España, Alianza Editorial.

Soto, I. (2012). Determinantes de la alternancia política en México, 1980-2009: un análisis econométrico a nivel de Estados. *Revista CONfines* 8 (15), pp. 77-98.

Valdés, L. (2004). El fin del sistema de partido hegemónico en México. *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Electorales*, 3, January-June, pp. 11-50.

Weldon, J. (2002). Las fuentes políticas del presidencialismo en México. En Mainwaring, S. y Shugart, M. *Presidencialismo y democracia en América Latina*, Argentina, Paidós.

Woldenberg, J. (2012). Historia mínima de la transición democrática en México. México. El Colegio de México.

*Cómo citar este artículo:* Torres, I. y Ahuactzin, C. (2019). Democracy and electoral reforms in Mexico. *Derecho Global. Estudios sobre Derecho y Justicia*, 4(11), pp. 143-162. DOI: 10.32870/dgedj.v0i11.186