

State & Politics in Modern Mexico

-From the intersection of globalization and civil society-

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Summary

This book covers the formation of democratic governance in Mexico, focusing overall on a diachronic and synchronic analysis of the dynamic transfiguration and shift in the configuration of the Mexico's political system through a "state-society" relations-based framework. In this sense, this text does not focus solely upon empirical analysis. Rather than mere positivism, importance is placed upon a theoretical framework in an attempt to integrate theory with empirical evidence. While such attempts may be considered natural, this approach is often insufficiently used in research on Latin America in Japan.

This text covers a particularly wide time period in an attempt to include the origins of Mexico's political characteristics. The organization of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) followed a gradual, but unbalanced and stratified course from a formation and stabilization of its "state-society" relations, to the emergence of crises, and finally its weakening and decline. Such a process is peculiar compared with many Latin American countries which have undergone drastic transitions from military regimes to civilian governments and then began the transition to democracy.

In the case of Mexico, under the overwhelming supremacy of an authoritarianism type of political space, both the market and civil society were in a prolonged state of stifling straightjacket. However, changes in this situation began through the influx and accumulation of globalization. With the development of a neoliberal policy and delayed emergence of a civil society, the process of escaping the political space of authoritarianism sluggishly has advanced. However, as can be observed from the various difficulties NAFTA caused upon citizens, civil society has been fragile under the market supremacy policies and ideology of neoliberalism, with prospects for democratic governance continuing to remain unclear.

Utilizing a long-term perspective as described above, this text focuses on the period of the Salinas administration as this period is recognized as an important intersection of globalization and civil society in Mexico. In other words, the emergence of social actors, who formed the supporting base for civil society, as well as the surfacing of fissures and fraying of authoritarian corporatism rule became visible during this time period. The "state-society" relations based framework, which is employed in this text, assumes a permeating interdependence or synergetic effect between various domains, social actors, systems and movements. This relationship extends stratified from local space to national space.

The examination of the "state-society" relationship in Mexico's political system is, in some ways, tied to the examination of the formation of the country's democratic governance. Deconstruction of the 'state' and its joining with a dynamic, complex 'society' opens the door for the possible development of a civil society. This view point is particularly important in order to investigate case studies like Mexico from a local and civic point of view.

The organization of this text is explained below. In chapter 1, the "state-society" relations approach, the analytical framework and points of issue, which are discussed from chapter 2 onward, from which

modern day Mexico is discussed, are presented. In the process towards the formation and stabilization of a “state-society” relationship in Mexico, the handling of laborers was an indispensable issue for the Cárdenas administration, and as such, chapter 2 discusses this matter. The “state-society” relationship, which Cárdenas created during this period, later shaped the fundamental framework of Mexican society.

Chapter 3 centers on the “state-society” relations during the 1970s, a period which was effected by the Mexican government’s violent response towards student and public demonstrations in 1968. Political and ideological crises began to surface together in the 1970s, and these were made worse by inner fighting over political hegemony within power blocks. Such conditions pressured the Mexican government and ruling class to construct and reorganize a new strategy. A crisis of legitimacy developed and negotiations over the relationship between the state and society became unavoidable.

Next, chapters 4 and 5 discuss disputes surrounding shifts in the internal organization of the national government, with particular emphasis placed upon concerns over hegemony within the bureaucratic system. Chapter 4 deals with the PRI’s structural formation and systemization. In addition to taking into account the establishment of civilian bureaucracy, this chapter also examines the strengthened influence of the Ministry of budget and Planning (SPP) and technocratic bureaucracy networks. In the following chapter, this problem is then related to globalization as well as the relationship of the SPP within Salinas’s administration with that of the National Solidarity Program (PRONASOL).

In chapter 6, in order to clearly prove the progression of PRI’s structural weakening and legitimacy crisis, the election process from 1988 to 1997 is analyzed. Through this analysis, the reorganization process of Mexico’s political system and shift towards and potential for democratic transition is examined.

Chapter 7, examines not only the effects of NAFTA upon the country’s citizens as a whole through the perspective of the agricultural community and farmers, but also looks at effects of the agreement from the relationship of a “state-market-society” perspective. The impoverishment and structural change of the agricultural community was a consequence not only of America’s agricultural policy, which applied pressure through NAFTA, but also resulted from the dismantling of various organizations, which protected the livelihoods of citizens, by the Mexican government. To illustrate this point, National Subsidized Staple Products Company (CONASUPO) is examined as typical example.

Next, a study of the analytical framework used to examine the shift of the “state-society” relationship towards democratization is presented in chapter 8. Using the research results of J. Fox as a base, the mutual relationship between local agricultural politics and reformist actors under the Salinas administration is studied. In the local political space the role which actors within the framework play in the emergence of and the possibility for democratization, social pluralisation, and civil society is examined.

Finally, in chapters 9 and 10, certain conditions, triggers, and possibility for democratization and civil society in Mexico are then covered. Chapter 9 focuses on a discussion of, while to a certain extent, Mexico’s decentralization of power and movement away from authoritarianism, its recognition of diversity, and its progression in democratization holds some positive meaning, there is, at the same time, a strong aspect of “decentralization of power from above” with insufficient delegation of power

and accountability, and issues regarding the development and connection of civil organizations remaining to be dealt with. Chapter 10 turns attention towards the movement of Alianza Cívica and El Barzón. In this chapter, the construction of a democratic relationship between state and society is analyzed from a “civil society- decentralization- democracy” perspective, and the role of diverse social movements and development of NGO’s, which assume the burden of these changes, is finally discussed.

The political and social analysis of Mexico from a “state-society” relations type of framework presents not only a new viewpoint and new issues regarding research on Mexico, but also contributes to research on politics in developing countries as a whole. Additionally, the distinctiveness and complexity of research on Mexico can also offer an abundance of subject matter for research in political science as well.