**Structures and Functions of the United Mexican States**

Executive Branch

* Fox’s victory in 2000 presidential election marked a turning point. First non PRI Pres in 71 years.
* Fox’s controversial presidency
	+ Fox never had majority in either house—led to 17 presidential vetoes of Congressional legislation. Calderon only vetoed 5 times.
	+ Lacked political experience
* Hyper-Presidentialism
	+ Constitution gives the president considerable leverage.
		- Can initiate legislation (virtually all bills of importance originate from exec branch)
		- Can issue decrees
		- Transfer funds
		- Appointment powers - patron client relations and a substantial civil service
		- Administrates PEMEX, Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) and state owned banks
		- Makes appointments
			* Fox wanted to minimize patron client relations and filled his cabinet with political experts, many of whom were not PAN members.
			* Minister of Defense & Minister of the Interior crucial

Senate

* Senate is chosen along with Pres and has the same 6 year term. 2 term limit.
* 128 seats. Thirty-two national senators-at-large
* In any given Senatorial election the party that wins the highest percent of the vote, even if it is less than half, gets 2 seats and the second highest votes (or first minority party) gets 1 vote. The remaining 32 seats are allotted according to PR and divided among the parties in proportion to their share of the national vote.

Chamber of Deputies

* 1 federal representative for every 200,000 citizens. 500 deputies:
* 300 "majority deputies" are directly elected by plurality from single-member districts. The remaining 200 "party deputies" are assigned through rules of proportional representation. These seats are not tied to districts; rather, they are allocated to parties based on each party's share of the national vote.
* 3 year terms. 4 term limit.
* Sole authority to approve President’s budget. Purse Power

Obstacles to improving the Mex Legislature

* 1. Members have small budgets and staffs. Also, small archives. Leg relies on Exec branch for important information
	2. The use of PR to elect the remaining 32 Senators and 200 deputies. On one hand it allows minority parties to have a voice; however, it prevents members of Congress from having a strong geographical base. Still, most Mexicans support it as do most parties.

Judiciary

* [Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_Justice_of_the_Nation) and Council of the Federal Judiciary
* **Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation**--the highest federal court.
	+ Chief Justice + 10 associate justices
	+ 15 year terms.
	+ Pres nominates and 2/3 Senate approves. 15 year terms, non-renewable.
	+ Almost never overruled an important policy under the PRI
* 1994 Law of the Judicial Power increased indep of judiciary.
	+ 2 new powers of judicial review: federal laws and international treaties
	+ Has become more active since 1994 law
		- Court ruled against Fox’s decree for daylight savings time. Ruled this was a state prerogative.
		- 1997-2005: stuck down 3 of 6 presidential initiatives it heard

New Federalism

* 31 states + Mexico City.
* Each state has three branches. Governors have a single 6-year term.
* Zedillo, pressured by opposition, offered a New Federalism Program…
* Revenue sharing program
	+ - Governors complain of 80-16-4 split, national gov holds 80% of funds, leaving 16% to states and 4% to locales
		- Law of Fiscal Coordination (LCF) states that states and local govs forfeit their taxing privileges in return for their share of national revenues.
	+ Yet 4 main obstacles to federalism remain:
		1. Discontent with current revenue sharing program. Wealthier states pay more but receive proportionately less. Poorer states feel that not enough is being redistributed
		2. LCF allows states to choose how to spend their money—creates tension among localities
		3. Current tax system too dependent of fed taxes. States do not exercise the tax authorities they do have b/c they can depend on fed taxes.
		4. Undermines gov accountability. Local and state authorities can and do just blame the Fed gov.