Mexican Elections

BACKGROUND

In September 2018 WAC will focus on the Mexican Elections and learned about how past and current elections have effected Mexican citizens and Mexico-US relations.

Given the current humanitarian crisis on the border, discussing the Mexican elections could be beneficial to understanding US Mexico relations and how the new Mexican president may remedy the immigration crisis on the US Mexico border as well as the southern Mexico border with the Northern Triangle. The Mexican elections could also serve as a mirror to compare and contrast between previous and current Mexican elections and the US’s 2016 election.

Although Mexico’s Constitution, drafted in 1917 promised to establish a democratic state, it has struggled to manifest amongst a tradition of a single party rule, namely, El Pri. The PRI, or the Institutional Revolutionary Party, has dominated the Mexican government for over 70 years. Under PRI’s rule, Mexico was riddled by violence, corruption, and class disparity as well as stagnant policy.

While the PAN party (the center-right National Action Party) broke 70 years of PRI rule in 2000 with the election of Vicente Fox, Mexico continued with the same pattern of corruption, especially after the PRI party regained dominance in the next elections. 2018’s Mexican election is proving to be a crucial turning point in Mexican politics given the ideology of the leading candidate, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador - often referred to as AMLO for short – from the independent party, Morena.

Self-identified as a leftist, AMLO’s prioritization of “el pueblo” or “the people”, specifically the nation’s most marginalized, has made him a favorite among many. AMLO has gained popularity among young voters for his commitment to end corruption and violence, however, his often vague policy proposals have left many with questions and comparisons of AMLO to some of Latin America’s past dictators such as Hugo Chavez and even the US president.

Despite his ardent opponents, Obrador won over 53 percent of the vote, outnumbering the dominating parties, PRI and PAN. Beginning December 1, the
president-elect of Mexico will assume power from the current president, Enrique Peña Nieto and entirely change the trajectory of the Mexican government and greatly impact business, the economy, and US-Mexico relations. Mexico’s election of AMLO may finally allow for Mexico to live under a true democracy.

**LET’S THINK ABOUT IT**

Your SWAC leader will prompt you with questions revolving around the same idea: will the election of AMLO benefit the Mexican government and its citizens and how might this election affect Mexico-US relations?

Express your thoughts and contribute to discussion with your fellow peers!

(room to write your thoughts)

This lesson plan is meant as an aid for the Faculty Sponsor, President or Vice-President to lead their respective SWAC chapter in the discussion of this two weeks’ focus: The Mexican Election.
Kahoot! Introductory Quiz

Kahoot! is an online Quiz platform. This small five-question quiz is to test the student’s prior knowledge of Mexico and its elections and leaders and introduce them to the discussion to come. The quiz does not require the proctor to have a Kahoot account in order to start. Students will use an electronic device in order to answer. The link is below; click START NOW and select Classic mode. After the Game PIN is generated, students will be able to join the session by accessing kahoot.it on their computer or mobile device. Begin the quiz once all students have joined! This activity shouldn’t take more than 10 minutes.

LINK: https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/ceda7866-d9b4-4b34-82d0-e8f4e6f70287

Lesson

The following are links to articles which we feel are helpful aids in understanding the Mexican elections and the candidates presented, as well as the current state of the Mexican government and US-Mexico affairs. Review the articles as a group and take some time after each reading to cover the material with students and make sure that it has been generally understood. Ask questions to students; get them to summarize what they’ve read and make sure they are engaged and understanding. This segment should not take longer than 20 minutes.

A SHORT GUIDE TO THE MEXICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM
LINK: http://www.rogerdarlington.me.uk/Mexicanpoliticsystem

This guide gives a thorough explanation of varying sectors of the Mexican political system from the constitution and political parties, to the different branches of government and responsibilities of the president.

- How does the Mexican government compare to that of the United States?
- Do the three major political parties in Mexico have any similarities to that of the major political parties in the U.S.?

U.S. – MEXICO RELATIONS COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
LINK: https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-mexico-relations
This is a thorough timeline of the U.S.’s relations with Mexico from 1810-2010 showing how NAFTA paved the way for a closer U.S. – Mexico relationship on security, trade, and counter narcotics.

- How do you foresee Mexico-U.S. relations changing in the next few years now that President Trump is in office and Mexico has elected AMLO?
- What has had the largest impact on U.S. – Mexico relations?

THESE ARE THE FOUR CANDIDATES IN MEXICO’S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

This article provides information on each of the four presidential candidates, what their background is, why they are running, and what they believe.

- Which candidate do you feel will have the most impact on the Mexican government and creating change for the Mexican people? Do you feel they will have a generally positive or negative impact?

Additional Resources

Below we have listed additional resources which will go over the election in more detail and expand upon the candidates as well as the structure of the Mexican Government and attitudes of citizens and political officials toward the election. The first two videos listed will be most helpful in expanding upon the recent election itself and U.S.-Mexico relations.

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE MEXICAN ELECTION
LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kA_A7FATobw

This 2 minute video breaks down the Mexican presidential candidates, the stakes of the election, and the parallels to our American president.

ROBERTA JACOBSON, EX-AMBASSADOR TO MEXICO, ON WHAT MEXICO’S ELECTION MEANS FOR THE U.S.
LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qB4UeMaq-LY
This 6 minute video shows an interview with Roberta Jacobson, ex-ambassador to Mexico, answering questions surrounding the recent Mexican election and how this could affect NAFTA, immigration reform and the opioid crisis in the U.S.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM MEXICO’S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Z2QINquHqq

This video provides good discussion on presidential candidate, AMLO, and how he might govern, what distinguishes him from other candidates, and why citizens are voting for him, as well as the holes in platform.

REVIEW ON MEXICO
LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6-eCB9qUeY

This video, although long, provides an excellent overview of multiple topics related to Mexico’s government, political parties, and history.

DISCUSSION

Obrador has taken a strong stance against the Trump administration’s immigration policies. What could this mean for the relatively stable relations between both countries?

Is AMLO’s vague policy proposals a deterrent to his message? Will this affect his productivity during his presidency?

Are his proposals – such as abolishing corruption and cartels, and making higher education free – too ambitious for the current state of Mexico?

What do you say about the other candidates? Anaya, “El Bronco”, and Meade? What separates AMLO’s proposals from theirs?

What do you think was the reason for such a massive support for AMLO – and independent party candidate – taking into account EL PRI’s dominance over the country for the past 70 years? Is this a win for the lower class?
BIBLIOGRAPHY


