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MASTER THESIS

Titel der Master Thesis / Title of the Master's Thesis

Corruption, Clientelism and Democratization

The Mexican Case

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Advanced International Studies (M.A.I.S.)

Wien 2018 / Vienna 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt
Postgraduate programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 992 940

Universitätslehrgang lt. Studienblatt
Postgraduate programme as it appears on the
student record sheet:

Internationale Studien / International Studies

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Prof. Arthur Rachwald



diplomatische
akademie wien

Vienna School of International Studies
École des Hautes Études Internationales de Vienne

Abstract. Corruption, the misuse of public power for personal gain, and clientelism, the exchange of favors for votes, endanger many electoral democracies in their transformation process into liberal democracies. In its course of democratization, Mexico has been distressed by scandals of corruption and clientelism. This thesis explores the development and patterns of clientelism and corruption in Mexico since its democratic opening in 2000. It further seeks to identify the impact of reactions of the Mexican authorities in terms of legislation and enforcement thereof. After an introductory opening section, the second chapter grapples with the theoretical contextualization of clientelism and corruption in general and particularly in Mexico. The third and fourth section approach the concepts of clientelism and corruption in the Mexican case with a triangular assessment that combines a quantitative analysis of indices and surveys and a qualitative selection of cases. By introducing the most important laws and institutions, the fourth chapter also lays out parts of Mexico's legislation that seek to curb unlawful practices of clientelism and corruption. While democracy as such does not seem to be endangered in Mexico, the worrying level of corruption and clientelism hinders the country from the progress it could make. The large amount of laws attempting to restrict corrupt and clientelist methods need stricter enforcement in order to have an effect and transform Mexico from an electoral into a liberal democracy.

Die vorliegende Masterarbeit untersucht die Entwicklung von Klientelismus und Korruption in Mexiko seit der demokratischen Öffnung des Landes im Jahr 2000, sowie die Auswirkungen der Reaktionen der mexikanischen Behörden auf die Gesetzgebung und deren Durchsetzung. Nach einer Einführung im ersten Kapitel, setzt sich das zweite Kapitel mit der theoretischen Kontextualisierung auseinander. Im dritten und vierten Abschnitt werden Klientelismus und Korruption in Mexiko mit Hilfe einer Triangulation, welche eine quantitative Analyse von Indizes und Datenerhebungen und eine qualitative Fallauswahl kombiniert, untersucht. Zudem werden im vierten Kapitel Teile der mexikanischen Gesetzgebung herausgearbeitet, die zur Eindämmung rechtswidriger Praktiken bestimmt sind. Während die Demokratie als solche in Mexiko nicht gefährdet scheint, behindern Korruption und Klientelismus das Land in seinem Demokratisierungsprozess. Um Mexiko von einer Wahl- in eine liberale Demokratie zu verwandeln ist es notwendig, die Gesetze, die darauf abzielen korrupte und klientelistische Methoden einzuschränken, strenger durchzusetzen.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Arthur Rachwald for the continuous support of my master thesis, for his patience, understanding, and knowledge.

I thank my fellow students for the sleepless nights we were working together before deadlines, and for all the fun we had in the last two years.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank my parents for their endless support in my studies and my life in general.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

COPIFE	Federal Code for Electoral Institutions and Procedures (span.: Código Federal para Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales)
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organisation
EDOMEX	State of Mexico (span.: Estado de Mexico)
ENCIG	National Survey On Governmental Quality and Impact (span.: Encuesta Nacional de Calidad e Impacto Gubernamental)
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FEPADE	Specialized Prosecutor's Office for the Attention of Electoral Crimes (span.: Fiscalía Especializada para la Atención de los Delitos Electorales)
IFE	Federal Electoral Institute (span.: Instituto Federal Electoral)
INE	National Electoral Institute (span.: Instituto Nacional Electoral)
LEGIPE	General Law on Electoral Institutions and Procedures (span.: Ley General de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales)
LGMDE	General Law on Electoral Crimes (span. Ley General en Materia de Delitos Electorales)
MCCI	Mexicans against Corruption and Impunity (span.: Mexicanos contra la Corrupción y la Impunidad)
MORENA	National Regeneration Movement (span.: Movimiento Regeneración Nacional)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAN	National Action Party (span.: Partido Acción Nacional)
PEMEX	Mexican Petroleum (span.: Petróleos Mexicanos)
PRD	Party of the Democratic Revolution (span.: Partido de la Revolución Democrática)
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party (span.: Partido Revolucionario Institucional)
PRONASOL	National Solidarity Program (span.: Programa Nacional de Solidaridad)
PVEM	Green Ecological Party of Mexico (span.: Partido Verde Ecologista de México)

SEDESOL	Secretariat of Social Development (span.: Secretaría de Desarrollo Social)
TEPJF	Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary (span.: Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación)
TI	Transparency International

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Map of Mexico



Mapsofnet (2018)

I. Introduction

1.1 General Background

“Corruption is not a disagreeable characteristic of the Mexican political system: it is the system“, the Mexican author Gabriel Zaid stated bluntly in 1987 in his book *“La economía presidencial“*, highlighting the impact of corruption on Mexican politics (Zaid, 1987). Yet, systemic corruption is not a phenomenon exclusive to Mexico. It roots in human nature and it is not limited to any specific country, culture, religion or history. However, if corruption infiltrates all levels of society, as it does in the Mexican case, it may hinder democratization and facilitate the rise and growth of other crimes. One type of corruption, media outlets primarily focus on, is the abuse of a public office for personal gain and benefit (Serra, 2015). Powerful actors misusing some of the tools they have access to in order to pursue their private interests, is unfortunately a rather frequent phenomenon in Mexico. There is, however, another type of corruption which does not aim at private benefit but seeks political support. The theory of clientelism seeks to describe the practice of getting political support in exchange of giving away benefits. In Mexican national and subnational politics, the use of clientelist practices, the exchange of goods and services for political support, as well as corruption, aiming at private gain, dates back to its colonial era (Nubia Nieto, 2013: p. 130).

In the late 1980s, Mexico slowly began to open its doors to democracy. Enhanced party competition and numerous reforms culminated with the end of the 71-year, one-party-reign of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI, *engl.*: Institutional Revolutionary Party) in 2000. With the new multi-party-system, which created laws regulating the election process as well as anti-corruption mechanisms, 21st century Mexico appeared to strive for the consolidation of democracy. However, the actual statistics say quite the opposite. Crime rates have risen, scandals of electoral fraud and vote buying became increasingly public and recent corruption perception indices positioned the country as corrupt as never before. The question that arises is, can a country whose citizens seem to have no trust in their public officials and their voting system be classified as a modern democracy on the same level as its “big northern brother“, the United States, or Western European democracies?

1.2 Research Question

What are the patterns of clientelism and other forms of corruption in 21st century Mexico and how do they influence the consolidation of democracy?

With this thesis, I seek to identify patterns of corruption and clientelist practices in contemporary Mexico. Under the 71-year-rule of the PRI, clientelist practices were an essential part of the political machinery that many saw as crucial for a smooth functioning government. With the electoral win of the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN, *engl.*: National Action Party) in the 2000 presidential elections, many saw it as a victory for democracy and hoped it would lead to corruption-free institutions and political leaders. Unfortunately, those have remained rather utopian thoughts which will not become a reality any time soon. In 2017, crime rates were at an all time high. Scandals of fraud, vote buying and clientelist practices plagued the last presidential election in 2012. Many fear similar or even more exaggerated use of such methods in the 2018 presidential elections, which the media thinks will roadmap the future of Mexican democracy. It seems that corruption as a whole and political corruption in the form of clientelism are more present than ever. Thus this thesis aims to analyze the current state of clientelism and corruption in Mexico. How did the situation change since the end of the PRI reign in 2000 which marked the official beginning of a multi-party-state? How does clientelism influence the process of democratization of the country? And what are the general patterns of (political) corruption in the country?

1.3 Relevance

In 2017, the Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranked Mexico 135 of 180 countries, with an all time high score of 29 out of 100¹ - Mexico's second² worst result since the CPI has been introduced in 1995. According to the CPI, which ranks countries according to how free they are from corruption, Mexico is dead last when comparing the country to the 35 other member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The country's CPI is also well below its economic competitors with 40 places separating Mexico from countries such as China, India and Brazil. When the PAN was elected to presidency in 2000, there was much hope for the beginning of real democracy in the country. The PAN, headed by the two presidents, Vincente Fox (2000-2006) and Felipe Calderon (2006-2012), publicly condemned the practices of the PRI and promised to erode corruption on a governmental level, as well as to declare the war on drugs and crime. However, the 12-year-rule of the PAN turned out to be not quite as different from the times of the "perfect dictatorship"³ of the PRI. Both Fox's and Calderon's presidencies were characterized by high rates of homicides and, in spite of an initial improvement, a steadily increasing perception of corruption. Although the PAN had fewer public scandals and accusations of electoral fraud or vote buying, none of the PAN presidents succeeded in achieving what they promised to the Mexican population - a safer country. Nevertheless, when the PRI came back into power in 2012, there was hope from the international sphere - especially the United States - that corruption on an institutional level, and the state of crime as a whole, would drastically improve in the near future. The presidency of technocrat Enrique Peña Nieto started off with promising reforms, which, regardless of the people's perceptions, symbolized change and progress. Yet, not long after his successful start, Peña Nieto's image started to crumble. Now, having reached almost the end of his term in office, the incumbent president's six years as head of state can be, bluntly said, summarized as a series of political scandals. In spite of attempts to free the state from corruption and to create a system of fair elections by introducing several anticorruption laws and enhancing the capacities of the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary (span.: Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federa-

¹ 0 = highly corrupt, 100 = very clean

² In 1997 Mexico's CPI was at 26,6

³ quote by the Peruvian author Mario Vargas Llosa in 1990, calling Mexico "la dictadura perfecta"

ción, or TEPJF), not much of it seems to have had a real effect. Scandals of vote buying and illegal campaign financing arise with every major election in the country. In addition to a low level of trust in public officials, the state of security in the country continues to be alarming. Crime rates are at an all time high. In 2017, Mexico registered a record number of murders, with 29,158 homicides (Cole, 2018). In anticipation of the General Elections in July 2018, there is again much discussion about the state of political corruption, since many fear that an unfair and undemocratic election will take place. With that in mind, it is important to analyze the development of political corruption and clientelist practices in 21st century Mexico in order to address the question: Is Mexico a functioning democracy?

1.4 Academic Contribution

At a time where democracy is being globally threatened, the progress of democratization in one of the world's largest economies is at stake. Political corruption and the use of clientelist practices, which include methods of vote buying and illegal campaign financing, contribute largely to the containment of democratization. Thus, in this thesis, I will focus on the patterns of clientelism and other forms of corruption over the last one and a half decades since the election of the PAN to presidency in 2000, which is often referred to as Mexico's opening to democracy. Although there has been significant research conducted on the democratization process in Mexico already, as well as on corruption and clientelism, few academics have investigated clientelist practices as a subcategory of corruption and its relevancy to the development of democracy. By analyzing clientelist practices and political corruption with a combined methodology, I seek to bridge this gap in the literature.

The case of Mexico is of particular interest since there have been substantial contradictions in its development. Declaring itself a democracy decades before, the real opening towards a multi-party-system only took place in the late 1980s, reaching its peak in 2000. Expectations of democratic development at a high pace were reinforced by the introduction of reforms and the fight on criminal groups that threatened the citizens' security. Yet, none of this turned out to be successful after all. Laws are not enforced and

the country's crime rates continue at their highest levels today. It is thus of particular interest to analyze why the democratic opening and increased reforms and laws on electoral malfeasance could not contribute to curb the country's systemic problems.

Although the theories embedded in this work come from political science, I will also touch upon historical facts and developments. The relevance of reforms and laws to limit practices of corruption and clientelist behavior, further ask for the incorporation of juridical aspects.

1.5 Methodology

In order to examine the correlation between the perceived level of corruption and the perceived level of clientelism, I will use a triangular approach that combines a quantitative and a qualitative assessment. The time frame that has been selected for this analysis stretches from 2000, when the PAN first came into power, until 2018, the year of the presidential elections in July 2018, with a special focus on the presidency of Enrique Peña Nieto. Within the quantitative analysis, I collected data from the most relevant index for corruption, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which has been published by Transparency International since 1996. It annually ranks countries by their perceived level of corruption, as determined by experts' assessments and opinion surveys. In order to evaluate the perception of clientelism in the country, I relied on data collected by the Mexican Panel Study, a survey research project on Mexico's election campaigns since 2000. The Mexican Panel Study is intended to be a resource for scholars working on issues of public opinion, voting behavior, and political communication, and includes questions that focus on the perception of clientelist practices in the run-up to elections. Within the Mexican Panel Study of 2000, 2006 and 2012, I selected the questions that are relevant for the perception of clientelism to analyze and compare them. The aim is to examine whether or not there were increases in the perceived level of corruption or the perceived level of clientelism respectively.

In a second methodological step, I approached the issue with a qualitative assessment. This included expert interviews as well as a selection of relevant cases of corruption and clientelism in the above stated time frame. For the expert interviews, I selec-

ted two academics who have investigated this field for decades. The first, Prof. Kenneth Greene from the University of Texas, is the central figure behind the Mexican Panel Studies that I have used for my quantitative analysis. The second expert interviewed, Dr. Cristina Tapia Muro from the University of Colima, Mexico, has investigated the topic of clientelism in Mexico consistently for years. The second part of this qualitative analysis, a selection of cases, falls under the methodology of process tracing, which has been selected as a predominant design for case studies in many recent academic studies (Siewert, 2017: p. 239). Kittel and Kuehn (2013: p. 1) identified Alexander George and Andrew Bennett's "Case Studies and Theory Development" (George and Bennett, 2005) as one of the central promoters of the concept of process tracing as a relevant methodology in the field of Political Science. The methodology is often used by scholars to carry out within-case analyses based on qualitative data (Collier, 2011: p. 823). Bennett and Checkel (2014: p. 6) refer to process tracing as "the examination of intermediate steps in a process to make inferences about hypotheses on how that process took place and whether and how it generated the outcome of interest". Process tracing can be used both for case studies that aim to gain a greater understanding of the causal dynamics that produced the outcome of a particular historical case, and to shed light on generalizable causal mechanisms linking causes and outcomes within a population of causally similar cases. Furthermore, it is defined as the systematic examination of diagnostic evidence that has been prior selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator (Collier, 2011: p. 823). Collier (2011: p. 833) mentions four central contributions that process tracing can make to diverse research objectives: (1) identifying new political and social phenomena and describing them; (2) evaluating prior explanatory hypotheses, discovering new hypotheses, and assessing these new causal claims; (3) gaining insight into causal mechanisms; and (4) providing an alternative means of addressing challenging problems such as reciprocal causation, spuriousness, and selection bias. The focus of process tracing is thus not merely to prove the existence of a causal mechanism between situation X and situation Y, but also to give deeper insight into how Y occurred.

In order to gain deeper insight into the Mexican case, I will employ the methodology of process tracing in addition to the analysis of quantitative data and expert interviews. As already stated, the time frame of the analysis is from the start of the presidential campaigns in 2000 until 2018, yet, due to the higher amount of available information, a particular focus will be on the six years of Enrique Peña Nieto's presidency between 2012

and 2018. For this analysis, I compiled information on the most eminent events and scandals that became public in the selected time frame and deal with issues of clientelism or corruption. Therefore, I will use a broad variety of sources including newspaper articles, discourses, and academic literature such as journals, magazines, or books. To enable the most extensive collection of information, I will analyze sources in Spanish, English, and German.

1.6 Constraints

Given the illegal nature of corruption and clientelism, both corrupt transactions and clientelist practices are typically carried out in secrecy. Whilst measurements on the perception of corruption and clientelism exist, there is no reliable “hard data” on corruption and clientelist incidents (OECD, 2013: p. 7). Additionally, data on criminal prosecution of corruption and clientelism contributes relatively little to the real occurrence of both phenomena, as it serves specifically as an indicator of the efficiency of rule of law in the respective country or region. However, well established indices, such as the CPI, are now largely recognized as they are based on expert interviews and aggregated data collected from opinion surveys.

An additional limiting factor of this thesis is the varied perception of clientelist practices from individual to individual. The experts interviewed for the purpose of this thesis stressed the problems of identifying clientelism that some voters may have. Whereas some citizens may consider preferential access to welfare programs in exchange for their vote as a regular trade of benefits, others may identify receiving a kickback during campaigning as a bribe and thus a form of clientelist behavior. Hence, the surveys on the perception of clientelism also cannot be regarded as entirely reliable, since individual perceptions are highly subjective.

However, there are some factors that might be traceable as influential variables playing into the individual perception of clientelism and corruption. As in every case of reciprocal exchange, there is a supply and a demand side. Lower social classes are, in particular, largely dependent on preferential access to health and anti-poverty programs, which is why they would probably not admit to having participated in clientelist practices when asked in the framework of surveys or interviews. While some academics (Hilgers,

2008) have shown the influence of social class on the penetration of clientelism, demand of clientelist practices cannot be simply limited only to lower class individuals.

Lastly, it should be questioned what role enhanced party competition and increased media coverage on elections and campaigning play in the development of corruption and clientelism. While it may often seem that reports on clientelist behavior have increased, this rise is likely to have been triggered by an increasing tendency towards investigations on the side of political competitors leading up to elections, or could also be traced back to a generally higher level of media coverage and information gathering.

1.7 Research Outline

After the introductory chapter I, chapter II will give a theoretical introduction into the Mexican political development since the days of the 1910 revolution, with the aim of identifying patterns of corruption and clientelism in 21st century Mexico and their effect on democratization. A brief overview on the development of democracies and Mexico's specific democratic progress will be given before defining the concepts of corruption and clientelism. Both phenomena will then be compared and specified in their particularities within a literature review before deepening the analysis in the Latin American and Mexican cases. After this theoretical section, chapter III will depict the first part of my analysis. With a quantitative approach, both corruption and clientelism will be evaluated to identify possible patterns or trends. As the next step, in chapter IV, a qualitative analysis will complement the findings from the previous chapter with some case studies as examples and the input from expert interviews. Chapter IV will also discuss the main contributions of law enforcing mechanisms that have been introduced in Mexico in recent years. In the final chapter (V), a summary of findings together with a final conclusion will assess the impact of clientelism and corruption, as well as democratization in Mexico today.

II. Theoretical Conceptualization and Literature Review

2.1 A Brief Overview on Mexican Politics Since the Revolution of 1910

The role of the most dominant party in Mexico's democratic history is essential to understand in order to fully comprehend the development of democracy and the role of political corruption in Mexico. Until the elections in 2000, Mexico was the longest surviving single-party regime in the world (Wallis, 1998: 165). The Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) won every presidential election from its foundation in 1929 until 2000. In addition to that, the PRI was able to monopolize both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, and to win virtually every governorship of Mexico's 31⁴ states until its ultimate defeat in 2000. According to Wallis (1998: 165), the *sexenio*⁵ was a key element to the PRI's success due to the 'political assassination' of the president every six years. The state control of the main industries, state corporatism and, where necessary, fraud, intimidation and corruption helped the PRI to maintain its power.

The PRI has its origins in the Mexican Revolution of 1910 which was initiated by the failure to manage the presidential succession after the Porfiriato, the 35-year-long regime of President Porfirio Díaz. Even though the armed phase of the revolution had ended in the year of 1920, it was followed by further political unrest. In 1928 the crisis created by the assassination of the president-elect Álvaro Obregón was solved by the founding of the National Revolutionary Party (PNR) - which would later become the PRI - by the former president Plutarco Elías Calles. Created as a mass party, the institutionalization of the results of the Mexican Revolution was the PNR's central policy. This included especially the promotion of workers' rights and a more equalized distribution of wealth amongst Mexicans. Until 1934, Mexico was dominated by corruption under the rule of presidents following the ideology of the PNR's founder Calles. This era, referred to as the 'Maximato' (Buchenau, 2006: p. 229), ended in 1934 with the election of Lázaro Cárdenas as the new Mexican president. Cárdenas, unlike his predecessors, did not accept a subordinate role to Calles' well-established regime. Led by Cardenas, this culminated in the ar-

⁴ Mexico is divided into 31 states. The country's capital, Mexico City, is a federal entity with a level of autonomy comparable to that of a state, but is not a state itself. Therefore Mexico City's highest office is the one of the city's mayor since there is no governor.

⁵ "Sexenio" is the term limit on the President of Mexico. The president's time in office is limited to a single six-year term, and no president is permitted to hold the office again.

rest and deportation of Calles and dozens of his corrupt associates in 1936 (Buchenau, 2006: p. 252).

The PRI got its present name only in 1946 at the end of the rule of Cárdenas' successor, Manuel Ávila Camacho. Although the party already had a reputation for its corrupt practices by then, many of its supporters continued to reinforce the necessity of the PRI for the modernization and stabilization process of Mexico. Even though oppositional parties, such as the PAN, emerged already in the 1930s, they seemed to have had no influence on the PRI's success in every presidential election from 1929 to 1982, which it won each by well over 70 percent of the vote. A ritualized procedure also called "*el dedazo*" (*engl.* tap of the finger), in which the incumbent president and the party leaders selected the next presidential candidate, was integral in the PRI regime (Camín, 2017). The party's dominance, which is often referred to as "the perfect dictatorship", was near-absolute on all levels. The PRI not only held an overwhelming majority in the Chamber of Deputies, but also every single seat in the Senate for most of the time until 1988. During most of its reign, it also held every state governorship (Weiss, 1997).

President Zedillo was the last one to receive *el dedazo*, before the PRI had to yield power to the PAN after the historic defeat in the 2000 presidential election. Yet, the decline of the PRI hegemony started years before the historic election defeat. The PRI had been weakened by increased electoral competition in the 1990s, which had also changed the internal dynamics of the party (Langston, 2001: p. 468). Langston (2001) argues, that inter-party competition allowed less powerful actors within the PRI to strengthen their position to win more decision-making power, especially over the nomination procedure. For the 2000 elections, the PRI held a primary vote to choose their candidate for the first time in the party's history. In spite of this transition to a more transparent and democratic procedure, the PRI lost the presidency to the PAN, a party of largely ex-PRI members, and its candidate, right-wing populist, Vicente Fox. PRI candidate, Francisco Labastida Ochoa, was later accused of having embezzled money for his election campaign from the state-owned oil company, PEMEX (Mexican Petroleum, span.: *Petróleos Mexicanos*).

However, things would get even worse for the PRI and would lead to the largest political crisis the party had ever seen before. In the 2006 General Elections, the PRI presidential candidate, Roberto Madrazo Pintado, was able to win only 9.3 million votes (PAN: 15 million., PRD: 14.8 million). Constrained again to function as an opposition party, the PRI was able to recover under the presidency of Felipe Calderon, whose term in

office was marked by the Mexican Drug War and the Great Recession in 2009. In 2009, the PRI regained plurality control of Mexican congress. Disappointments regarding the PAN during its decade in power accumulated as the economic growth, in the otherwise prosperous country, declined by 4.7% in 2009 (WorldBank, 2018). The PAN has often been accused of adapting the corrupt methods of the PRI, and a lack of structural reforms did not help polish its image in the Mexican public. Calderon's centerpiece of his term in office, the war on drug cartels, resulted in 60,000 deaths, including many civilians, and an extremely high murder rate (The Economist, 2012). Considered by some as the "less of two evils", the PRI candidate, Enrique Peña Nieto, won the 2012 elections. This led to many critical voices issuing their concerns about a possible resurgence of corruption, repression, economic mismanagement, and electoral frauds. The legitimacy of Peña Nieto's victory in the 2012 elections has often been questioned, especially in regards to electoral fraud. A number of corrupt ex-governors of the PRI who supported Peña Nieto during his campaign, were only recently declared criminals by the Mexican government (The Guardian, 2018). The allegations against Peña Nieto and his administration are reflected in the incumbent president's extremely low approval rating of 12% (Ortiz, 2016). The striking amount of scandals that marked Peña Nieto's presidency will be discussed later in this analysis. With regard to the Mexican General Elections in 2018, warnings of a comeback of the practice of *el dedazo*, as well as the possibility of the PRI committing electoral fraud, have been brought back to the table (la Nacion, 2017). The PRI's presidential candidate 2018, José Antonio Meade, was handpicked by Peña Nieto whom he served first as Secretary of Foreign Affairs and later as Secretary for Social Development.

2.2 The State of Democracy in Mexico

Even though there is no real consensus about the definition of democracy and its key elements that may differ from state to state, the concepts of free and fair elections, the protection of human rights, legal equality and rule of law have evolved as the central characteristics.

The fact that the United Mexican States, in particular after the end of the PRI hegemony in 2000, constitute a *de jure* democracy cannot be contested. During the rule of the PRI, corruption and clientelism were used as tools by the government and the benefi-

ciaries of economic liberalization which started in the 1940s (Nuba Nieto, 2013: p. 135). The decline of the PRI's influence and the slow democratic opening to more than one sole party started in the 1980s. Simultaneously, the type of politicians in charge also evolved from traditional politicians coming from public universities to technocrats with degrees from private or foreign institutions (Nuba Nieto, 2013: p. 136). However, it can be argued that there is still a big portion of necessary development missing in a regime where properly functioning institutions exist *de jure* but not always *de facto*. Serra (2015: p. 131) points out the difference between an electoral and a liberal democracy. Although both types share that they have abandoned autocracy, an electoral democracy is usually less politically developed than a liberal democracy (Schedler, 2013). A very concrete definition of what separates an electoral democracy from a liberal one has been made by Haber, Klein, Maurer and Middlebrook. The authors argue that in liberal democracies the rule of law is enforced universally and in a fair manner. There are also sanctioning mechanisms to keep public officials accountable for their actions, while state institutions regulate and monitor each other (Haber et al. 2008). In his analysis, Larry Diamond (2002: p. 26) classified only half of all countries in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean as liberal democracies. Ten countries were categorized as electoral democracies, with Mexico among them. According to the NGO Freedom House, which also holds Mexico as a partly free electoral democracy, the country has never been an entirely liberal democracy since it started to be monitored (Figure 1).

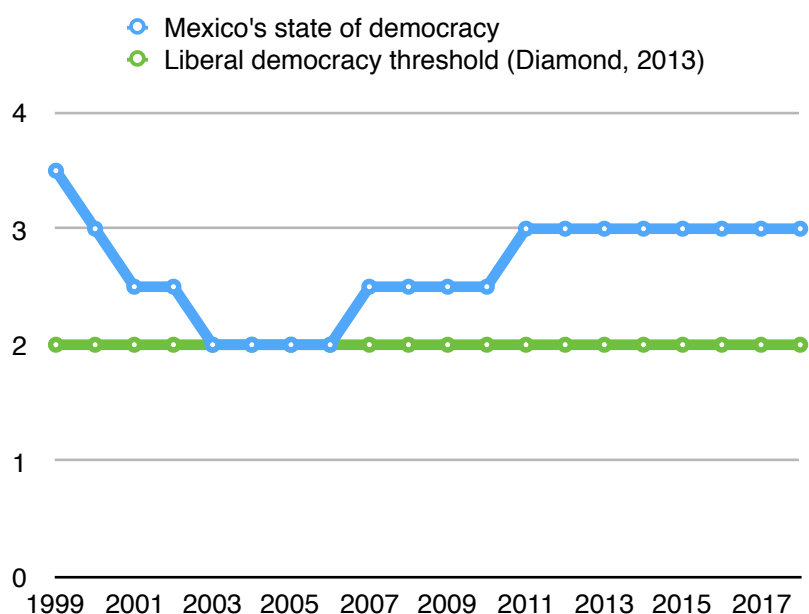


Figure 1: Mexico's democratization process according to data from Freedom House (2017)

2.3 Concepts of Corruption

While Machiavelli defined corruption as the destruction of public virtue and political morality, political scientists have still not found one universal definition of corruption. A rather frequently stated definition, which is also used by Transparency International, is that “corruption is the abuse of public power for private profit or for a gain in power or status” (Nye, 1967: p. 417, Rose-Ackermann, 1999). This financial gain or increased power or status can be on the side of the corrupter, the corrupted, or both. It is mostly the poorest level of society that eventually carries the weight of the consequences of corruption, in the form of distortions and deprivations (Doig and Theobald, 1999: p.1). The precise measurement and definition of corruption can be different in every analyzed case or issue. The term corruption has evolved over the years and now includes many aspects of society aside from politics. For example, economics, culture, or law. Yet, for the purpose of this thesis, another relevant concept of corruption is the one of ‘grand corruption’, which in an early definition by J.J. Senturia (1931) has been described as “the misuse of public power by heads of state, ministers and top officials for private, pecuniary profit”.

Due to its illegal nature, data on corruption is relatively hard to collect and often unreliable. Transnational research of corruption usually collects the corruption indices provided by international databases, such as the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of Transparency International, or the WBES of the World Bank Institute. In order to develop those indices, the respective organizations use data from surveys of experts, businesses, or citizens of the country they are investigating (Liu, 2016). Transparency International, originally founded by former World Bank employees in 1993, counts as the most active international organization dealing with issues of corruption. With its mission 'to curb corruption through international and national coalitions, encouraging governments to establish and implement effective laws, policies and anti-corruption programs' as well as to 'strengthen public support and understanding for anti-corruption programs and enhance public transparency and accountability in international business, transactions and in the administration of public procurement'⁶, it is widely recognized as a global opinion leader on anti-corruption efforts.

⁶ TI Mission Statement, Transparency International (1995)

In spite of being classified as illegal, there are situations where corruption can be morally acceptable or where it can serve as a means of efficiency. For instance, bribing of a concentration camp guard to facilitate someone's escape might be classified as corrupt but it would probably not be seen as morally problematic. As well as the bribing of officials to facilitate economically or socially beneficial projects, like the construction of infrastructure, might be corrupt but still efficient. Campbell (2016: p. 124) thus concludes that while corruption might be legally questionable, it is sometimes morally, socially or economically beneficial.

In addition to not having found a single definition yet, political scientists also still do not agree on the impact of corruption to cause social damage. Sociologist, Robert K. Merton, said that immigrants from Italy or Poland coming to the American continent would never have been able to gain influence in the party machineries without a certain degree of corruption. Today, in many third world countries, the same logic applies (Von Alemann, 2004: p. 25).

In conclusion, the search for a universal definition of corruption might continue to be difficult as it is subject to continual redefinition as time moves on. Corruption is a multi-dimensional concept which needs to be approached from a variety of different angles and disciplines. However, for simplification, for the purpose of this analysis, corruption will be defined as the 'misuse of public power for personal gain', the definition most commonly used by scholars.

2.4 Concepts of Clientelism

Definitions of clientelism are relatively vague and varied depending on the perception of the respective scholars. As an umbrella term, which will also be used primarily in this analysis, the concept of clientelism usually includes a menu of practices to distort voter intentions by improperly using resources of different kinds (Hilgers 2011; Nichter 2014). Hicken (2011: p. 291) describes clientelism as a method of contingent exchange that thrives in both autocracies and democracies. Similar to corrupt behavior, clientelism is not adherent to any specific cultural or economic contexts. In some cases, clientelist practices decline in a country in times of economic development, yet in others, they adapt and sur-

vive. Furthermore, clientelism is commonly considered an obstacle to democratic transitions, especially in regions where large fractions of the population are in poverty.

Political clientelism can be face-to-face or broker-mediated (Hagene and Gonzalez-Fuente, 2016: p. 5), and is characterized by a mutual benefit (Roniger, 1990: p. 2). It presents a process that traverses social class (Hagene and Gonzalez-Fuente, 2016: p. 5). Clientelism had been described as a face-to-face phenomenon by most early scholars. However, more recent research has shown that clientelist mechanisms can be considerably more complex, reaching “from the summits of national politics down to the municipal level” (Kitschelt, 2000: p. 849). Clientelism is based on a hierarchical relationship between the “patron” and the “client”. In this relationship, the patron provides resources that are transferred to the client while proofs of loyalty, mostly in the form of votes, flow upward to the patron (Krishna, 2007). On a local level, a patron mostly works and influences not on a direct, face-to-face basis, but via brokers who have a certain status in the community they live in. These brokers can be regional government officials, landowners, or respected business people (Moerman, 1969).

Most research on clientelism does not give any specifications about the nature of the goods and services that are being exchanged. First of all, this is because the exchanged benefit for political support can be of material or nonmaterial nature. Material benefits for example can range from cash to housewares and food supply, whereas nonmaterial benefits can be jobs or access to public services, such as health care, education, housing, and security (Hicken, 2011: p. 292). Bustikova and Corduneau-Huci (2017: p. 279) add that the exact content of the exchange between patron and client is often context specific.

Hicken (2011) mentions iteration, thus the ongoing nature of the patron-client-relationship as another key factor that differentiates clientelist practices from other methods of exchange of favors such as bribes or the practice of giving away gifts, such as pens, badges or gift cards, by political candidates to potential voters. The absence of a direct exchange implies that each side of the clientelist relationship is anticipating future benefits or future behavior as they make decisions about their behavior today. Whereas a bribe, for example, is a simultaneous exchange of benefits, the exchange between patron and client can thus happen on a staggered basis, as it does in the case of electoral promises. The characteristic of an iteration process is also of importance when describing vote-buying, which also consists of the exchange of goods or services for political support in the form of votes. Yet, there is some discussion whether vote-buying is to be considered

as a form of clientelism or not (i.a. Hagene, 2015). Academics who argue for a separation of the two, argue that in contrast to the more permanent and personal relationship that clientelism often promotes, vote-buying is mostly limited to a single and direct exchange (Hagene and Gonzalez-Fuente, 2016: p. 5). Other authors, however, identify vote-buying as a subcategory of political clientelism (Stokes et al. 2013: 13 pp., Nichter and Palmer-Rubin 2014: p. 200). In this analysis, vote-buying will be treated as a form of clientelist practice since it serves as the most accessible proxy for the measurement of clientelist interactions.

2.5 The Demarcation between Corruption and Clientelism

Due to the essential continuity between corruption and clientelism, academia has long regarded clientelism as a mere component of the concept of corruption. The two terms have often been even used as interchangeable synonyms. Some scholars also proposed measurements of corruption such as indices as proxies for the extent of clientelism (Keefer, 2007). A similarity between clientelism and corruption is that both are likely to thrive in the same kind of countries, mostly developing states with high levels of poverty, weak democratic institutions, a relatively short democratic history, and a considerably big state economic presence (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007).

However, there also have been stages of research in political science with a focus on the differentiation between clientelism, the exchange of favors for votes, and corruption, the misuse of public power for personal gain. Some academics conducted in-depth research on the conceptual distinctions between clientelism and corruption. Caciagli (1996), for instance, insists on differentiating the two concepts while acknowledging that clientelism, by using public resources for political benefit, can cause corruption. While the clientelist exchange of favors is merely for political reasons, the aim of corruption is the financial benefit of an individual, thus diverting money for private gain. Also, the result of the clientelist exchange of administrative decisions for votes and of the exchange of contracts or public tolerance for money is of a different nature. Caciagli (1996) stresses the asymmetry of power and general respect for the law as characteristics of clientelism that are often not present in the concept of corruption. In the Mexican case, De la O (2014: p. 183) determines corruption as the cause for clientelist practices by identifying a

high level of corruption as the trigger for forms of political behavior that may be destructive to a democracy, such as patron-client relations.

Align with Caciagli, Singer (2014) separates the concepts of clientelism and corruption. Yet, he identified a strong relationship between the perceived level of clientelism and the perceived level of corruption even after controlling for their underlying association with poverty. With these findings Singer (2014) proposes three different arguments for this perceived positive correlation of corruption and clientelist practices. Firstly, the association between the level of corruption and clientelism could be superficially driven by the sometimes overlapping nature of clientelism and corruption. Secondly, a reason why clientelism might be associated with corruption is according to Singer (2014) that clientelism could be a factor in creating a political structure in which corruption can flourish. Hence, clientelist practices can lead to systems where mechanisms of accountability are weak, where political decisions are made with little transparency, and where bureaucratic discretion is relatively high. Thus, all of those results facilitate corrupt behavior. And thirdly, there is the argument of financing clientelism. Similar to corruption, clientelism is reciprocal and requires parties or individuals to have resources to distribute. Singer (2014: p. 6) further develops this idea and mentions two sources that politicians can use for handouts but eventually also for private gain. In order to gain votes, politicians can either manipulate the distribution of state welfare programs and patronage assignments or they divert funds from state programs into their own pockets in order to finance their campaigns which tend to be more expensive as the client is being offered a benefit. Thus, illegal campaign financing is an important aspect that should be included in the analysis of clientelism.

In contrast to other authors, who distinguish vote-buying from clientelism (see Hagene, 2015), Singer (2014) identifies direct vote-buying as a clientelist practice which is classified as illegal and corrupt in many countries. Vote-buying and illegal campaign financing can be often observed simultaneously in elections across developing democracies. Serra (2016) argues in favor of studying the phenomena of vote-buying and illegal campaign financing together due to the symbiosis between them. Serra (2016) builds his argument on the fact that if an institution, party or individual buys votes, this needs to be done in secrecy, implying the need to acquire unlawful resources to be able to finance these actions. If there has been illegal campaign fund raising, the party in question would then also need to spend this money illegally and secretly, for example through vote-buy-

ing (Serra, 2016: p. 132). If however, there is a situation where a political organization cannot directly use state funding or other public resources to finance clientelist practices guaranteeing benefits to voters, then the patron has to seek another ways to raise the necessary funds. In the Mexican case, this is often where political actors turn to Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) or other criminal organizations.

2.6 Corruption and Clientelism in Latin America and in Mexico

The study of democracy and elections in Latin America has enhanced the attraction of the phenomenon of clientelism in literature in recent years. Hagene and Gonzalez-Fuente (2016: p. 3) conclude that although in the 1960s and 1970s it was widely believed that economic development and enhanced political competition would eliminate clientelism, recent studies and practical evidence show that clientelism never ceased to exist. The Latin American continent in general is widely seen as a fertile ground for corruption (Morris, 2006; Mainwaring, 1995; Szwarcberg, 2015). The hypothesis that enhanced democratization has the capability to erode corruption and clientelism, does not seem to be true in the case of Mexico. In 2011, the Transparency International report counted 200 million incidences of corruption in Mexico, most of them classified as bribery. Bribes to access public services amounted to approximately 32 million pesos (1.7 million USD). According to Transparency International, in 2011, Mexican households spent on average 14% of their income in bribes. In addition to that, corruption tends to be a regressive phenomenon since low-income households even spend a third of their income in bribes (Transparencia Mexicana, 2011). Although corruption is an established problem throughout the Latin American continent, Mexico leads the ranking in terms of frequency of bribes to access basic services, according to Transparency international. In 2017, more than half of the Mexican citizens (51%) have paid bribes in order to access basic services, such as educational or health services (Transparency International, 2017) (Figure 2).

In the whole Latin American continent there are some countries where clientelism seems to have diminished (Stokes et al. 2013). Yet, in Mexico after the end of the Mexican Revolution in the late 1920s, the creation of the PRI paved the way for the centralization of political power (Kenny et al., 2012: p. 31). Although clientelism had been around

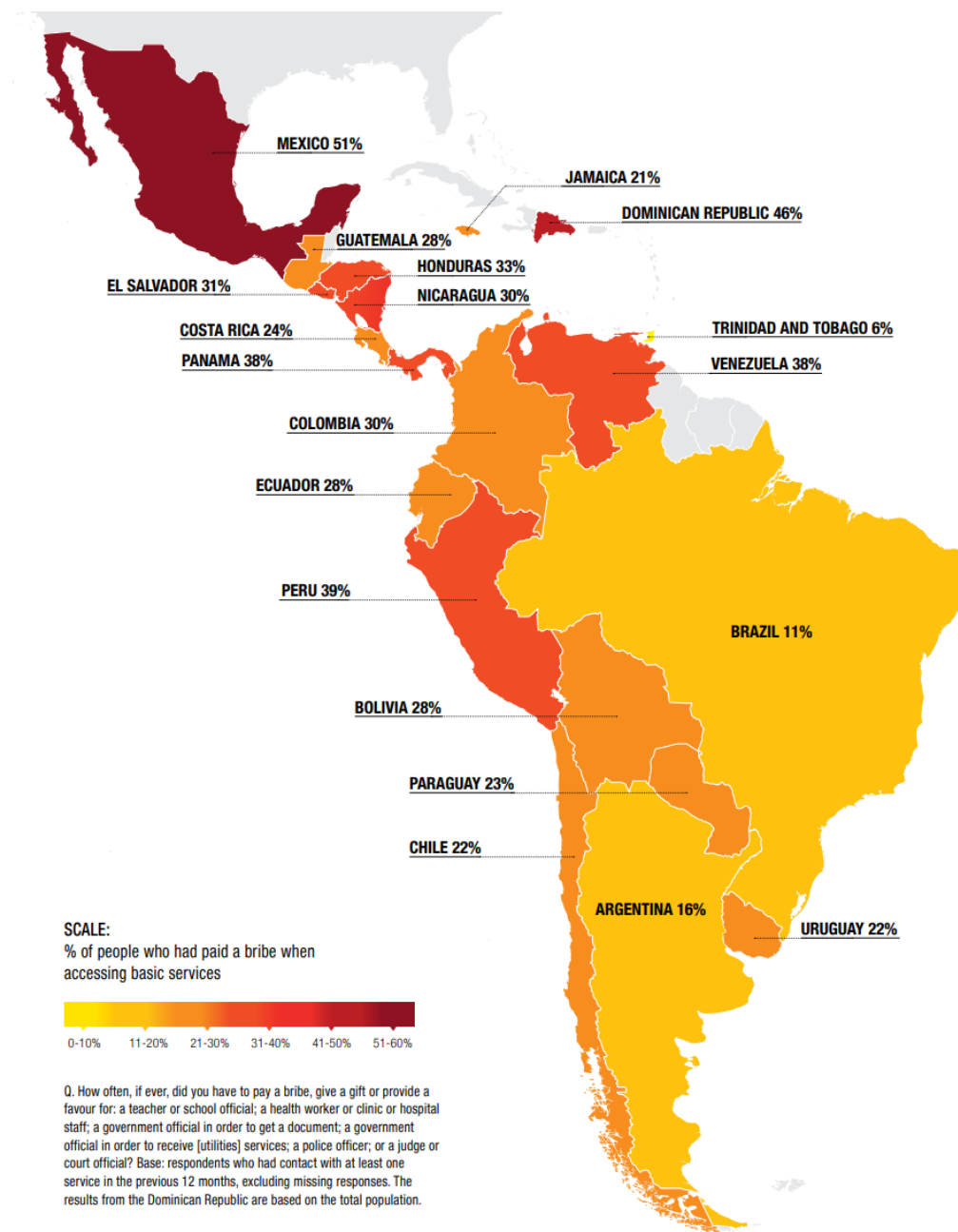


Figure 2: Bribery rates across Latin America and the Caribbean (Transparency International, 2017)

in Mexico since its colonial era, it was not systemic until the PRI established, similar to the United States, presidency as the central hub of power. For decades this system was highly beneficent for the PRI and those willing to play along with the PRI's set of rules (Hilgers, 2008: p. 128).

Under the facade of modern democracy, the PRI would establish what is often referred to as "*la dictadura perfecta*" and govern the country for more than 70 years. This centralization of power in the federal government, gave rise to clientelist practices exer-

cised by officials on a local and national level as well as to state-sponsored corruption (Grillo, 2011: p. 53). When in the 1980s and 1990s the PRI's predominance in Mexico's *de facto* one-party system decreased, opposition parties such as the PAN or the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD, *engl.*: Party of the Democratic Revolution) slowly gained in importance. The opposition first only won isolated districts and later entire states. The climax of challenging the PRI was their defeat and the PAN's victory in the 2000 presidential elections, yielding Vicente Fox as the new Mexican president.

Whereas there is much evidence that clientelist practices have been exercised by the PRI since the party's coming into existence, some academics (i.a. Greene, 2012) argue that these methods have spread also to parties other than the PRI. During the process of democratization beginning in the 1980s, Mexicans however seemed to have become increasingly aware of the importance of democratic values (Domínguez and McCann, 1996). The PRD's advancement to an important competitor in the 1990s was facilitated by their claim of not using the same methods as does the PRI. However, the evidence of the use of clientelist practices in the PRD's municipal and state governments are according to Hilgers (2008: p. 136) not consistent with the democratic values the PRD tends to highlight in their official discourse.

Vicente Fox's cabinet (PAN) attempted to give Mexican citizens a better understanding of democracy and good governance and introduced administrative reforms to constrain corruption and provide social benefits for everyone (Morris, 2008). Hagene and Gonzalez-Fuente (2016: p. 19) nevertheless found that in spite of the fact that public programs giving social and economic benefits to citizens were offered and increasingly promoted under President Fox, state institutions still continued to fail in extending them to the citizen. In order to eventually obtain those benefits, citizens thus still need to maintain a good connection to a broker or a patron.

It is important to stress that not all clientelist practices that can be defined as such are illegal in Mexico. According to the NGO "Mexicanos Contra la Corrupción y la Impunidad" (MCCI, 2018: p. 132) the delivery of utility items, for example, is not considered as illegal if they are made out of textiles and are intended to promote the image of the candidate. However, the law prohibits handing out goods when they are not textiles or when they have the purpose of influencing the direction of the vote due to its economic or material appeal, rather than the candidate's proposals.

2.6.1 The Role of Drug Trafficking Organizations in Political Corruption

In Mexico, Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO) are used as a source of financing clientelist practices if a party or public official has no access to other resources. The entrenchment of DTOs and public officials has a long history in Mexico, yet most of the financial results of their cooperation flow into the officials' private pockets. In such a case corruption results in beneficial outcomes for both sides and can be thus described as reciprocal. The corrupting side, mostly state officials on all levels or entrepreneurs with certain influence, misuses its power and influence for private benefit, mostly in monetary form. The corrupted side (DTOs or other criminal organizations who are often organized as cartels) on the other hand, benefits by not being prosecuted or by being tolerated in its illegal activities. It is however hard to define who is corrupting and who is being corrupted in this kind of relationship, since both sides benefit from their trade and often the incentive comes from the corrupted side (DTOs) in order to prevent any form of prosecution.

Another element that should be mentioned at this point, is the issue of drug-related violence. Although this work shall not focus on the relationship between corruption and drug-related violence, the issue should be addressed briefly in order to give a better understanding of the influence drug-related issues have on the general level of corruption in Mexico. Morris (2013: p. 196) summarizes that there are different perceptions of the relationship between the above mentioned issues. Whereas some argue for a direct link between drug-related violence and corruption, others claim a more indirect relationship where, both, drug-related violence and corruption, derive from weak institutions. Others, however, assert that drug-related violence and corruption are inversely related, by being mutually opposed tactics available to the delinquents in their attempt to influence state officials. According to Morris (*ibid.*) this theory is captured in the popular Mexican expression “plata o plomo” (*engl.* silver or lead), meaning that officials chose either to cooperate with drug-trafficking organizations in return for a payoff or suffer violent consequences if they refuse to do so.

2.6.2 The Impact of Democratic and Economic Development on Political Corruption

Not only democratization but also economic development is often seen as a key factor for the weakening of corrupt behavior and clientelist practices on a systemic level. The OECD issued in one of its publications, that while the direct relationship between corruption and economic growth (operationalized with the data of GDP) involves a complex assessment, the negative impact of corruption can be shown with its effects on key transmission channels, such as investment (including Foreign Direct Investments, FDIs), competition, entrepreneurship, government efficiency, and human capital formation (OECD, 2013: p. 1). Many scholars (Stokes, 2005; Kitchelt and Wilkinson, 2007) list a number of reasons why economic development would undermine clientelism. According to Stokes (2005) a first reason would be that if there is economic development, the voters' GCP tend to raise which would make vote-buying more expensive. Secondly, society usually gets urbanized and better connected, making networks in traditional rural societies less effective and lowering the ability of practitioners of clientelism to monitor voters. Thirdly, an increasing middle and upper class reduces the voters' dependence on elected officials for favors also because of their increased mobility and possibility to out-migrate. Fourthly, as the voters' life standard increases, they demand for more public and non-individual benefits, such as education or better governance quality. Fifthly, as media coverage tends to become higher, voters become increasingly aware of mis-governance and the social costs of vote-buying. And lastly, the development of mass media also facilitates the rise of oppositional parties as the costs of political advertising go down.

According to Bardhan and Mookherjee (2017: p. 19) there is evidence for the improvement of governance, the raise in social spending, and the generation of public goods when clientelist politics are substituted by programmatic politics. However, Hagene and Gonzalez-Fuente (2016: p. 7) identify three central factors that explain why clientelist networks are still present in Mexico today, the endurance of socioeconomic differences, the failure of the Mexican administration to deliver public goods accordingly, and the ways in which individuals seek to perform many tasks within a network or community.

III. Quantitative Analysis

3.1 The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)

The annually published Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) was first introduced by the international non-governmental organization Transparency International (TI) in 1995, and is since then ranking countries "by their perceived levels of corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys" (Transparency International, 2018). The definition, the CPI generally uses for its concept of corruption, is, "the misuse of public power for private benefit". In 2017 the CPI ranked 180 countries and territories "on a scale from 100 (very clean) to 0 (highly corrupt)" with New Zealand as the least and Somalia as the most corrupt country in the world. The 2017 CPI, with an average score of 43, highlighted that the majority of countries ranking in the lower two thirds are making little or no progress in ending corruption. The TI's in-depth research shows that an increasing number of journalists and activists in corrupt countries risk their lives every day in an effort to speak out. For the Latin American chapter, Transparency International observes worrying trends in recent years, including the weakening of human rights and the erosion of governance structures. Indicators of such a development is a serious rise in violent crime and insecurity in many countries in the region. The 2017 report adds a special focus on Mexico, where a 31% increase in the number of murders was recorded (Transparency International, 2017). When analyzing Mexico's CPI since the year 2000 a slight but steady downwards (more corrupt) trend can be observed. Whereas in 2001, the year after the PAN has taken over presidency, the score was at 37, it is now down to 29, an all time low since the CPI has been first published in 1996 (Figure 3).

In their research, TI found that a large number of people were concerned about the constantly high or sometimes even increasing level of corruption in the region. In Mexico, 61% of the polled people perceived corruption as an increasing phenomenon in the country in 2017. Over one half of the survey's respondents said that their government was doing a bad job at fighting corruption. Even more preoccupying is the fact that two key institutions for good governance, the police and elected representatives, were perceived by citizens as the most corrupt. In 2017, an alarming percentage of 51% of Mexican citizens had to pay bribes to access basic public services, with schools and hospitals leading the way (Figure 4).

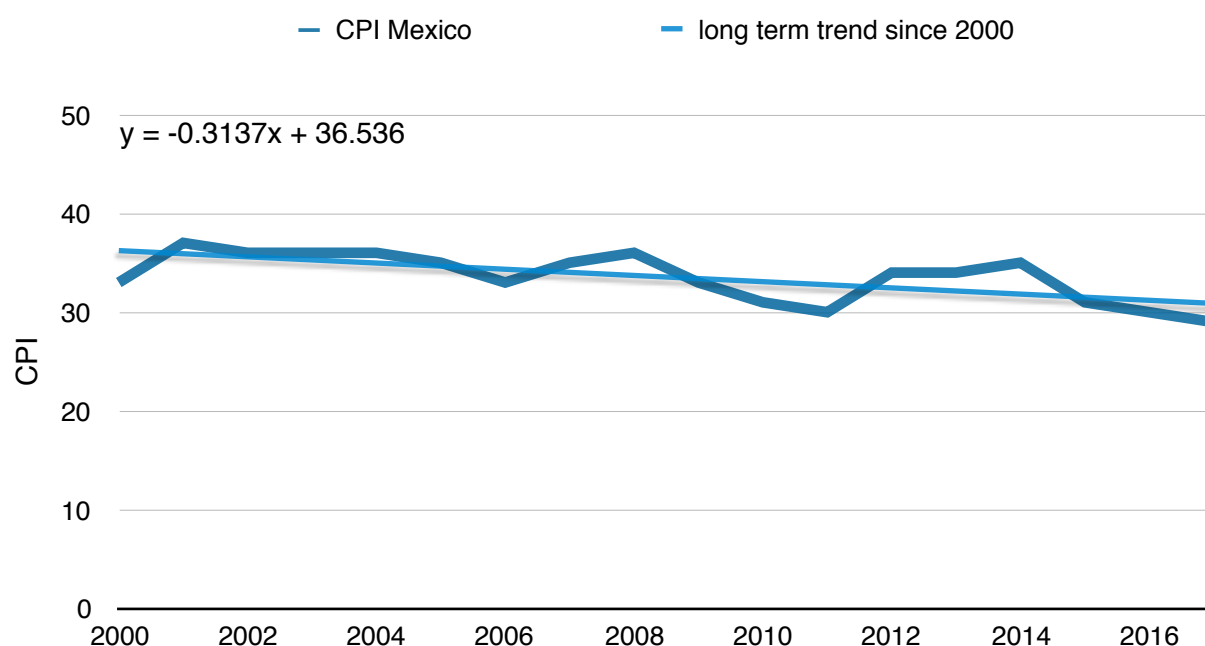


Figure 3: Longterm development of the CPI in Mexico (measured yearly) (Transparency International)

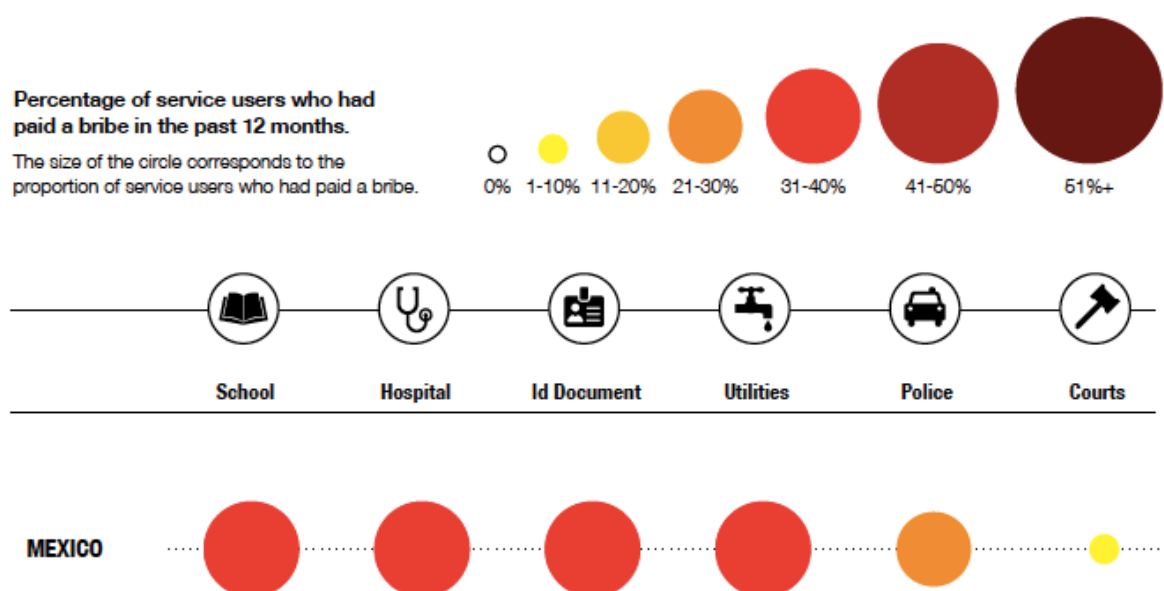


Figure 4: Percentage of people who had to pay a bribe to get access to a certain service, divided into most relevant public services (Transparency International, 2017)

3.2 The Mexican Panel Study

The Mexican Panel Study is a major survey research project on Mexico's election campaigns which started with the 2000 General Elections. Pre- and post electoral surveys have been conducted ever since (2000, 2006, 2012). The study's aim is to serve as a resource for scholars working on issues of public opinion, voting behavior, and political communication. Through the lens of electoral politics this academic project seeks in to examine democratic consolidation in 21st century Mexico. Although modern democracy involves much more than merely elections and preliminary campaigning, those processes do constitute key mechanisms of democratic accountability and representation. In democracies where norms and institutions are still relatively poorly developed, the role of elections is often especially important (Mexican Panel Study, 2012). In such countries, campaigns prior to elections often constitute the citizens' best chance to influence the political agenda.

3.2.1 Key Results from the Mexican Panel Study 2000

In the context of the 2000 General Elections, the Mexican Panel Study 2000 (Lawson, C. et. al., 2001) assessed campaign influences on public opinion and voting behavior among 2,400 adults who were interviewed on four occasions beginning with the official start of the campaign, in February 2000, and ending shortly after the election on July 2nd, 2000. The respondents were queried on a wide range of issues relating to voting behavior, political knowledge and engagement, opinions about salient political issues, attitudes toward the main political parties and candidates, impressions of the electoral process, voting intentions, faith in the electoral process, credibility of the media, exposure to the campaign, and opinions of current president Ernesto Zedillo and presidential candidates Cuauhtemoc Cardenas (PRD), Vicente Fox (PAN), and Francisco Labastida (PRI). After the elections took place, the respondents were asked for whom they voted and why, and whether they felt the election was clean or not. The sociographic background data on respondents included age, gender, political party affiliation, voting history, religion, education, marital status, children, employment status, labor union membership, languages spoken, travels to the United States, socioeconomic status, and household income.

For my analysis I focused on the data resulting from four central questions of the post-election survey that may serve as a proxy for the perception of clientelist politics. In

the first question I concentrated on, the polled respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they have been visited by a representative from any political party (PRI, PAN, PRD, or another one). 18.9% of the people that responded to that question indicated that they have been visited by a representative of the PRI before the elections⁷. This contrasts with only 8.8% and 8.6% who indicated to have been visited by a PAN or PRD representative respectively (Figure 5). Further, the respondents were asked if they had received a gift or assistance from any political party during the campaign⁸. Here again, most people that indicated to have received a gift or assistance from a party, named the PRI or the PRI candidate Francisco Labastia directly (15.4%). Fewer people (4.4% and 3.3%) mentioned to have obtained a benefit from the PAN or their candidate Vincente Fox, or the PRD or their candidate Cuauhtémoc Cardenas (Figure 6).

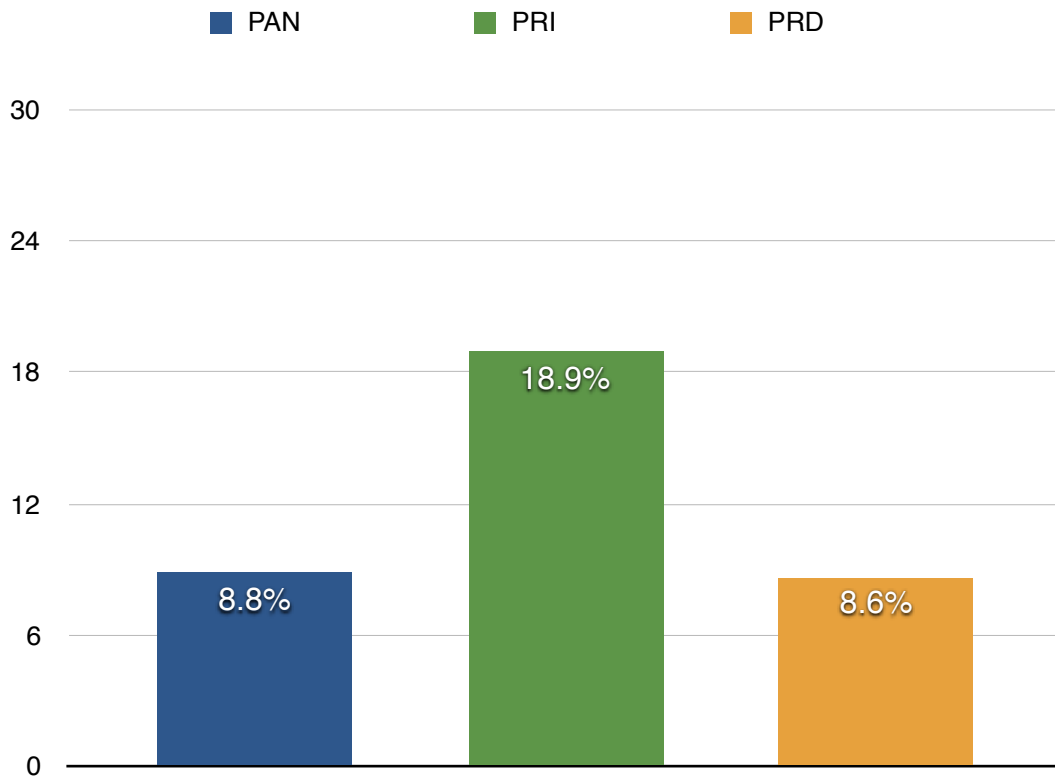


Figure 5: In the last few weeks of the campaign, were you been visited by a representative from any political party or a presidential candidate? From which one? (Mexican Panel Study, 2000)

⁷ In the last few weeks, have you been visited by a representative from any political party? (IF YES...) From which one? (Mexican Panel Study 2000, questionnaire)

⁸ In the last few weeks of the campaign, did you receive a gift or other assistance from any political party? (IF YES...) From which one? (Mexican Panel Study 2000, questionnaire)

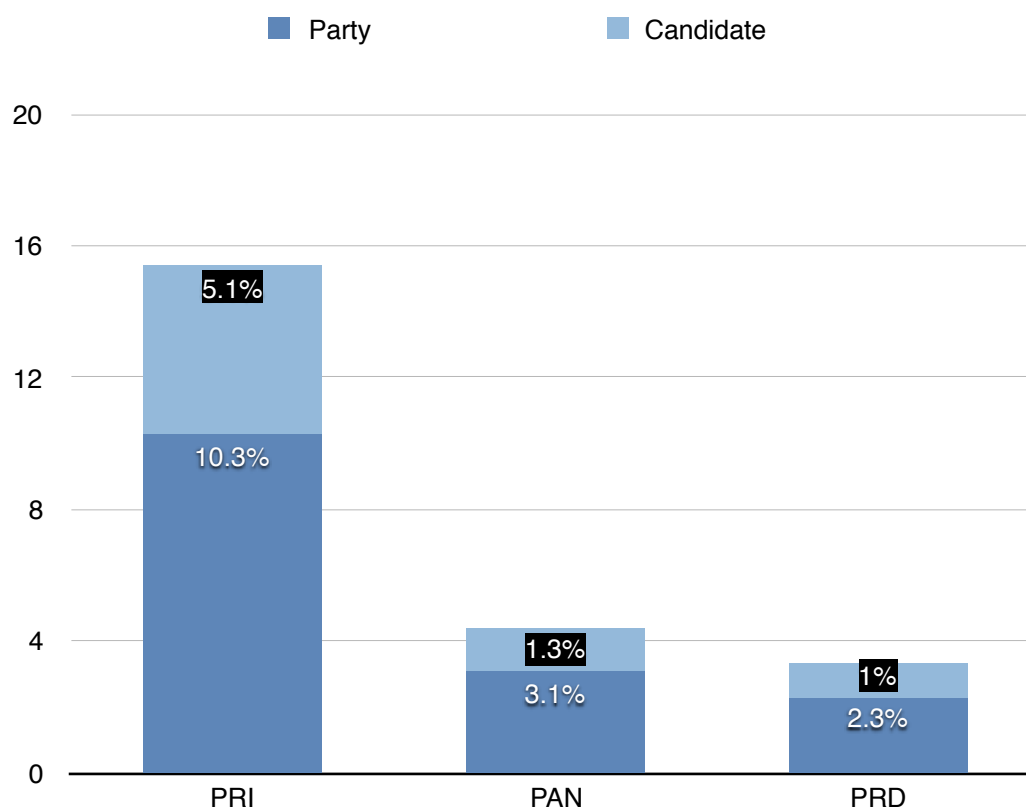


Figure 6: In the last few weeks of the campaign, did you receive a gift or other assistance from any political party? From which one? (Mexican Panel Study, 2000)

Furthermore, in the post-election 2000 survey, 32.5% of all respondents stated that they do not consider Mexico as a democracy⁹. The final question I analyzed within the 2000 Mexican Panel Study (post-election) asked whether the respondents thought that the elections were totally clean, more or less clean, not very clean, or not clean at all¹⁰. Here, more than half of the respondents (53.9%) did not think that the elections were totally clean.

3.2.2 Key results from the Mexican Panel Study 2006

The 2006 General Elections were one of the most disputed and discussed elections in Mexican history, not only due to the narrow margin of 0.58 percentage points of victory for Felipe Calderón (PAN) but also because of the high unpredictability prior to the elections. The 2006 Mexican Panel Study captured that in the nine months of campaigning, 33.5% of the entire electorate changed its vote choice at least once. In 2006, the Mexican Panel

⁹ Do you think of Mexico as a democracy? (Mexican Panel Study 2000, questionnaire)

¹⁰ How clean do you think were the presidential elections this year? (Mexican Panel Study 2000, questionnaire)

Study (Lawson, C. et. al., 2007) assessed campaign influences on respondents on three occasions, two times before the elections, in October 2005 and May 2006, and right after the July 2006 elections. The questionnaire of the 2006 panel study only slightly differed from the one used in 2000. Again, I analyzed four questions that serve as a proxy for the perception of clientelist practices.

In the post-election survey of July 2006 the respondents were again asked to indicate whether or not a representative of any political party or candidate (PRI, PAN, PRD, or another one) “knocked their door”¹¹. This time significantly less people (5.5% vs. 18.9% in 2000) stated that they have been visited by a representative of the PRI. In the context of the 2006 elections most people who said that they have been visited by a party representative, were visited by a representative of the PAN (7.1%) which is however still less than in 2000 (8.8%). 4,9% of the respondents indicated that they have been visited by a PRD representative (8.6% in 2000) (Figure 7).

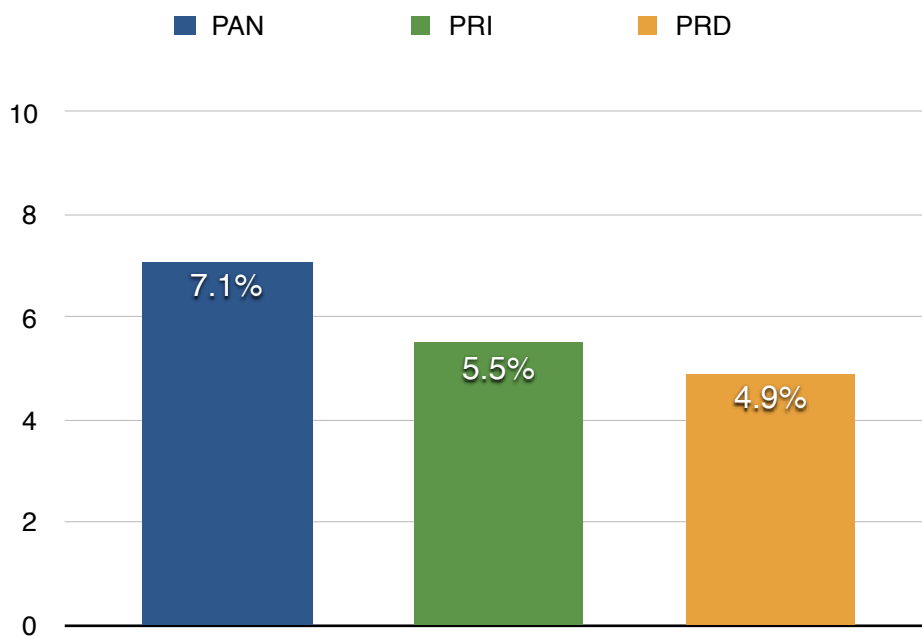


Figure 7: Over the last few weeks, has a representative of any political party or candidate knocked your door? Which party or candidate? (Mexican Panel Study, 2006)

¹¹ Over the last few weeks, has a representative of any political party or candidate knocked your door? Which party or candidate?

Similar to the 2000 survey, the respondents were asked again if they obtained any benefit from any political party during the campaign. The question was phrased more specifically this time and asked for concrete examples of the type of gift or assistance received. However, less people indicated that they have received “a gift, money, food, subsidy or any other type of help”¹². Most people who indicated to have received something from a party, named the PRI or their candidate Roberto Madrazo (2.8%). 2,4% of the respondents said they have received help or gifts from the PAN or their candidate Felipe Calderón and 1.9% from the PRD or their candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador (Figure 8).

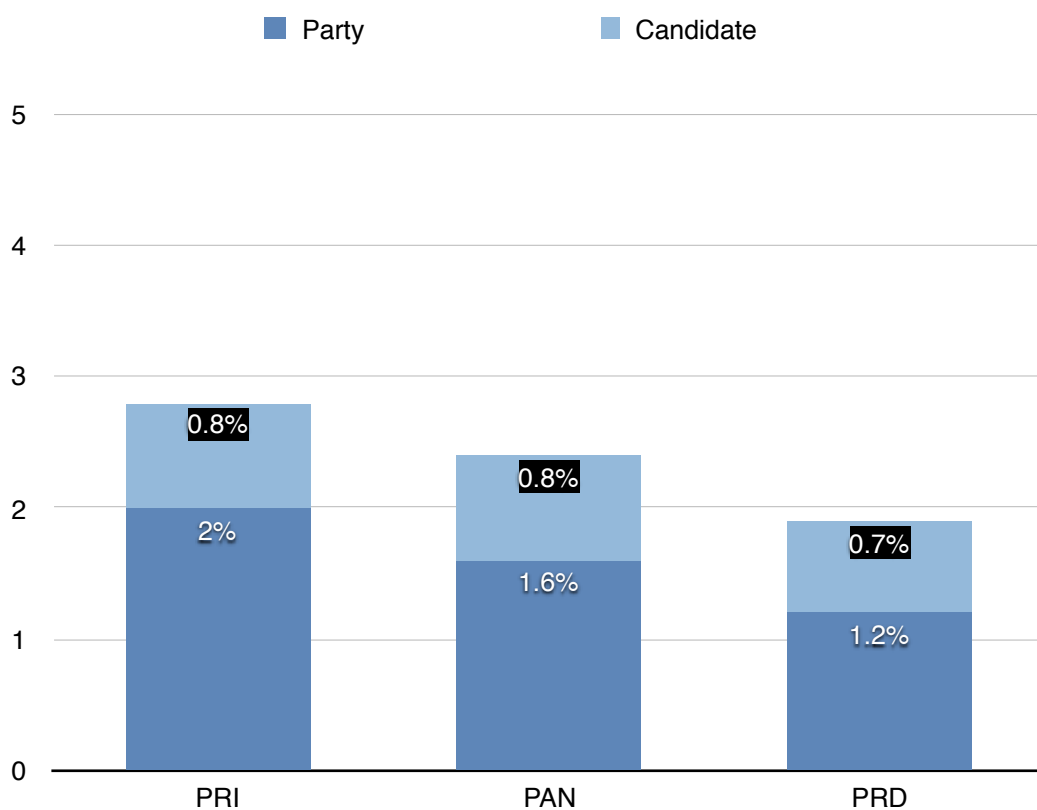


Figure 8: Over the last few weeks, has a representative of a political party or candidate given you a gift, money, food, subsidy or any other type of help? Which party or candidate was it? (Mexican Panel Study, 2006)

In 2006, 28% of all respondents of the post-election survey stated that they do not consider Mexico as a democracy. When asked whether the respondents thought that the elections were totally clean, more or less clean, not very clean, or not at all clean, only a mere 13% of the respondents thought that the elections were totally clean.

¹² Over the last few weeks, has a representative of a political party or candidate given you a gift, money, food, subsidy or any other type of help? Which party or candidate was it?

3.2.3 Key results from the Mexican Panel Study 2012

The 2012 General Elections marked the PRI's return to presidency yielding the young technocrat Enrique Peña Nieto to power. The PRI candidate won the elections with 38.2% of the votes, defeating the repeated candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador from the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) who accumulated 31-6% of the votes. In 2012, the Mexican Panel Study (Lawson, C. et. al., 2013) comprised only two waves of interviews, the first one before the elections, starting in April 2012, and the second one right after the July 2012 election. This time the questionnaire included various different questions than the previous panel studies, which were either completely new or simply phrased differently. However, even though some questions might seem familiar to the prior studies, the deviating phrasing must be taken into account when comparing the studies' results. In the 2012 panel study, numerous questions contain a different wording to avoid biasing effects of social desirability. In addition to that, a so called list experiment was introduced to avoid a social desirability bias of the results. Once more, I analyzed four questions of the survey that are of importance for the perception of clientelist practices.

In the pre-election survey of April 2012, a list experiment was introduced to avoid interferences of social desirability. Thus, before directly asking the respondent if someone has "knocked on their door", or if some representative of a party has "offered a gift", it was asked whether the participants agree or not to a statement saying that "in my community, politicians frequently try to buy votes with gifts, favors or giving access to services." Over 57% partially or totally agreed with this statement. When asked if the participants agree with a statement saying that people in their community also actively participate in vote buying, answers were similar with a total of 54.2% partially or totally agreeing. However, although half of the respondents (52.5%) answered that they think that a hypothetical person in his or her community would accept a generous gifted sum in exchange for his or her vote, a large majority of 77.9% thinks that such behavior is not correct. When the respondents were then asked directly if they were visited by anyone who has offered them a gift or service in exchange for favorable voting, 96.4% denied. However, most people who did admit that they were offered a gift, identified the person as a PRI representative.

In the 2012 panel study, 36.8% of all respondents of the pre-election survey did not agree with the statement that Mexico is a democracy.¹³ Again, participants were asked about their perception of the possibility of electoral fraud. This time the respondents had to respond whether or not they agree with the statement that “this year’s elections are going to be clean”. Over 47% did not agree on that the elections were going to be clean.

3.3 Conclusion of the quantitative analysis

After analyzing the three panel studies separately, it is crucial to review them in comparison in order to identify a possible trend. However, such a comparison has some limitations as the phrasing of the questions or/and the set of answers slightly differ in the three panel studies. It has also to be taken into account that due to only limited availability of data, the waves analyzed in 2000 and 2006 were both post-electoral, whereas the wave analyzed from the 2012 study is pre-electoral since post-electoral data was not available. Although the following table might not entirely reflect the real development of clientelism practices, it can facilitate discerning a rough trend line in the development of perceptions of clientelist practices and the perception of Mexicans of the state of democracy in their country (Table 1).

	2000	2006	2012
<i>“Mexico is not a democracy”</i>	32.5%	28%	36.8%
<i>“This year’s election will be/ were fair and clean”</i>	44.1%	13%	13.1%
<i>people who were offered a gift or service from a political representative</i>	> 10,3%*	4%	3%**
<i>“In my community, politicians frequently try to buy votes with gifts, favors or giving access to services.”</i>	-	-	57%

*the exact percentage cannot be determined from the available data as respondents were directly to indicate whether or not they were offered a gift or service from a certain party or candidate rather than being asked whether or not they received a gift from any political representative in general. Therefore mentioning multiple parties was possible. However, the percentage must be higher than 10.3% since this is the number of people who mentioned having received a gift from the PRI (most mentions).

**the question in 2012 included “in exchange for a vote”

Table 1: The Mexican Panel Studies 2000, 2006 and 2012 in comparison

¹³ The question in 2012 was slightly different in its wording than in 2000 and 2006: Do you agree to the following statement: “Today, Mexico is a democracy.”?

The percentage of people admitting to have received a gift or a service, is, as it can be seen in the table, relatively low when asked directly. There is a certain probability that the reason for these low numbers is that people tend to underreport due to a social desirability bias (Greene, 2018). However, it can only be estimated by how much people underreport. With the list-experiment in 2012 it could be observed, that although people themselves do not admit participating in vote-buying, it is perceived as a significant problem in their community. Greene (2018) asserts that the less related the polled person is to the projected individual, the bigger gets the sense that vote-buying is omnipresent. In conclusion, one of the biggest issues, Mexicans are facing, is not only their own involvement in clientelist practices, but also the extremely low confidence in the legitimacy of campaigning methods.

An additional conclusion that can be drawn from the analyzed data is that there is some evidence that the political party that engages most in clientelist practices, is the PRI¹⁴. Surveys other than the Mexican Panel Study also find similar tendencies (Greene, 2018). There are several theories to answer why it is predominantly the PRI engaging in vote-buying. Having been in power for such a long time, the PRI has an established network that facilitates a significantly better nationwide organization, whereas other parties are restricted to a limited amount of municipalities where they have a similar network of brokers as does the PRI in a plurality of states. The PRD has reportedly begun to start a comparable system of brokers, but due to its relatively low capacities, their network is limited to some enclaves, such as Mexico City, Ciudad Neza¹⁵ or Michoacan (see Hilgers, 2008). Yet, the PAN does not apply the same mechanisms of clientelism as does the PRI or the PRD. Greene (2018) claims that instead of acting on the ground, the PAN rather purchases certain networks of people who have already a function as gatekeepers. The clientelist functioning of Morena (Movimiento Regeneración Nacional, *engl.*: National Regeneration Movement), the party founded by the 2018 presidential front-runner, López Obrador, in 2014, is still unclear. It remains uncertain how much of the networks of López Obrador's former party, the PRD, Morena has already absorbed.

¹⁴ Greene (2018): "72% of the respondents that received something from a party, answer that they have received something from the PRI."

¹⁵ Nezahualcóyotl or more commonly Neza, is a city and municipality of the State of Mexico adjacent to the northeast corner of Mexico City.

Another limitation of the analysis of clientelism is that reliability on any data remains questionable due to the frequent underreporting and a lack of understanding of the concept of clientelism. Many people do not perceive receiving something from a party as a form of vote-buying. Thus, comparing data from the Mexican Panel Studies over the years does not give a satisfying picture on the development of the occurrence of vote-buying in Mexico. However, an increasing amount of people seems to believe that elections are not fair and transparent. Additionally, it seems that the belief in democratic consolidation has increased with the election of Felipe Calderon as the Mexican president in 2006, yet has again decreased in 2012, the year of the PRI's comeback to presidency.

The growing mistrust in democracy and democratic elections aligns with the downward trend of the CPI, which was discussed in chapter 3.1. Although little can be said about the real use of clientelist and corrupt practices, it can be said that, with the exception of Calderon's first years in office, since the year 2000 Mexicans perceive an increased level of corruption as well as a deterioration in the country's process of democratization.

IV. Qualitative Analysis

4.1 Laws and Other Mechanisms Aiming at the Containment of Electoral Malfeasance

Mexico's democratic opening to more than one single party together with the enhanced capacity building promoted by the broader spectrum of political parties, boosted the introduction of new reforms and laws beginning in the late 1980s. The membership in the Group of Twenty, created in 1999, and the accession to the OECD, in 1994, were seen as further steps to strengthen Mexico's democratic development. In order to create enhanced legitimacy of elected officials, institutions supporting the rule of law have been established, especially in the 1990s. Many of those, in addition to the enlarged competitiveness between the parties, were responsible for the extensive reforms of the 2000s and 2010s. The new laws aimed at the consolidation of democracy by diminishing electoral malfeasance and clientelist practices. As previously stated, not all clientelist practices are classified as illegal by Mexican law. A report, issued by "Mexicanos Contra la Corrupción e Impunidad" in 2018, mentions eight forms of clientelist behavior that go against the General Law on Electoral Crimes (*span.* Ley General en Materia de Delitos Electorales, LGMDE) (Table 2).

	Clientelist practice in question	LGMDE article concerned
1	<i>Requesting a vote in exchange for (promise of) money (vote-buying)</i>	Art. 7 §VII; Art. 9 §VIII
2	<i>Performing of an act that causes intimidation of the electorate; exerting pressure on voters to vote or abstain from voting for a candidate; coercing or threatening your subordinates</i>	Art. 7 §XVI; Art. 8 §VI; Art. 9 §I; Art. 11 §I
3	<i>Collecting and / or retaining credentials to vote</i>	Art. 7 §V and §VI
4	<i>Exerting pressure by setting conditions to access social programs</i>	Art. 11 §II
5	<i>Delivering public goods or services to get support for a candidate</i>	Art. 11 §III
6	<i>Organizing the transport of voters to influence their vote</i>	Art. 7 §X
7	<i>Requesting evidence of voting intentions</i>	Art. 7 §VIII
8	<i>Delivering promotional items prohibited by law</i>	Art. 209 §5 (LEGIPE*)

*Ley General de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales (*engl.* General Law of Institutions and Electoral Proceedings)

Table 2: Practices related to electoral clientelism that go against Mexican federal law (translated from MCCI, 2018) (LGMDE, 2018 and LEGIPE, 2018)

In the following the most relevant institutions, laws and mechanisms will be analyzed in their impact on political corruption and clientelism. Díaz-Santana (2002: p. 104) accredits an alleged diminution of electoral malfeasance to the actions undertaken since the electoral reforms of 1990, including the creation of the authorities INE and FEPADE, their normative framework and civic training programs.

4.1.1 FEPADE

Founded in 1994, the Specialized Prosecutor's Office for the Attention of Electoral Crimes (Fiscalía Especializada para la Atención de Delitos Electorales - FEPADE) is the organism under the Mexican Attorney General responsible for institutional, specialized and professional matters related to federal electoral crimes. Together with the National Electoral Institute (INE) and the Electoral Court of the Federal Judicial Branch (TEPJF) the FEPADE is in charge of ensuring the fairness, legality and transparency of federal and local elections (FEPADE, 2018). The FEPADE's central purpose is not the imposition of sanctions, but the containment of criminal behavior in elections (Nieto, 2015: p. 288 pp).

In 2006, constitutional amendments increased the scope of the FEPADE. However, the amendments made were in no way complied with penal legislation, although part of the complaints raised in the presidential elections in 2006 were - according to the decision of the Federal Electoral Court - the purchase and enforcement of votes (TEPJF, 2006: p. 38) as well as the use of social programs (TEPJF, 2006: p. 203) (Nieto, 2015: p. 290).

With the 2014 reforms under President Peña Nieto, article 102 of the Mexican Political Constitution first recognized FEPADE as an organ of constitutional relevance. The June 2014 amendments of article 21 and 24 of the General Law on Matters of Electoral Crimes further enhanced the capacities of the institution (LGMDE, 2014). The amendment included various forms of electoral malfeasance that would constitute a block of electoral crimes that could be observed by all the prosecuting and enforcement authorities within the scope of their respective competences (Nieto Castillo and Espíndola Morales, 2017: p. 228). According to FEPADE, from 2015 to July 2017 there were 6878 complaints for electoral crimes, out of those 2116 (30% of the total), related to electoral clientelism (MCCI, 2018: p. 134).

Although pre-FEPADE agencies were similar in their principles, the FEPADE did not experience the same support as the other electoral institutions, such as the INE. Political actors and civil society still see the FEPADE as an ineffective institution. More critical voices even question its existence (Nieto, 2015: p. 285). Nieto (2015: p. 292) further stresses the FEPADE's inability to influence election results by their actions and legal sanctions. To increase the FEPADE's legitimacy, Nieto (2015: p. 289) suggests that a fundamental reform of the Federal Penal Code is necessary in order to achieve that the FEPADE meets political needs and expectations. Reforms of the Criminal Code and criminal procedures would be likely to give the institution more stability.

4.1.2 INE

Since 2014 the INE (National Electoral Institute) is the autonomous authority in charge of organizing federal elections, that is, the Presidential elections, as well as the election of deputies and senators that make up the Congress of the Union. Further, in coordination with the electoral bodies of the federative entities, it is responsible for organizing the local elections in the 31 states of the Republic and Mexico City (INE, 2018). Before the body was created in April 2014, the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) was in charge of monitoring and organizing the federal but not the local elections. The 2014 reform which created the INE was demanded by many as there was much mistrust about the influence that some parties had over the composition of local electoral bodies. They claimed that governors largely influenced the designation and functioning of local electoral bodies, which impairs their autonomy and impartiality (Reynoso Núñez, 2015: p. 223).

The independent institutional body IFE was founded in 1990 in order to take power away from the PRI's Ministry of Interior, who previously was the responsible organ for organizing federal elections (Reynoso Núñez, 2015: p. 223). Since its founding, both the IFE and its successor the INE were to establish strategies to guarantee transparency and freedom of vote (Díaz-Santana, 2002).

It is important to also mention the role of the Electoral Court of the Federal Judicial Branch (TEPJF - Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación). Founded in 1986, the TEPJF is a specialized judicial body in charge of resolving electoral disputes and protecting the electoral rights of the citizens. The TEPJF is to guarantee that all acts of the electoral authorities are subject to the principles of constitutionality and legality. In-

initially, the TEPJF consisted of a permanent chamber and five regional chambers, which only functioned during the elections. In 2007, a new reform transformed the temporary regional chambers also into permanent chambers (Reynoso Núñez, 2015: p. 223). Within this analysis the TEPJF will not be discussed in detail since it operates as a judicial body that requires a prior appeal coming from a party and a consecutive request of the INE to have jurisdiction over the matter (Díaz-Santana, 2002: p. 103).

Although in theory the INE's sole responsibility should be the organization of federal and regional elections, its institutional success lead to the establishment of other core functions, such as the creation of a federal register of voters, the administration of the time limits given to parties in public broadcasting stations, the supervision of resources of the parties, the formation of the electoral administration and the capacity to start investigations for violation of the electoral regulations which are then to be resolved by the TEPJF (Nieto Castillo and Espíndola Morales, 2017: p. 227).

4.1.3 Thematization of Electoral Malfeasance in Campaigning

Besides the institutions introduced around 1990, the INE, the TEPJF and the FEPADE, Greene (2018) mentions another mechanism which contributes to the detection of electoral malfeasance. In recent elections some candidates used their opponents' techniques of electoral malfeasance as a part of their campaigning. The PRD, for example is known for accusing its opponents of illegal practices in the run-up to important elections. Also, former PRD and now Morena presidential candidate, López Obrador, has a reputation for using his adversaries' dubious practices against them. In order to increase their own chances and diminish the other parties' credibility, party members and supporters might thus investigate on issues of electoral malpractice in order to then report possible findings to the INE or FEPADE.

However, not only the PRD has incorporated defamation as a theme of their own party's campaign. In fact, a famous phrase of the PAN says "toma lo que te dan, pero vota por el PAN" (*engl.*: "take from them what you get, but vote for the PAN"). Also Morena encourages voters to accept the gifts offered by other parties, but reminds that "a la hora de la hora, toma tu voto" (*engl.*: at the time of the hour, take your vote) (MCCI, 2018: p. 137).

4.1.5 Conclusion

Together with the country's democratic opening, the frequency of reforms increased in the late 1980s. Yet, a large number of electoral reforms was initiated after 2000 and especially during Peña Nieto's sexenio, mostly because of the pressure coming from the opposition. The central organ of electoral organization, the INE, enjoys a relatively good reputation in the country and is recognized as the main electoral institution. Yet, its core activities are limited to the organization of federal and regional elections and only touch upon electoral supervision. However, the responsible institution for supervision, the FEPADE, struggles to achieve a recognized status in the Mexican political and civil sphere. While marginally enhancing its capacities, all recent reforms failed to furnish the FEPADE with real legal competences. Many cases brought to the FEPADE thus remained without any significant consequences which makes it seem evident why Mexicans would question its effectiveness. In order to grant the FEPADE more competencies, eventually a major reform of the Criminal Code would be necessary.

4.2 Cases of Electoral Malfeasance and Corrupt Abuse of Power

First of all, it is important to highlight that corruption, in its classic definition, the abuse of public funds for personal enrichment, is often more prominently covered by the media than are clientelist practices. This has to do not only with the often extraordinary sums of public money that are deviated for private benefit, but also with the fact that clientelist practices are somewhat complex to investigate. Although corruption and clientelism should be analyzed separately, as previously discussed, I will cite both, incidents of corruption and clientelism, in the following subchapters. There are many reasons to believe that politicians who use state money for private gain would also use this money for political gain, since this will allow them to stay in power and continue these practices. Many academics (i.a. Whitehead, 2002) support this theory by arguing that corruption is not always a method for private gain, but that it is often aimed at buying political support. Whitehead (2002: chapter 5) investigated many cases of deviations of public funds in Latin America, including Mexico. She concluded that electoral democracies in the region generate incentives for malfeasance that root in the desire for political survival rather than for private appropriation.

The two main forms of electoral malfeasance that are easiest to trace, are illegal campaign financing and vote-buying, as they involve money transfers which are more simple to document than for example abstract concepts of loyalty. Illegal campaign financing can be regarded as some sort of preliminary step for the clientelist practice of buying votes. As already mentioned in chapter 2, Serra (2016) suggests a contiguity between illegal campaign financing and vote-buying since the resources for illegal actions most probably also come from illegal sources. The MCCI's 2018 report concluded that a large part of illegal campaign financing is used to fund clientelist activities, such as buying votes or paying for expensive partisan structures (MCCI, 2018: p. 132). In conclusion, the following selection will include incidents of illegal campaign financing as they often lead to practices of vote-buying which again presents probably the most tangible form of clientelism.

The following selected cases look at incidents on the national as well as on the subnational level. Whereas scandals of corruption and clientelist practices on the national level may often attract more attention, on the subnational level, there is often less oversight on corrupt practices and the abuse of state money is tolerated by large portions

of the population, according to Faughnan, Hiskey, and Revey (2014). Governors are not subject to the same scrutiny as are high-ranking members of the administration. This leads to less monitoring of their states' budgets which have increased during the last presidencies (Diaz-Cayeros, 2004). Especially in states where the PRI hegemony has continued amidst a national-level democratization process, as it did in the State of Mexico (EDOMEX), corrupt behavior often endures. This is to highlight the fact that national-level processes of regime change, as well as the impact on phenomena as corruption or clientelism, do not occur evenly nor do they lead to similar outcomes across all subnational political entities (Faughnan et al., 2014: p. 71).

4.2.1 The “Sexenio” of Enrique Peña Nieto

The six years under Peña Nieto were “one scandal after another, after another” (Tapia Muro, 2018), causing national and international media outrage. The case of Peña Nieto’s “casa blanca”¹⁶ was only one of many scandals which extended to other members of the administration who were accused of having acquired luxurious estates at a very low price by companies who had previously negotiated profitable public contracts (Actualidad, 2015). It is thus not surprising that, “the public’s perception of Peña Nieto’s sexenio is terrible” (Greene, 2018). Corruption and allegations of electoral mispractice by his party, the PRI, have marked the technocrat’s presidency which started off rather successfully with a broad spectrum of reforms, including the 2014 electoral reforms. The latest Encuesta Nacional de Calidad e Impacto Gubernamental (ENCIG, *engl.*: National Survey On Governmental Quality and Impact), published in 2017, found that 91.1% of the Mexican population believe that corruption under the current administration is frequent or very frequent (ENCIG, 2017). This is a plus of 2.6% compared to the results of the ENCIG 2015, the year of the midterm elections. The ENCIG 2017 provides evidence that increased corruption is not limited to the people’s perception since also the estimated costs of the consequences of corruption have increased by 12.5% from 2015 to 2017. On average each individual affected by corruption had to pay 2,273 Mexican Pesos (122 USD) as a conse-

¹⁶ In November 2014 it was revealed that Peña Nieto and his family reside in a 7 million USD white villa in an exclusive neighborhood in Mexico City. Investigators found that the mansion is registered under the name of Grupo Higa, a company that was previously awarded a 3.7 billion USD contract to build a high-speed rail link between the Mexican capital and the city of Queretaro (BBC, 2014)

quence. From the six states that suffer from the highest average costs per individual, three are governed by the PRI (San Luis Potosí, Jalisco, EDOMEX), and the rest each by another party (Michoacan - PRD, Nayarit - PAN, Chiapas - PVEM) (Figure 9).

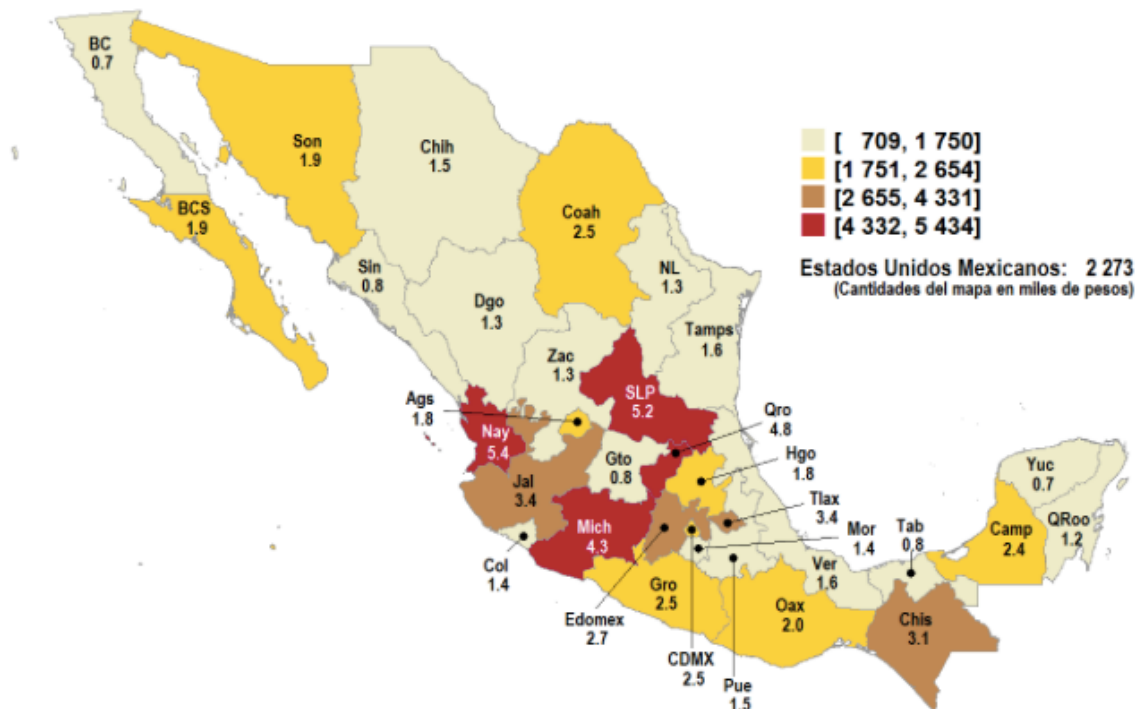


Figure 9: Average costs of corruption per individual, in Mexican Pesos (ENCIG, 2017)

According to the civil society initiative “Corruptometro”, in 2016, 72% of all citizens thought of the president as a corrupt figure (Corruptometro, 2016). An investigation published by the organization “Mexicanos Contra la Corrupción y la Impunidad” (MCCI) together with the anticorruption site “Animal Politico” revealed that only between 2013 and 2014, at least eleven public dependencies deviated approximately 192 million USD worth public money through 186 companies of which 128 were shell companies. The institutions involved include the state owned oil company PEMEX, the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL, (*span.*: Secretaría de Desarrollo Social) - responsible for the distribution of antipoverty programs - and the Ministry of Education. In addition to that, also public universities were part of this massive fraudulent venture. They functioned as intermediators through which a large portion of the public money went to be ultimately distributed to non-existent firms (Animal Politico, 2015).

It is often claimed that also freedom of expression has significantly suffered in the six years under PRI president Peña Nieto. With systemic attacks against not only journa-

lists, but also other individuals making use of the right of free expression, such as student activists and opposition politicians, Mexico is currently classified as one of the most dangerous countries for press in the world. Since 2012, over a dozen journalists have been assassinated throughout Mexico. A vast majority of these cases involved public officials. In addition to that, increasing government censorship lead to the creation of a list of independent anti-governmental journalists who are excluded from broadcasting stations (Ackermann, 2016). “Reporters Without Borders” identified the PRI-governed state of Veracruz as one of the most dangerous places worldwide for journalists with 176 cases of violence, intimidation, threats, aggression, cyber-attacks, blackmail, murder and enforced disappearance with journalists as victims, from 2013 to June 2016 (RSF, 2016). A 2017 “New York Times” article also criticizes the carrots and sticks approach of the Mexican government towards the national media. 68 percent of news journalists admit self censorship not only to avoid cuts in funding but also to prevent physical threats (The New York Times, 2017).

Peña Nieto’s administration is often attacked for issuing vague and incorrect statements on many of the cruelties that happened during his sexenio. In 2014, the disappearance of 43 student activists from a teacher’s college in Ayotzinapa, in the state of Guerrero, startled the country. The government’s version of the Ayotzinapa case was completely discredited by the investigations of Argentinian forensic specialists after the students’ corpses had been found. The Mexican authorities stopped the investigations after arresting the mayor of Iguala, where the 43 students were deterred, and his wife, for being responsible for the masskidnapping. However, several NGOs who collect all material available, continue to reveal more and more dubious details about the case (Der Standard, 2017).

Even though not every case is linked directly to members of the government, violence and general threats of insecurity in the country are an increasing risk in Peña Nieto’s Mexico. October 2017 was the deadliest month in terms of homicides in this century. As several key cartel leaders were arrested during President Calderon’s war on drugs, many cartels split up and the fighting between them escalated in a large number of states (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Dominant cartels throughout Mexico (Geopolitical Futures, 2018)

4.2.1.1 Illegal Campaign Financing

Although it might often seem that it is predominantly the PRI making use of clientelist practices in electoral processes, in recent years, there was substantive evidence that also parties other than the PRI have engaged in unlawful electoral practices, such as illegal campaign financing. In the 2012 presidential elections, the press uncovered a secret fund-raising project which was to finance the campaign of the PRD's presidential candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who is again front runner for the 2018 elections. In order to collect 6 million USD in undisclosed campaign donations, PRD officials organized a dinner gathering high-level Mexican businessmen (El Universal, 2012).

Also the PAN, known as the least corrupt of the three largest parties, got into the focus of the media with the *moche* scandal in 2013. A *moche*, in Mexico describes the action of seizing a part of a resource that belongs to someone else. It became public that PAN congressmen asked for favors from several PAN-affiliated mayors in exchange for assigning federal transfers to their municipalities. The requested resources would be then used to support and finance the campaign of PAN president, Gustavo Madero, who strived

for reelection as the head of his party. Reports from the newspaper “Reforma”, talk of an entire network of *moches* created by the PAN (Reforma, 2014).

Even after the structural reforms of 2014 which aimed at diminishing clientelist practices, claims of illegal campaign financing were made. In the weeks prior to the 2015 midterm elections, more legal complaints about illegal campaign funding and vote-buying were filed than ever before (Excelsior, 2015). The Green Ecological Party of Mexico (PVEM, *span.*: Partido Verde Ecologista de México) increased its vote share by a large percentage in those midterm elections. However, the PVEM was accused of having infringed many of the laws and regulations that passed through strict amendments in 2014. The infringement included violations of the time frame of the campaigning period, the distribution of expensive gifts, which could be classified as attempts of vote-buying, and surpassing the restriction on television airtime by negotiating a favorable deal with the broadcaster TV azteca (Excelsior, 2015b). It has still not become clear how the middle-sized PVEM, which only has access to a relatively small budget, could finance such an expansive campaign. Whereas some argue that a part of the money came from the only PVEM ruled state of Chiapas (El Universal, 2015), others suspect actions of money laundering by the leftist movement Morena, founded by López Obrador in 2014 (Jornadabc, 2015). Although it initially seemed that the INE was to take severe actions against the PVEM’s unlawful practices, the large fines were subsequently reduced or even eliminated by the TEPJF. Serra (2016) concludes from the PVEM incident in 2015 that the theoretical severity of the new sanctions, introduced in 2014 is often reduced by a soft implementation in practice. As outlined, unlawfulness is not limited only to practices of the PRI but condoned by the entire political spectrum which makes an effective enforcement of the rule of law nearly impossible.

To not fully discredit the authority of the INE, FEPADE and TEPJF, an example of the theoretical effectiveness upon proper application of the new regulations introduced in 2014 should be cited. In the context of the Colima gubernatorial elections in 2015 the new laws were indeed enforced. In October 2015 the TEPJF effectively annulled the gubernatorial election in the federal state of Colima, won by a PRI candidate, based on the new sanctions on violating campaign spending regulations (Numerounoonline, 2015).

In May 2018 the independent presidential candidate Jaime Rodríguez (also known as *El Bronco*) was fined more than 37,000 USD by the INE for a variety of alleged campaign violations (Abcnews, 2018). El Bronco, however, then accused the INE of only targeting

independent candidates as the institution is controlled by the major three parties. He thus denounced the INE before the FEPADE (El Sol de Mexico, 2018).

While the system of public campaign financing, introduced in 1996, has succeeded in making elections more competitive, the set spending limits are not even close to what it costs to run modern campaigns (MCCI, 2018). Hence, it should possibly be discussed to increase public campaign funding or give more possibilities of financing to candidates in order to hinder them from considering illegal campaign financing with deviated public money or private contributions.

4.2.1.2 The Misuse of Antipoverty Programs

Instead of the direct exchange of money for political support, giving beneficial access to federal antipoverty programs has evolved as another clientelist practice in Mexico. Tapia Muro and Gatica Arreola (2014) mention the importance of state social programs such as “Oportunidades” which in 2002 succeeded the antipoverty programs “Progresa” and PRONASOL (National Solidarity Program, *span.*: Programa Nacional de Solidaridad) as a means of clientelist exchange. In Mexico, those antipoverty programs are aimed at a large number of citizens. 5.8 millions Mexicans benefited from “Oportunidades”, only in 2010 (Tapia Muro and Gatica Arreola, 2014: p.33). To secure the equal distribution of the antipoverty programs, mechanisms and regulations were introduced together with them. Yet, there is much debate on whether distribution happens adequately in reality.

The role of antipoverty programs as an interchangeable good for political support is significantly more relevant on the state or even municipal level than on the federal level. The administration of these programs rests to a large extent with the governors and mayors in the federal states (Greene, 2018). Whereas most academics agree on the frequent misuse of “Oportunidades” in exchange for votes, it remains unclear which group of voters is targeted. Whereas some academics (Molinar and Weldon, 1994, Magaloni, 2009, Tapia Muro and Gatica Arreola, 2014) found that it is mostly swing voters who benefit from a preferential treatment in accessing social programs, others (Bruhn, 1996, Hiskey, 1999) identified faithful voters (*span.*: voto duro) as the predominant beneficiaries. Tapia Muro and Gatica Arreola (2014: p. 35) found that in the year of a municipal election the average money distributed via social programs is higher than in others. Inde-

pendent from the result, the average amount is particularly low in the year following an election, which the authors describe as the “relaxing” year.

During the Duarte administration in the state of Veracruz, which deserves a separate elaboration in a later chapter, a series of incriminating audio and video-documents were leaked to the media at the time of the local elections in 2013. The concerned material audio- and videotaped conversations among Veracruz state officials and PRI party leaders. In the recordings, they were discussing the misappropriation of public resources including plans to use “Oportunidades” - referred to as “solid gold” - to benefit the PRI in the upcoming local elections. The government’s plans not only aimed to control their own personnel, but also employees in public hospitals. Instead of nonpartisan government employees, the “Oportunidades” benefits were delivered by PRI representatives who were to tell the recipients that the received benefits came from the local PRI officials although the program is actually federally funded (Serra, 2016: pp. 138).

Yet, it was revealed in 2013 that also the PAN used the “Oportunidades” program in the 2012 General Elections in order to gain votes. Several audiotaped phone conversations were published in a YouTube video of 20 minutes documenting some PAN politicians’ fraudulent actions (Animal Politico, 2013).

4.2.1.3 Allegations of Vote-Buying in the 2012 elections

During the campaigning for the 2012 elections, and especially after the PRI’s victory, there was much criticism about the PRI’s campaigning methods. The leftist party, PRD, and its front runner, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who after his first attempt to win presidency in 2006 again turned out second, fought the election results. López Obrador accused the PRI of vote-buying and other irregularities in the election process and demanded a full recount of votes (Cbsnews, 2012). The responsible institution, the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) investigated all claims and found some irregularities, yet confirmed the results endorsing PRI candidate Enrique Peña Nieto as the new Mexican president. López Obrador then filed a complaint to the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary (TEPJF) with allegations of vote-buying, spending in excess of election regulations, illegal fund raising, and vote fraud. Everything was eventually rejected by the tribunal.

A much discussed accusation by López Obrador was that in some states PRI activists allegedly handed out gift cards worth 100 Mexican Pesos (worth 7.50 USD) for the Walmart-style grocery chain Soriana to voters. People who received such gift cards reported that PRI activists told them to turn in a photocopy of their voter ID card in order to receive the vouchers that were eventually of a lower amount than previously promised. Allegations regarding the Soriana gift cards were strongly denied by the PRI and president Peña Nieto who stated that the PRI did not buy a single vote (Washington Post, 2012).

The watchdog group “Alianza Cívica” added to López Obrador's vote-buying accusations that the PRI allegedly employed child lookouts who were sent to a number of polling stations in the State of Mexico (EDOMEX), Chihuahua, Sinaloa and Jalisco to assure that voters marked the ballots accordingly as they were paid to. The PRI was however not the only party allegedly using “niños halcones” (*engl.* falcon kids), as “Alianza Cívica” also mentions the green party PVEM as an employer of this method (Sinembargo, 2012).

4.2.1.4 The Granier Case

One of the most notorious recent cases in Mexican politics involving acts of illegal campaign funding by the PRI, was the scandal around the former governor of Tabasco, Andrés Granier Melo, which culminated in his arrest in June 2013 - one year after he ended his time in office. In March 2018, Granier was sentenced to almost 11 years of prison and a multimillion dollar fine in for embezzling more than 100 million USD, most of which corresponding to the social health funds of the state of Tabasco (El Universal, 2018). Also a number of former officials of Tabasco's Finance Department and Health Department had to face federal and state prosecution (New York Times, 2013). Foreign media outlets primarily highlighted Granier Melo's sumptuous lifestyle. He owned several luxurious real estates scattered throughout Mexico and abroad while holding a position that pays about 92,000 USD a year after taxes (*ibid*). However, besides his ludicrous spendings there is some evidence that at least parts of the money were also used for electoral purposes (Serra, 2016: p. 138). During his term in office, from 2007 to 2012, the governor allegedly started a machinery to reinforce political clientelism for his party, the PRI, in Tabasco. From an office in the backyard of his governor mansion, Granier Melo's son was reportedly working on non-official political coalitions on behalf of his father. Without having any official position in the state's government, Granier Melo's son was using public resources,

most of it coming from the state government's budget for health programs, to secure the political support from influential community leaders and activists. Moreover "Granier Junior" granted permits to gastronomic undertakings, pardoned traffic tickets, handed out traffic licenses free of charge and even assigned jobs in the public sector of the state to allies whose support he was seeking (Proceso, 2013). While his son had to face charges of money laundering once his illegal activities became public, Andrés Granier continued as governor of Tabasco until he stepped down from office in 2012 due to heavy accusations from opposition parties (Tabasco Hoy, 2016).

4.2.1.5 The Duarte Case

If there is a person that symbolizes Mexico's struggles with corrupt politicians, it is probably Javier Duarte de Ochoa, ex-governor of the state of Veracruz, in office from December 2010 until October 2016. The Mexican blog "Corruptometro" has awarded Duarte with the title of the "most corrupt person in Mexico" (Corruptometro, 2018). His gubernatorial term in office was characterized by numerous scandals. Many of them only became public when he left office in October 2016 as a fugitive criminal.

Only months after Duarte took office, in September 2011, 35 dead corpses were found in two vehicles under a bridge in Boca del Rio in the state of Veracruz. All of the identified victims had a criminal record and links to criminal organizations. The case has not been solved until today, but Duarte's ambiguous statements towards this happening contributed to uphold conspiracy theories suspecting a link between Duarte and the dead corpses found at Boca del Rio. In March 2017, shortly before Duarte was captured in Guatemala, 250 skulls have been found in a mass grave in Veracruz. Duarte has been blamed to have only done little to find and identify people reported as disappeared during his administration (BBC 2017).

In January 2012 two Veracruz state officials, were arrested at Toluca airport (EDOMEX) with two briefcases carrying 25 million Mexican Pesos (worth 2 million USD at that time) in cash. The money was seized and a federal investigation was launched to determine if the sum indeed belonged to the state government of Veracruz. The government of Veracruz claimed that the money was legal and intended to pay for the advertisement of local festivals. The opposition parties, however, accused the PRI government of Veracruz that the money was intended to contribute to the campaign of the presidential can-

didate, Enrique Peña Nieto (Nacion321, 2014). The federal investigation eventually found no evidence for illegal activity, and the entire amount was returned to Veracruz in 2015.

During his time in office, Duarte has publicly threatened journalists in several interviews. In Veracruz, in the time of Duarte's term in office, twelve journalists and crime reporters have been killed and three more have gone missing. In 2012 the journalist Regina Martínez Pérez, widely known for her reports on Veracruz state corruption and its links to drug cartels, was found strangled to death in her apartment. Most reported cases of murdered journalists remained unsolved (El Informador, 2012).

In 2014 an investigation led by the anticorruption group "Animal Politico" revealed a network of shell companies, all of them created under the Duarte administration. The companies in the center of the allegations received more than 950 million Mexican pesos (currently worth more than 50 million USD) of state money deviated from mainly educational and security funds. The entire sum of the pecuniary damage under the Duarte administration amounts to more than 16 billion pesos (currently worth 865 million USD). Duarte spent parts of the deviated money on the construction of a luxurious ranch and retreat estate in Valle del Bravo (EDOMEX), and on the purchase of several thoroughbred horses and a real estate investment of more than 40 properties in Florida (Univision.com, 2015).

According to "Corruptometro", in 2017 there has been found evidence that during the Duarte administration, within the state's health care programs, apocryphal medicine was given to children suffering from cancer (Corruptometro, 2018). In another article, "El Pais" stated that under Duarte's administration, between 50,000 and 70,000 fake HIV tests, which all gave out negative test results, were bought. Fortunately those tests were detected before they reached the population (El Pais, 2017).

4.2.1.6 The 2017 elections in EDOMEX

In June 2017 the PRI candidate and cousin to incumbent president Enrique Peña Nieto, Alfredo del Mazo Maza, won the gubernatorial elections in the State of Mexico (EDOMEX) after a two-horse race with Morena candidate Delfina Gómez Álvarez. The Mexican newspaper "El Economista" claims that the gubernatorial elections in EDOMEX involved the biggest vote-buying scandal ever seen in Mexican history (El Economista, 2017). The opposition party Morena also claimed that the PRI spent almost double the amount that li-

mits legal campaign financing (Sinembargo, 2017). According to the magazine “Proceso” the PRI broke at least 16 state laws during its campaign and the election in order to favor del Mazo Maza (Proceso, 2017).

In an interview with the British newspaper “The Guardian”, a state government employee reported that he was one of hundreds forced to work on the PRI campaign. The state employee said that he was ordered to set up committees who were given cash benefits for securing 10 votes per committee member. To convince people of marking the ballot in favor of del Mazo Maza, people told their neighbors that they would lose basic services and social programs if the PRI was to lose (The Guardian, 2017).

EDOMEX is seen as the crown jewel of PRI state governance as the state has never seen a non-PRI governor in 90 years. A defeat in Mexico’s largest state with over 15 million inhabitants would have been fatal for the party.

4.2.2 The 2018 Presidential elections

The 2018 Mexican General Elections are regarded as a crucial decision mapping out the future path of the country. Mexicans are unsatisfied with the incumbent government. Some experts even identify patterns similar to the anti-system tendencies that marked the election of Trump as the American president (i.a. Greene, 2018). Academics investigating on Mexican federal elections state that the candidates avoid making clear statements about major issues in the country (Greene, 2018; Tapia Muro, 2018). Whereas frontrunner López Obrador identifies economic development as the key solution to all problems, the other candidates often limit their public speeches to mutual allegations.

In 2017, the Mexican newspaper “Regeneración” warned about a possible electoral fraud by the PRI in the 2018 General Elections. The newspaper emphasized the role of the controversial new law of internal security, PRI senators pushed through in order to be able to diminish the protests in case of any suspicions of electoral fraud. The law of internal security, enacted in December 2017, establishes that Mexico's president, by his own initiative or when asked by the federal chambers, may order federal authorities, including army and navy, to intervene when “threats to internal security” are identified and other federal or local forces' capacities prove insufficient against the threat. The law, however, lacks an exact definition of what exactly constitutes a “threat” resulting in the fear of many that the president could now also order army forces to intervene in civil protests

(Regeneración, 2018). A political scientist from the University Tecnológico de Monterrey, Jesus Cantú, stated in an interview with the newspaper “Bloomberg”, that the 2018 election could potentially be “the worst election since democratic races were born” (Bloomberg, 2017). Some experts even fear a sanguine escalation after the election. The possibility of a cyber attack of the Mexican electoral system, either by the PRI or by a foreign government, has been identified as another significant risk. In addition, claims of illegal campaign financing feed the debate about the fairness of the 2018 presidential election. Several news outlets cite the financing of the PRI campaign as another reason why the 2018 election could result as the “dirtiest ever seen”. PRI candidate, José Antonio Meade, allegedly receives help out of the public purse from the over-budget amounts of money spent in publicity by incumbent president Enrique Peña Nieto (Bloomberg, 2017). In 2016 the Peña Nieto administration spent around 500 million USD on publicity, a sum exceeding the total amount of funds for scholarships for Mexican students (New York Times, 2017).

In the Mexican 2018 General Elections on 1 July 2018 voters will not only elect a new president but also 128 members of the Senate and 500 members of the Chamber of Deputies. Although there has been no major act of violence towards the presidential candidates reported so far, media outlets report that only in 2018 a number of 112 politicians in Mexico has been assassinated. 42 of them were candidates or pre-candidates for the General Elections (CNN en español, 2018). This serves as an indicator of the political violence that seems to evermore penetrate the country.

As of one month before the elections of July 2018, Morena candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) who has been in the run for presidency for 18 years now, has sealed a double-digit lead in the polls. Yet, not everyone in the country appears to be satisfied with AMLO as the possible future president as they fear a further weakening of the rule of law and the country's institutions. His promises to install a populist economic model based on nationalization and government handouts could, according to critiques, root out the rising middle class in Mexico. Needless to say that López Obrador's competitors, the PRI and the PAN, would not argue against those critiques. Already in 2006 the PAN and the PRI allied in a defamation campaign that compared AMLO to Venezuela's Hugo Chavez. However, a central driver behind the support of AMLO is the Mexican's discontentment with the current administration and the extent to which impunity has eroded trust in the country's political system. It is not much of a surprise that voters feel betray-

ed by a government incapable of helping more than 50 million Mexicans living below the poverty line while at the same time the country seems to be filled with rich politicians and government contractors (Washington Post, 2018).

The anti-system atmosphere in the country is often compared to pre-Trump United States. Frontrunner López Obrador is often referred to as “a Mexican translation” of President Trump’s “I alone can fix it” (Washington Post, 2018). While the results of the 2018 presidential elections are still unclear at the point of writing this thesis, it is no secret that they will be crucial for the democratic future of the country. Another PRI victory, even though it is very unlikely, would perhaps equal democratic stagnation and further deterioration of the country’s state of corruption and clientelist practices. On the other hand, leftist López Obrador’s ambitions could at least initially contribute to reduce corruption and dissolve clientelist practices while the long term effects of his electoral promises could endanger Mexico’s economic position.

V. Final Remarks

Many new democracies today face problems in the process of consolidation of democratic values. The focus country of this thesis, Mexico, illustrates that merely writing election laws and installing institutions is insufficient to effectively tackle problems of corruption and clientelism. As argued by Haber et al. (2008), such electoral laws can be erased “with the stroke of a pen”, yet corrupt practices cannot. Looking back at Enrique Peña Nieto’s presidency and the presidencies of his predecessors, criminal records, corruption indices and data on electoral malfeasance showcase that the persistence of corruption and clientelism is one of the most pressing problems in Mexican society. The cases of corruption and clientelism selected within this thesis are only a small number out of hundreds of similar cases. The democratic opening of the country in 2000 did not lead to the long term effects many had hoped for. Many Mexicans identify the low level of trust in politics, corruption and insecurity as the most worrying issues in everyday life. Yet, especially the lower social classes are still dependent on clientelism to access certain services resulting also in a steady demand of clientelist practices.

With the rise of new technologies and increased political competition, clientelist practices transformed and are now increasingly investigated. As there is more democratic competition in Mexico, many laws tackling issues of corruption and clientelism have been introduced in recent years. However, the Mexican authorities mostly fail in enforcing those laws effectively. Rule of law, an element deemed to be essential in a democracy, is thus not entirely given. This hinders the country from successfully evolving into a liberal democracy. The experts consulted in the framework of this thesis, argued that while democracy as such is not endangered in Mexico, the high level of corruption and clientelism hinders the country from the democratic progress it could make by now being a multi-party federal state. As pointed out by Dahl (1989), becoming a full polyarchy requires citizens’ rights and freedoms to be effectively enforced. The solution to the country’s problems of clientelism and corruption is unlikely to be one of constantly creating new laws and institutions but rather one of focussing on changing the legal culture in order to effectively enforce the already existing laws and enhance the capacities of the responsible institutions. Since the PAN’s electoral victory in 2000, Mexico has become indeed more democratic in terms of electoral competition. However, as Haber et al. (2008) conclude, “the country’s post-2000 experience clearly shows, [that] electoral democratization has

not automatically strengthened the rule of law or brought about other changes required to consolidate liberal democracy. In fact, many legacies of Mexico's authoritarian past continue to weigh heavily on the country."

A future key role regarding the rule of law in Mexico could lie with the Attorney General, whose importance is also highlighted by Greene (2018). The institution responsible for the investigation of electoral malfeasance, the FEPADE, reports to the Attorney General, a position which is currently to be filled. The last Attorney General, Raúl Cervantes, stepped down from office due to heavy critiques on his allegedly protectoral behavior towards issues concerning his party, the PRI. It is foreseen that the next Attorney General will be independently elected instead of nominated by the president in order to guarantee authority and transparency. However, the issue on the next Attorney General and the exact election procedure is to be determined only after the 1 July 2018 General Elections where the next Mexican president is to be chosen.

Mexico is yet not the only case of an electoral democracy where a stronger rule of law is required for the transition into a liberal democracy. Many electoral democracies merely focus on continually creating new laws and institutions instead of seeking how to enforce the existing ones in a more efficient way. The remarkable amount of electoral laws in Mexico, especially after the reforms of 2014, would be more than sufficient if they would be only enforced. The election of the next president of the United Mexican States as well as the election of the new Attorney General will be crucial, not only to determine the future path of the country, but also to ensure the stricter enforcement of laws to diminish clientelism and corruption.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview 1

The following interview was held between Anna Pachinger and Prof. Kenneth Greene on 25 April 2018. The paragraphs held in italic contain the interviewer's question and statements while the remaining paragraphs are the interviewee's answers.

Prof. Greene, it is my great pleasure to be able to talk to you. I have studied your work and especially I have paid close attention to the Mexican panel study that you started in 2000. To not to take too much of your time, I would like to start off with my questions right away if that is fine for you? I would like to start with Mexico's current situation and the upcoming elections. What would you say is the most urgent topic the country is currently facing? What is the main predominant motive in the campaigning prior to this year's election?

Political topic?

Yes

Well, I have to choose only one?

We can be flexible in that.

Uhm, well. So crime and violence are obviously a huge issue affecting lots and lots of things. If you believe Lopez Obrador then the root of the problem is economic and obviously the economy is a preliminary issue, so that makes the list. And why don't we throw government corruption in there too, but I would rank corruption amongst public officials after the other two.

Ok. So the next question is kind of related to the previous one, what is the main predominant motive in the campaigning prior to this year's elections?

Tell me what you mean with motive?

Is there a topic which is predominant in most candidates' campaigns or perhaps in all of them?

You know, it is remarkable to which extent the campaigns have been free of issues. The candidates are avoiding making clear statements about most major issues. And so, I always want to find out what the issue differences are and I want to place the candidates upon some kind of a spectrum. And I have done a lot of that in academic work and it just seems like a clear way how campaigns should work, but so far the only issue that I hear everybody talking about in some format is corruption among public officials. Sometimes that takes the format of a policy related issue and sometimes it's about slinging dirt at the opponent. I am sure you watched the debate the other night and so there is Meade trying to call Lopez Obrador corrupt and others such as el Bronco trying to do that as well. And so does Anaya, now that I think of

it. Those are all kind of swirling around the theme of corruption among public officials. But they are centered around personal attacks and I think this is the closest we have gotten to issues so far.

I might add one more thing to that. I guess kind of the subtext of these elections which can be encountered as an issue is pro- vs anti-system, status quo vs change, Lopez Obrador vs everybody else. I see it as non-entirely dissimilar to that portion of the Trump campaign

Thank you for your answers! Now I would like to change the focus and look back on the past presidencies. How would you sum up Pena Nieto's sexenio and what is the Mexican public's perception on his achievements?

Am I allowed to swear? His administration has been shit and the public's perception of it has been double shit. I mean its terrible. He has had massive problems after a brief, brilliant start that created a coalition in favor of a series of reforms, whether you were for or against the reforms he seemed to get things done and then it all started to fall apart and since then its just been terrible and his approval rating is incredibly low and people have very low confidence in institutions and the ability of the government to deal with basic tasks going after crime, prosecuting criminals, finding disappeared children, creating a sense of justice, dealing with corruption, dealing with the economy, dealing with Trump. People don't think that Pena Nieto has been good on basically any of those things.

Would you say that the Mexicans are less or more satisfied with his presidency than they were with the one of his non-PRI predecessors (Fox and Calderon)

Yes, I mean you can usually find the presidential approval ratings over time and I don't have the exact shape of series in my head, but Pena Nieto is lower than the others by a significant margin. I think his approval rate is around 30 now, and I don't think that anybody else got that low, right?

We stay in the past. Looking back at the last two decades, a lot has happened in Mexican politics, the PRI had to "end" its reign after its defeat in the 2000 elections, came back to power in 2012 and is now challenged again by PRD candidate Lopez Obrador, who does not seem to get tired of electoral campaigns. In nearly all big elections in the last years, claims of vote buying have been brought up. But have clientelist practices including vote buying and illegal campaign financing indeed become more frequent or is it more a matter of increased media investigation and party competition so that such scandals would become public?

That is a great question. I wish I knew the answer, but I don't. But more importantly nobody knows the answer, nobody can tell you. They can make things up, they can tell you what they would like to be true or what they fear is true but it's all just invented nobody has any idea whatsoever and it's because the amount of real research on this has been very, very minimal, its incredibly difficult to get projects funded that collect useful valid data on the extent of

vote buying attempts and much less whether they were actually successful and so there are a lot of people who will cite reports by election observation groups and domestic NGOs like Alianza Civica, but that is all BS, its terrible data and it doesn't really have any kind of representativeness or validity to it. This is not to say that it is wrong, but there is no particular reason to believe that it is right either. As a result we just don't have a sense of the magnitude of vote buying attempts and how they have changed over time. I think there are some theoretical reasons to believe they could have increased over time. This is perfectly compatible with the current laws and institutions as well as democratic competition, but that is all just in the land of theories, so just speculation. I can tell you a couple of little things. So in the panel studies since 2000 we have asked a direct question where we just ask people directly whether they have received any type of good, a favor, or a service in exchange for their vote. And those numbers have remained very steady along the panel studies in 2000, 2006 and 2016, somewhere between 5, 6, 6 and a half percent of people say that they have received something. The overwhelming majority of the people who told us that they got something, say that they have received the good, favor or service from the PRI. The thing is that those direct questions are not very good instruments. There is a social desirability bias. People don't want to admit that they engaged in illegal, in some people's views immoral activity, so they underreport. We just don't know how much they underreport. I did a thing in the 2012 panel, called list experiment, and the difference between the direct and indirect question is incredible. So in the full sample it is 21.2% in the list experiment. We don't know either whether this is accurate, I don't think that there are major design effects in the way that that is organized, which is good, but the question is pretty vague (Did you receive something in exchange for your vote?) I think it could be pretty hard for people what exactly we are trying to find out with that. And of course government agencies give stuff out all the time to people, that is just distributive politics. People could be confusing that with what we attempt to get out which is a one off transfer to try to influence vote choices instead of some kind of public policy. So I am not totally confident in that question, I think it's helpful but it also does not tell us if things increased over time, since we introduced the list experiment only in 2012.

Ok, thank you very much. I have mentioned vote buying and illegal campaign financing in my last question. However I would like to know if there are other forms of clientelist practices that you have come across in your research? Like giving preferred access to social welfare programs?

Yeah, anti-poverty programs. They enroll people in anti-poverty programs or are threatening to take away access to those kind of benefits. Yes, there is a lot of talk about this, that is for sure, the evidence I've seen, again from the survey work is that it doesn't happen very much with the federal programs, it seems to happen a lot on the state level. With state level programs that can be used in much more discretionary ways. So there is a grad student in MIT who has done some really detailed work on this in Yucatan, her name is Tesario Rezo. So you might look at her work and get in touch with her. I think she has got the best information

about the use of programs, at least in that one state. In other places I don't know how frequent this is used. There are bits of information that imply the desire that programs are used that way like also in the recent EDOMEX elections, but nothing terribly concrete. I have been working for a very long time now to get a project going on the current elections, but it keeps on changing everyday as the funding keeps on disappearing. I may be working with a guy who is putting together a project to do 350 focus groups sessions in 6 different states across the country, specifically surrounding the use of social programs to try to influence vote choices.

Do all parties make use of the same practices? You have mentioned the PRI, but do others use it as well.

Another great question. So the response to the direct question and then the follow up asking for which party, is a 72% PRI. I have looked at some other surveys where we used two list experiments. One that asked about getting something from the PRI and another one that asked about from all the other parties combined, and the numbers are strikingly similar, with almost an equal proportion of people saying that they got something from the other parties, but that is for all of them combined. So that implies that the PRI certainly does the plurality of it and that other parties kind of add up to about that amount. I think a lot of that has to do with capacity, so the PRI has a better nationwide organization with the ability to distribute goods through local brokers, the other parties are just restricted to their parties, they don't have the neighborhood level and the distribution networks to do it terribly well. The PRD does in DF and Ciudad Neza and Michoacán some other cities. The PAN doesn't have a lot of local level people, they just don't operate that way. So when they want to do it they try to purchase certain networks of people who already have that access, who function as gatekeepers. So it is sort of an arm's length kind of process. And so for those reasons the PAN and the PRD don't have as much capacity as the PRI, even if there was desire and resource, and Morena is at this point kind of a black box. I don't know of how much of the PRD local networks they have absorbed already. It is really hard for me to figure that out.

Thank you very much for the answer. I would now like to talk about initiatives that are taken against such clientelist practices and political corruption. Which impact do you attribute to anti-corruption capacity building which includes the creation of the National Anti-Corruption System (Sistema Nacional Anticorrupción, SNA), civil society organizations like Mexicans Against Corruption and Impunity (Mexicanos Contra La Corrupción y La Impunidad, MCCI) and Transparencia Mexicana, and citizen initiatives, including the "3for3 Law"?

I am not sure if any of them have any influence on clientelism and vote buying. And I think that those laws and initiatives are all dedicated to going after corruption in the sense that public officials use their offices for private gain rather than to augment their campaigns or distribution to voters. So I think that issues related to vote buying really fall under the FEPADE (Fiscalía Especializada para la Atención de Delitos Electorales), which is under the Attorney General. The campaigns that IFE and now INE have done every once in a while are kind of ci-

vic education campaign that sort of encourage people not to sell their vote, to report people activities where brokers try to get there votes. Then candidates would be the third kind of arm of this. Candidates who feel like they are on the losing side of vote buying strategies often say, yes, we know that you get stuff from the other parties, go ahead and take it, then just vote your conscience. That seems to be part of their campaigning and seems to go back to as least as far as to Cuauhtémoc Cardenas in 1988 doing that. So I think those are the areas but I don't know how effective they are. So FEPADE is tiny, the fiscal in charge of FEPADE was recently replaced and its budget is quite small and there was a further cut back a year ago with some general cuts to the INE and TRIFE and FEPADE. The INE campaigns limited very much to education, and I haven't seen much of these recently and the candidate have not mentioned the topic a lot this time but they did in the past. Does it have an effect on people? I don't know. I guess, it could. Let me add one more thing to the groups that might be involved in diminishing clientelism. I think the major thing that needs to happen to help with both corruption and clientelism is about the auditorias federales and estatales that are supposed to do auditing of the public budget, if they tremendously increase their capacity they could really do, deep dive into lots of municipalities and state governments and put local public officials on notice that it is much more difficult to get away with diverting public funds either for personal or electoral gain. I think that could have the biggest effect. But that has not been done yet.

What do these initiatives mean for the consolidation of democracy in the country?

Well, in a narrow sense in terms of consolidation, democracy is well consolidated in Mexico and I don't think that we are on the verge of authoritarian regime. In terms of the quality of democratic competition and accountability of public officials, I don't think that FEPADE, the INE campaign and the statements of the candidates have much of an effect. I don't know for sure, but I don't think they are broad enough. If you go to the FEPADE website, there is a picture of the entire personnel, that is everybody for the entire country, so like 50-60 people who does all the investigations from the ground level until prosecution level of vote buying and other types of electoral maleficence – it does not have the capacity to do what we would hope that they would do. So I don't think that there is much of an effect on the quality of democracy. I think that these issues are really big in people's minds. When you ask people, how much vote buying they think goes on, you can ask them in concentric circles. First you can ask, are you involved, and we get those responses and it's the percentages we have talked about before. Then you ask, do you think your neighbours sell their votes? It goes up, so like a 40% thinks their neighbours sell their votes. And then do you think that people in your neighbourhood sell their votes? And it goes up to like 80%. As the circle gets wider, the sense that vote buying is everywhere gets bigger. So people think it's a huge problem. So maybe that is one of the biggest issues, low confidence in the legitimacy of elections because of the sense that it is so wide spread.

Do you have anything to add to this?

You might consider if you are interested in the relationship between corruption and clientelism to take a look at the data series that you get from a varieties of democracy project which is a worldwide and time series which could be useful to place the case of Mexico in a broader perspective. There is also a grad student here in Texas, whose work could be interesting for you, he used to work at Transparencia Mexicana and is tuned in into everything that goes on in Mexican politics.

Thank you very much for your time!

Appendix B: Interview 2

The following interview was held between Anna Pachinger and Dr. Cristina Tapia Muro on 26 April 2018. The interview was held in Spanish, yet the version hereafter is translated into English. The paragraphs held in italic contain the interviewer's question and statements while the remaining paragraphs are the interviewee's answers.

Hello, good afternoon. Thank you very much for taking my call, I have already sent you several questions, I hope you have more or less an idea of what my interview is about. If it is okay for you, I would like to start directly with the questions.

Yes, of course.

So my first question would be, what do you think is the most urgent issue Mexico faces at this moment and what is also connected to that question is: What is the main topic dominating the campaigns of this year's elections?

Look, I think the most important issue for us Mexicans is the security issue. It is an issue that has been present for several years. The people waited for a change already when the sexenio of Calderón ended, they hoped that with the period of Peña Nieto there would be a decrease in the crime rate and in terms of insecurity. And this was an expectation of the people that was not fulfilled. In fact there are different surveys that report that the feeling of insecurity of the population has been growing recently. So let's say that this is a very strong issue which is also used for the campaigns. The campaigns, I think, have touched upon three things basically. Firstly, the Mexican's perception of insecurity. Secondly, also the issue of corruption is something important since especially in this sexenio several scandals have been uncovered. Shamefully, this is not an issue exclusive to only this six-year term, but it is the most recent experience in the country. And thirdly economy plays a big role because one of the ways the candidates are trying to approach the issue of insecurity is to try turn the issue of insecurity into an economical one with the focus of improving the general living conditions. So I think these are the three issues that have been most touched upon in these campaigns and that

have also been used to disqualify or better position one or the other candidate. This year there is also an independent candidate who is the wife of former President Calderón whose sexenio was marked by the fight against drug trafficking with large numbers of deaths and violence.

Thank you very much for your response. The next question is also a bit connected to what you have already said. How would you summarize Peña Nieto's sexenio? What is the perception of the Mexican public of his "achievements"?

His "achievements" as you have well said are totally disqualified from the Mexicans, that is, if you see the media and the polls, he is the Mexican president of the last years who has had the lowest approval ratings. Of course, surveys do not always reflect reality, but my perception as a citizen is that one. People are not thinking about the achievements of Peña Nieto. Or if you would ask an average Mexican about the achievements of Peña Nieto, he will hardly be able to name you any. Yes, he has done things, and it is true that while having in mind the high disapproval rate that has manifested during the last years of his sexenio, he has also launched campaigns. To cite the good thing which also have to be told. In other words, he has done good things. Even so, the average population is not looking at this. You feel a climate of strong dissatisfaction and because it is borne just with some adjectives that you hear, such as that it was a rugged period. It was a period that has been characterized by different scandals that belong to different issues of security, human rights, and corruption. All this, in a way, has overshadowed anything positive that could have been done by the administration.

You have already mentioned that the approval rate is very low for Peña Nieto, but would you say that there is a big difference between the approval of Peña Nieto compared to his non-PRI predecessors?

To give you the correct answer, I would have to see the polls, but according to my perception Calderón also had a very low approval rate due to the issue of violence that emerged under his presidency but still I think that Peña Nieto's disapproval rate is slightly larger. Regarding Calderón, the disapproval rate is connected to the war on drugs and matters of violence and insecurity but in Peña Nieto's term there was just one scandal after another after another, in an iterated way and connected to different topics. Problems dealing with human rights, the case of Ayotzinapa, the matter of the white house... And that little by little has contributed to the disapproval rate he has with the Mexican electorate. Even though Calderón did not have an outstanding approval rating, I think it is even lower what Peña Nieto had in recent months or years.

Thank you. Now I would like to look at the longer period, starting with 2000 where the PRI lost the presidency for the first time. The PRI came back to power in 2012. In almost every major election for the past 18 years there were claims of alleged vote-buying. Do you think that clientelist practic-

ces, including the vote-buying and illegal campaign financing, has become more frequent or is it more a matter of increased investigation by the media or more competition between the parties that makes these scandals go public?

Literature documents that Mexico is, sadly, one of the most representative cases of clientelism. What we can now observe thanks to the work of several academics, is the mutation or evolution of clientelist practices. It is a phenomenon that has been there for a long time and that has been changing. There are now other ways of adopting to the legal frameworks that have tried to shield us from certain things and to reduce clientelism. Clientelism has also transformed in terms of new resources that became available and I believe that this has a lot to do with what you said about the dissimulation of the problem. New technologies have also brought new ways of documenting clientelism and new ways of establishing different relationships. It is a practice, that is very old and that it is very diversified among countries with different levels of development. In order to survive in these different environments, between time and space, clientelism has had to evolve. What we are seeing now, is precisely the result of some years where there was a lot of clientelistic use of the solidarity programs. There is a lot of literature on how these programs were used to distribute them according to political and electoral factors. What we also see is that when Oportunidades arrived, it was attempted to protect the program so that the resources reach the people who really need them. But it also served for everything what I have mentioned before. proffered access to the program happened in places where the distributors had a “hard vote” but also where they had no “hard vote”, so in swing states, where voters had to be won. Now there are means to document clientelism and also your comment of what increased political competition has done to the dissimulation of clientelist practices is very interesting. In the moment the PAN won, the lesson changed into that now anyone can win. Hence one must try to weaken the greatest weaknesses of the opponent in any way possible to defeat the electorate.

Well I would also like to know if you think that it is all the parties that are using these clientelist practices? Or are there differences between the parties?

That is a very difficult question. My opinion is that all parties do it even if they do it in different ways. The evidence I have to tell you that is very debated. When you work for surveys, you can see that it is very difficult to study clientelism because nobody is going to tell you the truth. So the amount of people you can track down is very small. And then you can never be sure that effectively that support comes through the reception of the good. Many times clients give a sense of gratitude, of community work. It is a much more complex matter than a simple transaction which is what paints us the concept and gives a more pragmatic approach. Going back to what you asked me about if all the parties use clienteles practices. We can document in the surveys that there are cases in all the parties where there is people who have received things from them and thus vote for them. Yet we cannot know If indeed the reason

why one has voted for them is the reception of the good and that treatment. There is some data saying that it is a practice that occurs in all parties but we also know that the parties have different machines, different gears, different resources, and it also changes and transforms.

So according to the polls there is no party that gave more goods to the people than others?

If you see the surveys then it is indeed possible to identify that there are parties that give more gifts than others, yes. But there comes another discussion. The concept of clientelism is the delivery of a good or of a favor in exchange for political support. And in this story we are talking about which are the parts who give something. And at the point where a party gives a good to somebody we can not observe who the gift corresponded to. So when trying to make that match between who distributed the gift and who actually voted for the party that distributed the gift, we realize several things. There are parties that distribute more gifts, but maybe their target group is not the right one so that they receive less in relation to what they gave. And in the same way there are parties that distribute less gifts but gave them to a part of the electorate that actually voted for them.

What impact do you attribute to the creation of anti-corruption capacity organizations that includes the creation of the National Anticorruption System (SNA), civil society organizations such as Mexicans Against Corruption and Impunity (Mexicanos Contra La Corrupción y La Impunidad, MCCI) and Transparency Mexican, and citizen initiatives, including the "3for3 Law"?

I think the impact of those is still very limited. I think that in Mexico there are many things that should have other types of persecution and this does not happen. Transparency by itself is not enough to end corruption. There is a need to also focus on another part of the story. I like to think that we are moving forward, as there are elements that allow us to think about an advance, but still the road is very, very long.

What would be necessary for this initiatives to be more effective according to you?

This is going to be a very unpopular comment but clientelism has two parts, supply and demand. Of course, all people investigate in the clientelist offer, but there is also the demand side. There are civil society activists that promote more responsibility and a certain progress can be seen. But a change from the root is also necessary. What all those laws do is in a way to make everything heavier, it's a bit the history of what happened with the social programs. Since some actors used to take advantage of social programs for clientelist practices, now we have to shield them and incorporate a lot of provisions to guarantee that the money arrives accordingly - but all that makes the whole process slow down. Now, there is more monitoring so we would really have to be working rather on the demand side. In creating other con-

ditions. According to several authors, clientelism meets the needs of a sector of the population that can not be met otherwise. Clientelism is nothing more than a way to solve problems. We should rather build other conditions to affect demand as well as alleviating the conditions of poverty in another way and thus build different values. Maybe it will be more effective than making everything more complex.

What does all this mean for the consolidation of democracy in the country?

Without a doubt it is a tremendous difficulty. There is no way to effectively have an authentic democracy when in reality what is happening is to exchange political support for the reception of goods or favors. It is one of the great difficulties of the country and it is also important because it distorts.

Coming to my the last question which could also be quite difficult to answer, but where do you see Mexico currently in its process of democratization?

I think I would have more arguments to answer that question, once these elections pass. I think that these elections will teach us many things, from what the system is willing to allow to the preferences of the electorate. How the Mexicans decide their vote and which part of society decides it. Recently there was a debate among the candidates for presidency. It was not exactly a debate full of ideas which is what really should have happened. And that probably means a lot regarding the quality of politics. And for us citizens that makes it difficult to choose our next president. I would say that the process of democratization in Mexico is progressing but very slowly, certainly better than before when there was not even an alternative, but not fast enough to meet the demands of society and there are still sectors that are very disadvantaged.

Thank you very much!

Pledge of honesty:

On my honor as a student of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

Vienna, 15 June 2018

Anna Pachinger