Issues in Mexico

2000 – Vicente Fox (PAN party) elected as President

 -defeated PRI candidate (Labastida) by 20%

 -PRI lost first major election in 60 years; also lost majority in Senate and local areas

 -start of “new era in democracy”

PRI lost power to PAN b/c of #1) PRI deception (oil boom of 1977 – 1981 and Salinas presidency of 1988 – 1994) Economic gains and prosperity were reported but not felt by the general population. #2) Rising crime rate and government corruption at all levels.

Challenges for Fox:

 -crime

 -corruption

 -economy

 -poverty

 -drug trafficking

 -criminal justice reform

 -environment

Historically these issues are characteristic of Mexico’s problems, in addition to military and church issues.

Proximity to US has also created pros/cons. (labor problems in Mexico leading to cheap labor in the US and US investments and exploitation)

Political Parties in Mexico

PRI - Partido Revolucionario Institucional

 -post revolution goal was to reduce violence among those seeking political office and to

 consolidate power of government (at expense of local govt)

 -became a part of political system; did not promote competition among parties

PAN – Partido de Accion National

 -most support is from anti-PRI groups, urban areas, far right and the church

 -platform is for privatization, market policies, closer ties with the US, improving church

 & state relations, and stronger federalism

Minor Parties are………..

 -PRD – Partido de la Revolucion Democratica

 -PCM – Partido Communista Mexicano

 -PPS - Partido Popular Socialista

 -FDN – Frente Democratico National

Political Participation

Changes to electoral system b/c of fraud charges:

* Photo id system
* Citizen groups/ watchdogs
* Established the Federal Election Commission
* New legislation regarding elections
* Exit polls/ frequent campaign polls

Increased political participation among citizens / crossing party lines / more voters.

Political socialization mainly in family, church and school.

 -views change with economic conditions

 -very critical of government operation

 -economic performance is main factor in evaluation of govt

 -most believe govt has responsibility to lead the economy

Economic Performance & Government Spending

Problem of growing inequity among urban & rural areas; among classes and regions of country

Poverty levels, infant mortality rates, and population growth rates have all decreased.

Literacy rates and life expectancy have all increased

Government spending is low for Social Security, healthcare and education

Government spending is high for private industries

Problems with debt and unemployment have led to a lack of credibility of the government