

Sergio Aguayo's presentation. "The State of Mexico's Democracy: Obstacles to Consolidation", Yale University, May 1st. 2007.

OUTLINE

I will use my 15 minutes to the explanation of the factors that led to the electoral and political events of the traumatic 2006. My main hypothesis is that that during the Fox administration there was a massive redistribution of economic and political power that weakened the State and democracy.

I will give evidence to prove that hypothesis in the following cases:

1. The redistribution of power within the cabinet.
2. The massive transfer of federal funds to states and municipalities transformed governors in autonomous actors.
3. The wealth flowing to political parties strengthened bureaucracies and created rigidities in institutions like Congress.
4. The power achieved by the private sector as indicated by the accumulation of wealth.
5. The power of TV networks and their capacity to impose laws.
6. The strength of organized crime that was able to impose their will in vast regions.

A clear consequence was the weakening of the State that expressed itself in different and uneven ways. During the Fox years became more and more obvious that local elections had very poor democratic quality. That is, there was no control over the amounts spent, many governments became openly partisan, media was biased, poor citizens were being coerced

or bought to vote for one of the candidates, negative campaigns became normal events because the institutions in charge of organizing the elections and solving the conflicts lack the will and/or the power. That is, symptoms of a democracy that is working poorly.

Therefore, the actors and ingredients were prepared to have, in 2006, the longest, most expensive and murkiest presidential election in Mexico's history which I will briefly describe.