

PREFACE

A long time ago Charles Tilly, an extraordinary professor, told me that life was a collection of mistakes and falls; clever people get up and try to continue with their existence. Writing a book is a similar task; like in life, to get up we need a lot of advice and good friends, who support you when you think that you cannot continue. This book has a long history, I started thinking about it more than a decade ago; Fox's administration was ending and the results were very far from our high expectation as a country. Nevertheless, I had studied and compared the long struggle for democracy in Mexico and Spain and, considered that, at some point, I would have to review a part of that story, but focusing on the presidential elections in Mexico. Democracy goes far beyond elections; however, presidential elections have been a key arena where the Mexican political system has been forged. A long time ago, Lenin, contradicting Kautsky and the social democrats, argued that bourgeois democracy was the most important protection for capitalism. It was a facade for maintaining a brutal process of domination.¹

The ideal of social democrats has been that through elections the process of domination could be tamed, socialist governments would develop a welfare state that made unnecessary the violent process of destruction involved in a revolution. In some countries, with all its contradictions, democracy has produced significant results for the majority of the population, a better and good life in the Aristotelian mode for the majority of the population. However, that is not the case in Mexico. We still live in an unequal society, not just economically, but socially and

culturally... The book that the readers have in their hands is the result of my thinking and discussions with multiple professors, colleagues, and friends. I have benefitted enormously from conversations with Fernanda Somuano, who has been my coauthor in multiple academic projects at El Colegio de Mexico, Edith Pacheco from the Center for Demographic and Environmental Studies (CEDUA) helped me enormously to develop the statistical models of the 2000 and 2012 presidential elections. Aldo Ponce from CIDE Centro gave me excellent comments on a draft of two chapters that I presented at LASA in New York City in 2016. Bernardo Mabire from the Center for International Studies read the whole manuscript and help me to polish my English. Martha Elena Venier has been an extraordinary reviewer, she also read and corrected the whole manuscript and made numerous suggestions to improve the book. Humberto Garza has always been a good friend, who has encouraged me to continue with all my projects. Julio Solís, my research assistant, has helped me to finish the bibliography and review the notes. I also want to thank the anonymous reviewers from Palgrave, who made key suggestions to improve the book and insisted on changing the structure of the book so that the typology developed in the theoretical chapter could be used along the whole text. I am thankful to the Center for International Studies at El Colegio de México. That has been my institutional home during the past 18 years. I also want to thank the Katz Center for Mexican Studies at the University of Chicago, where I finished the final revisions of the book. Let me express my affection and gratitude to my whole family, my parents, Leticia and Reynaldo, who have been a constant source of inspiration, and my sister and my brother Claudia and Hiquingari. I have a special debt to my two kids Carmen and Yunuen. I have borrowed too much time from them; I hope this book will compensate some of the pain involved.

I expect the result, although small, will help to understand and eventually give some ideas to transform our political system into an authentically democratic one. As Charles Tilly says, “Almost all crucial democracy-promoting causal mechanism involve popular contention—politically constituted actors’ making of public, collective claims and other actors, including agents of government—a correlates, causes and effects.”² The main argument of this book is that Mexican presidential elections have been crucial in those struggles for democracy. Here, I will present a theoretical approach to analyze that historical process.

I have adapted some material from my *Movilización y democracia. España y México* (México, El Colegio de México, 2008); and a previous

version of my typology of presidential elections, developed in Chap. 1, appeared in my “De la hegemonía al pluralismo: elecciones presidenciales y comportamiento electoral, 1976–2006,” at S. Loaeza and J.F. Prud’homme, *Instituciones y Procesos Políticos*, (México, El Colegio de México, 2010) pp. 405–447.

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NOTES

1. See: V. I. Lenin, “Democracy and Dictatorship,” in *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/dec/23.htm>. “The Scheidemanns and Kautsky’s speak about “pure democracy” and “democracy” in general for the purpose of deceiving the people and concealing from them the *bourgeois* character of *present-day* democracy. Let the bourgeoisie continue to keep the entire apparatus of state power in their hands, let a handful of exploiters continue to use the former, bourgeois, state machine! Elections held in such circumstances are lauded by the bourgeoisie, for very good reasons, as being “free”, “equal”, “democratic” and “universal”. These words are designed to conceal the truth, to conceal the fact that the means of production and political power remain in the hands of the exploiters, and that therefore real freedom and real equality for the exploited, that is, for the vast majority of the population, are out of the question. It is profitable and indispensable for the bourgeoisie to conceal from the people the *bourgeois* character of modern democracy, to picture it as democracy in general or “pure democracy”, and the Scheidemanns and Kautskys, repeating this, *in practice* abandon the standpoint of the proletariat and side with the bourgeoisie.
2. Charles Tilly, *Contention & Democracy in Europe, 1650–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 255.

Presidential Elections in Mexico

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