University of Tartu

Faculty of Social Sciences

Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies

WHERE ARE THE EXTREMISTS?
THE MEXICAN CASE FOR A NEW UNDESTANDING
IN THE STUDY OF THE FAR RIGHT

Master's Thesis in European Union and Russia Studies

Guillermo Chávez García

Supervisor: Louis Wierenga, MA

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Abstract

This work addresses the question of *Why has there not been an increase in support for far-right organizations in Mexico?* The author uses process tracing with a wide data range in order to overcome the lack of academic research done in the country about the far right. First, the theoretical framework for the far, radical and populist radical right are established, with a focus on populism and the populist radical right in the United States and Europe. Furthermore, the author narrates the historical background of the far right in Mexico in order to establish the primary characteristics and continuity from the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution until today. The main work is focused on explaining the process for the far right between 2008-2019. The author concludes that the far right in Mexico hasn't been able to establish a foothold in large parts of the population, hindering their ability to grow; this in part to the lack of rallying topics such as migration or common external enemies such as the EU and their close links to the country's economic elite. It also concludes that the far right has appeared in limited numbers in Mexico derived from the introduction of progressive laws in Mexico City as well as the election of left-leaning president Andres Manuel López Obrador. In a nutshell, there seems to be no appetite for a comparable growth in the far right in Mexico, despite their renovated activity in the last few years, so the appearance of a successful far right or populist radical right party seems unlikely.

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I have written this master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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Abbreviation dictionary

CAM- Green Vests Mexico

CNN- National Citizen's Congress

CNI- National Indigenous Council

COPARMEX- Confederation of Patrons of the Mexican Republic

FNM- National Family Front

FRENA- National Front

GIRE- Group for Information on Elected Reproduction

NMD- No More Squander

MORENA- National Regeneration Movement

MURO- University Movement for Orientation and Renovation

PAN- National Action Party

PAS- Social Alliance Party

PES- Social Encounter Party

PDM- Mexican Democrat Party

PNA-Parents National Association

PRI- Institutional Revolution Party

PRD- Democratic Revolution Party

SEP- Education Secretariat

SPM- Yes For Mexico

UNS- National Sinarquist Union

Introduction

Almost every generation must face a challenge to its status quo. Posterior to the Second World War the Western World was in dire need to provide structure and a strong ideological background to the new world order. And so, financial, supra national and regional institutions were set up, all this in order to achieve a new era of world peace. However, some of the ghosts from the pre-war era have shown their face again, echoes of the fascism wave that brought the world to a catastrophic war have made their way into the political mainstream in the shape of populist radical right (PRR) parties and organizations. Even going as far as emulating symbols and discourses from a dark and shameful era, authoritarian, xenophobic and nativist leaders have rushed to fill the vacuum of power that the struggles of a globalizing world leave empty[1].

However, these new challenges to democratic order, and public discourse have not appeared in the same shapes and forms in different parts of the world. Current academic efforts, especially in the West, have disproportionally focused their attention on the phenomena developing in Europe and the United States, much like most relevant academic efforts[2]. Giving little attention to relevant developments in other parts of the world. In so, this thesis work will make an attempt at explaining the far right in Mexico and its more contemporary iteration the populist radical right: its historical origins, main characteristics, current social and political context, and finally, how it differs greatly from its counterparts in the United States and Europe. This effort will be carried out around a central question, that approaches the current situation of the populist radical right in the country, and why it has not appeared as strongly, decisively and successfully as in other parts of the world.

Why has there not been an increase in support for far right parties and organizations in Mexico?

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[1] Kim, n.d.
[2] Kerner, 2018, pp. 550-563

There is some historical evidence of the presence of far right parties and organizations in the political and social life of Mexico for at least 100 years[3]. A sort of by-product of the secular character of the Mexican Revolution and its aftermath. However, as will be addressed later in this work, the secretive and discrete nature of some this organizations, has made it difficult to properly identify them and understand their main motifs. Far right organizations have come and gone from public life, usually accompanied by rally-around-the-flag efforts with specific issues in mind such as communism, progressive social rights, religious freedom, and many others. While formal political parties have never gathered enough support in order to remain relevant active political players, instead shifting and dissolving consistently over the years.

This research puzzle, presents a specific set of challenges: first, the lack of relevant information, either from media, academia, or other sources, as it remains a scarcely researched topic in Mexico; second, the profound theoretical and research focus in far parties and organizations in Europe and the United States, where we do have copious relevant information that provide a theoretical approach and insights but it fail to address the local context in formulating explanations, either for the Mexican or other regional cases outside the West.

Given the particularities of the far right in Mexico and the challenges mentioned above, a specific methodology was needed in order to be able to carry out this work of research. The limitations of a positivist approach, meaning the search for theory building that allowed for generalizations proved to be too grand for this topic in particular. And so, a more eclectic and wholesome approach was needed. Process tracing appeared to be the most suitable methodology in order to explain this particular outcome, while being able to include the widest variety of data and sources, allowing the author to construct a sufficient enough narrative that would be able to explain the current context of the far right in Mexico as well as its characteristics and perhaps make some predictions about its future. The author goes beyond what is traditionally

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[3] Uribe, 2008, pp. 49-44

considered as good process tracing, that would involve theory building or theory explaining methodology, and focuses instead on outcome explaining methods using a deductive approach. This methodology seems the most appropriate to study a specific case such as the current research puzzle[4].

It is important to mention, that the author could not find any research works focus on the populist radical right, far right, or extreme right that used process tracing. As for the reasons that this hasn't been attempted, it is difficult to venture an explanation. However, the author did made due diligence by comparing the methodological approaches of other works such as the article by Kyung Joon Han, in which he studied behavioral patterns in European Values Surveys in order to establish a correlation with voting intentions for radical right parties[5]; or the comparative study by David and Deole in which they established a correlation between foreign-born population percentages and support for far right parties by crossing it with macroeconomic indicators and individual wealth and education indicators[6]. As relevant as this connections and inferences are, such an approach for an initial effort in the Mexican scenario as this work is, might be more relevant in a further research that goes beyond what's described here.

Therefore, process tracing with a wholesome social science research approach allows the author to properly process the myriad of data and information needed. As mentioned above, the lack of specific information regarding this topic creates a necessity to include and analyze large numbers of information in order to create the necessary links for a sufficient explanation. In so, historical secondary sources help explain the roots and historical context of the far right in Mexico; party manifestos and public statements by their leaders help construct a general idea of their ideology and goals; electoral results and party identification surveys aid in connecting popular

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[4] Ulriksen & Dadalauri, 2016, pp. 222-237
[5] Han, K. J. (2016). Income inequality and voting for radical right-wing parties. *Electoral Studies*, *42*, 54–64. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2016.02.001
[6] Davis, L., & Deole, S. S. (n.d.). *Immigration and the Rise of Far-Right Parties in Europe*. 3.

support for certain political parties; demographic and economic statistical data provides the reader with a clearer idea on the population groups that identify or not with the far right in the country; ethnographic information better explain the current social context for discrimination, migration and nativism; and finally, distinct academic works from Mexico and abroad, provide insightful information that allows this work to go deeper into the historical process that created the characteristics of the far right in Mexico and its profound differences with its counterparts around the world, especially in Europe and the United States.

However, if the contemporary manifestation of the far right, the populist radical right, as such, has not appeared in Mexico, in comparison to the United States or Europe, why is it important to study it? The fact of the matter is the reasons behind its apparent irrelevance in the country are the more relevant to understand the greater process that encircles the far right in other parts of the world. Not only could it help understand PRR better in Europe and the US but could also provide insight in how to counter it as it looks for undermining democratic institutions elsewhere.

This argument of course, added to the fact that political developments in Mexico have a greater impact in world politics and economics as it could be expected. Mexico remains one of the top world economies and is expected to be in the top 10 economies in the next few decades. It is also a major economic partner to the United States, the European Union, and much of Asia[7]. Finally, the country remains a political and cultural powerhouse in Latin-America, specially at a time where other major powers in the region have decided to look inwards and have stop engaging in the region.

Finally, in order to better explain the complex process for the far right in Mexico this work will be structured as follows: first, the theoretical framework and literature review will give an overview of the current academical works and theories in regard to the topic at hand; second, the selection process for the case and methodology, followed by

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[7] *Mexico's Top Trading Partners 2019*, n.d.

a wide data overview of the different types of information, sources and data utilized in this research; third a wide historical review divided into the Genesis of the far right in Mexico with a focus on its origins and success, and the current state and context of the PRR in the country; finally we continue with the analysis and comparison of the far right in Mexico, by establishing its main characteristics, and contrasting them with parties and organizations in Europe, this in order to widening the scope of analysis.

Fundamental theory of the Far Right and its historical and contemporary context in Mexico

Theoretical framework and Literature Review

First, we must provide a working definition of radical right, as this will be the family group from which the work ahead will be developing. Cas Mudde states that the radical right are *ideologies that believe that inequalities between people are natural and positive and that accept the essence of democracy but oppose fundamental elements of liberal democracy*[8]. For the complete understanding of the political family that includes the radical right and populist radical right, it is also relevant to include a working definition for the extreme right, going ahead with Mudde, he defines it as a close sibling to radical right, in which inequalities between people are positive, even desirable, however the main difference being that the extreme right rejects the essence of democracy, in contrast to radical right that accepts most elements of it[9]. The combination of the radical right and extreme right would encompass the full far right as an umbrella term.

Before proceeding and providing a working definition of the populist radical right, it is necessary to define populism. This work conceptualizes populism with a complimentary approach using a number of definitions: first, the definition by Robert Jansen in which *populism is a mode of political practice, aimed at mobilizing "ordinarily marginalized sectors into publicly visible and contentious political action" (Jansen 2011, p. 82. Populism represents a "sustained political project" that combines "popular mobilization with populist rhetoric" (Jansen 2011, p. 82. Only where both are present and mutually reinforce each other can we speak of a genuine populist mobilization*[10]; second, the definition by Cas Mudde, in which populism *is a (thin)*

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[8] Mudde, 2019, p. 328
[9] Mudde, 2019, p. 325
[10] Rydgren, 2018, p. 140

ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, the pure people and the corrupt elite, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volunté génerale (general will) of the people[11]; Finally, since the focus of this study is Mexico, it is important to also include at least one definition of populism derived from the Latin-American context, Kurt Weyland conceptualizes populism from the study of Latin-American politics, in which it is defined as a political strategy, with the aim to obtain or remain in power, that also rests in the capability of numbers. Populism is intimately linked to personalistic leaders who base their power in uninstitutionalized support emanated from large numbers of people. This definition encompasses classical populists from the 1930s and onwards[12]. While this last definition is useful to understand some of the regional context, it leaves out the economic factors of populism, that might be triggers in the more contemporary definitions of Mudde and Jansen. While these first two definitions cover the contemporary dynamics, if we take into account the delay in certain processes in Mexico, it may very well be that older definitions would complement the understanding of the concept in relation to this particular country. In so, this work will utilize the elements of Cas Mudde's definition regarding the separation of society into homogeneous and antagonistic groups, such as the people and the elite, but also considering the relevance of popular mobilization, from Jansen and Weyland.

The populist radical right is one of the political concepts defining the current era, it is a notion fundamental to understand it. From Europe to the Americas, we can find a deep transformation in the complex political landscapes of a variety of nations. Most of these transformations can be framed as an *action of* or a *reaction to* the populist radical right. Cas Mudde (2016) provides a working definition of this phenomenon in his work *Populist Radical Right: A Reader and many works*. He does so by naming the main characteristics of populist radical right parties and movements as follows as a way of definition: (1) *nativism* as a xenophobic form of nationalism; (2) *authoritarianism*, a strictly ordered society in which any sort of infringement of such an order should be

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[11] Mudde, 2019, p. 327
[12] Weyland, 2001, p. 18

severely punished; (3) populism, a constitution of society into two antagonistic groups: on the one hand, the corrupt elite "in control", on the other hand, the pure people struggling against the dominant group[13], he goes on further to portray it as *a thin-centered ideology that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale of the people*[14] as mentioned above. While Mudde's work offers a broad definition for the populist radical right, his approach remains very much localized in the West, taking his major examples both from the United States and Europe, despite his recent efforts to move beyond the western sphere in his most recent work. For matters of clarity, populist radical right and radical right will tend to be used similarly in this work albeit taking into account the theoretical nuances between one and the other, as the definition from the Oxford handbook of the Radical right provides a similar enough definition as Mudde: Rydgren explains how "Radical right parties and movements share an emphasis on ethnonationalism[…]They also tend to be populists[…]In their political platforms, this ideological core is often embedded in a general sociocultural authoritarianism that stresses themes such as law and order and family values"[15]

In order to more thoroughly outline how these characteristics, present themselves in the Realpolitik, it is necessary to firstly regard the cases most relevant according to the academic literature. It is clear that one of the main scenarios where the far right has become alarmingly evident is in the United States, with the outbreak of the Tea Party movement and the later take-over of the Republican establishment, mainly during Trump's presidential campaign in 2016 as somehow predicted by Williamson, Skocpol and Coggin[16]. Nativism being one of its main drivers, in this sense, it is worth noting that nativism in the United States is not a new phenomenon, for we can trace it back to at least the 19th century, much further back than in Europe. Anti-immigration movements have been an integral part of the US political system, one of the main examples being the Native American Party, which in 1854 managed to get as much as

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[13] Mudde 2016, pp. 25-27
[14] Mudde, C. (2004). The Populist Zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition*, *pp.* 541–563.
[15] Ibid., pp. 23-24
[16] Williamson et al., 2011

52 members in the House of Representatives. This continued through the century with the strengthening of the Ku Klux Klan, and eventually with groups sympathetic to Fascism and Nazi Germany. Overall, the far right became closely linked to anti-immigration politics and anti-government positions, with both areas operating in different political spheres, either at an elite or a grassroots level. The contemporary example of these groups is manifested in the Tea Party, which ended up heavily influencing the Republican apparatus, and which eventually led to the election of Donald Trump as Presidential candidate in 2016. In this regard, Mudde, in *The Far Right in America*, discussing the terrorist attacks in Oklahoma in 1995 and the Sikh massacre of Oak Creek in 2012, alerts against the threat that these far right groups represent both to the Government and to minority groups[17].

Another example of a study which explains the traits of the US radical right groups is Eric Miller's study "God Hates" about the religious right in North America. In this study, Barret-Fox explains how Christian organizations have taken over a big part of the populist radical right discourse in the United States and are now actively promoting and financing political groups in order to further their agenda[18]. She also uses the example of the Evangelical lobby and how they use powerful tools to influence politicians and capture political discourse in the push for their agenda. On the same lines, Jeff Sharlet in the book *The Family* describes how Christian fundamentalist organizations are able to co-opt politicians in the US. He refers to the case of the National Prayer Breakfast, which has become a lobbying ground between politicians and religious leaders strong enough for US Presidents to be in attendance every year[19]. Another important study dealing with groups financing operations from the United States into other parts of the world is Jane Mayer and Walter Mondane's book *Dark Money* on covert and open financing of radical right organizations, think-tanks, candidates and media, and how these efforts are profoundly linked to big money donors. Just to name an example, she mentions the case of anti-abortion campaigns

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[17] Mudde, 2017, pp. 11-13
[18] Miller, 201, pp. 339-341
[19] Sharlet, 2008, pp. 1-9

popping up in Europe financed by Christian fundamentalist groups in the United States[20].

All of these studies come to the conclusion that Christian fundamentalist organizations, portraying much of the characteristics of radical right groups, have found a way into politics in the United States and are constantly pushing for a conservative agenda and even for violence. While these studies are able to explain the success and penetration of groups in the United States, and their relation to new movements in Europe, they fail to address the success or lack of success of such movement in other parts of the world. For this, the present work attempts to identify some general variables and then compare them to relevant cases in Mexico, in order to extrapolate similarities and differences that might help explain the current scenario concerning far right and radical right groups in Mexico.

The literature on European far right parties shows that this groups have their own set of specific circumstances in contrast to their US counterparts or other regions of the world. As discussed in Mudde's paper "Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe Redux", there are some general characteristics regarding European radical right groups: first, there is not an unified populist radical right, instead there are many different types of organizations and parties that resemble or could be considered as PRRs (Populist Radical Right groups, for short); second, the element of the European Union and their degree of opposition to it might tip the balance to include a party in the far right family, since being anti or pro EU might also intertwine with EU values that could directly contradict the traditional characteristics of the populist radical right; third, they include anti-immigrant and nativist ideologies and feelings, often linked to anti-Islam positions[21]. Mudde also goes as far as to make a comparison between East and West, parting from the example of how in the East, the populist radical right also embodies the difficult transition from the Soviet bloc into European democracies, thus giving space for anti or pro-Russian postures in the blocks. He also explains how there is no

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[20] Mayer & Mondale, 2016, pp. 11-67
[21] Mudde 2009, pp. 330-337

international network of far-right parties or organizations. Most of the time these parties' differences keep them separate. However, we can see the beginnings of such organizations working together (although not successfully) in an effort by Mateo Salvini, from the Northern League, to create a solid voting bloc in the European Parliament. It is noteworthy to emphasize that the conceptualization emanating from Europe works best to describe such parties. However, much can still be gained from widening the research scope to include elements from outside the western sphere. This is in part what the present work is attempting to do by complementing existing literature with a new case focused on Mexico.

Meanwhile, Provost and Fitzgerald are successful in establishing the links between dark money sources and religious right established branches in Europe. They go on to explain their focus on refuting liberal values and norms in Europe such as LGBT rights, reproductive rights, the promotion of a strict family model, and finally, with the possible illegal financing of populist radical right politicians and parties across the continent[22].

However, Mos in his article "The fight of the Religious Right in Europe: old whines in new bottles" goes further and makes a good case about how these organizations are not able to operate identically as in the US, they need to adapt their strategies to fit the current European Union's structures[23]. Further, he explains how instead of challenging directly the institutions of the European Union, they have changed their discourse with the use of common language in human rights and science while using the ambiguity of the treaties in their favour and promoting conservative values using technicalities. Hence, this article actually makes some echo as to how religious right groups operate in Mexico and as such it can be useful in making a comparison to business groups support for propaganda campaigns, and far-right policies as stated by Tirado in his research regarding who finances the far right in the country[24]. It is interesting to note

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[22] Provost & Fitzgerald, 2019
[23] Mos, 2018
[24] Tirado, 1985, pp. 105-121

that the financing does not only go one way: Mexican far-right groups such as *el Yunque* have established branches in Spain and France and are actively promoting far-right agendas with policy makers, such as the organization *Hazte Oír*[25].

Until now, the far right in Mexico has not been explained in full. In fact, there is very scarce contemporary literature on the far right in Mexico. With the exception of Monica Uribe's "*La ultraderecha en México: el conservadurismo moderno*" which gives us a detailed overview of the historical reach of the far right in the country, from its beginnings in the Mexican Revolution, the World War II stage and the development of the modern Mexican state[26]. She details how the far right has been heavily linked to big money and how their influence in politics has been longstanding[27]. She also makes a deep description on the vast network of organizations and their links between them and political parties, student movements, religious organizations, and the Catholic church[28]. This work is the most detailed historical explanation on the process the far right has followed in Mexico since the 1930s, but it fails to explain the proper causes of any of them.

Research Question

As a result of this lack of research, the far right in Mexico remains mostly invisible or easily dismissible, making it difficult to understand their goals and reach. This study addresses this shortcoming by conceptualizing the far right in Mexico within the framework of contemporary radical right studies with the goal of making susceptible to the analytical tools of the existing literature on the subject.

The aim of this study is to explain the characteristics of the Mexican equivalent of the radical right and its recent iteration the populist radical right and contribute to the

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[25] Cf. "'El Yunque', la sociedad paramilitar vinculada con HazteOír, cada vez menos secreta," n.d.
[26] Uribe, 2008, pp. 39-57
[27] *Ibid.,*
[28] *Ibid.,*

general knowledge of the field by examining the Mexican case and explaining the outcome within the framework of process tracing with an interpretative approach. Taking advantage of process tracing, as conceptualized by Beach and Pedersen regarding its ability to explain case-specific outcomes[29].

For this we will work with a general research puzzle from which several expectations will be framed and worked on.

Why has there not been an increase in support for far parties and organizations in Mexico?

This question is framed in the 2008-2019 timeline for Mexico that happens to intertwine with the fourth wave of the far right as mentioned by Mudde[30]. Within this research puzzle we have a number of expectations derived from the preliminary work done by the author from which the narrative and analytical structure of this academic effort derives. These expectations will be approached using a plural approach to methodology and data analysis; for it is relevant for this particular case to include a wide variety of data and methodological sources, both for the lack of information about it, and for the shifting and elusive nature of the topic at hand. Furthermore, it is important to mention that the expectations enshrined in this work are based on general observations made by the author into the contemporary politics of the far right in Mexico while carrying out the elaboration of the timeline presented along this work.

The main expectations to be found are as follows:

1.   The far right in Mexico got primarily activated due to the introduction of highly controversial laws in Mexico City and the National Government, mainly the right for abortion and equal marriage.

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[29] Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp.9-22
[30] f_barca, n.d.

2.	The far right in Mexico, in contrast to its European and US counterparts has not established a link with the traditional population targets, being economically disaffected, or uneducated youth. Instead, the far right biggest appeal is to educated and affluent middle and high classes.

3.	The new left government in Mexico has sparked a further surge as the Mexican equivalent of white anxiety takes over former power structures.

4.	Immigration is not an issue in Mexico, multiculturalism and acceptance have been part of the state building efforts of the Mexican government since the Mexican Revolution.

Methodology and overview of data

The Mexican Case

Mexico is the 6th largest democracy in the world, with over 124 million inhabitants. Heir to both indigenous and European culture and tradition. It is also the 15th biggest economy in the world and a fundamental part of the largest economic block: The North American Free Trade Area. Just the size of its population and economic power are reason enough for the political characteristics of the country to be of academic interest. However, there is also enough specific national traits that would spark interest in how one of the most studied phenomena of our time in social sciences, far right, has developed in such a country. Mexico has a mixed legislative system with both direct and proportional representation, it has also undergone a slow and progressive democratic transition since 1997, and while it portrays some of the perfect social disparity characteristics perfect for the far right and its subdivisions to fester, it doesn't seem to be the case.

For this work, the author will look into contemporary far right groups in Mexico, with a focus on larger organizations like the National Family Front, the National Citizen's Congress, or ultra-catholic groups like *El Yunque* or The Parents National Association; also focusing on non-governmental organizations, and their links to political parties and business groups such as *No Más Derroches*, Mexican Green Vests and the National Mexican Front. If we follow the historical development of far right groups in Mexico since the dawn of the Mexican revolution, we can find a direct progression between groups such as El Yunque or The Parents National Association and groups emanated from the Cristero War of the post-revolutionary years; and so, these groups have been selected for the most part as they share a common historical origin. Additionally, some of the most contemporary organizations, such as the National Mexican Front or Mexican Green Vests, seem to answer to some of the same social triggers as PRR organizations and parties in other parts of the world, such as nativism, anti-elitism or

authoritarianism, making a comparison feasible. As of today, most of the organizations mentioned in this work are still active, and it was possible to document their existence, part of their ideology and if they are still active or not.

In the case of Mexican far right organizations, a deep enough link is not seen between them and the populist radical right movements in Europe and the United States, at least not yet. Even if there are growing signs of anti-immigrant rhetoric, the main groups and supporters seem to be still a part of the middle and upper echelons of Mexican society, making the populist and anti-elite discourse difficult to attain. In any case anti-elite sentiment would seem to be directed not from the populist radical right towards elites, but from the populist radical left towards their opposing sides. Even the possibility of populism/nativism from above seem to be discarded as the elites seem to be deeply divided between those currently in power and the groups that historically have controlled public office.

However, there is a clear view of authoritarian and some xenophobic attitudes. There is also a set of traits that would place them in a similar category to the Christian right, like the support for anti-abortion measures or the promotion of a conservative family model and the despise for LGBT rights[31]. The latter could be tied to "white anxiety", such as the one documented by Jennifer Richeson in her recent study in how the white population might react in a hostile manner to a racial shift in the United States, and how this can affect intergroup interactions[32]. An example would be the strong reaction that rose during the very symbolic victory of Barack Obama, in which a good part of the white, Christian population felt disenfranchised[33], much like the Mexican middle and upper classes might feel with the rise of a left government lead by someone not from the elite. It is difficult to categorize the appearance of these traits as a surge, mostly because they do not seem to be widespread enough, especially when it looks like they are constrained by the nature of the Mexican political system that traditionally

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[31] Cf. Tirado, 1985
[32] Craig & Richeson, 2014
[33] Cf. Douthat, n.d.

relied on center-politics and a preference for keeping political forms[34]. They are also constrained, so it seems, by a strong contradiction from groups that are anti-systemic but at the same time enshrine the system because of the order it provides, perhaps hinting that the only thing they are actually against is the current government and not really the system.

Process Tracing and multi-method research

The question of the absence of the far right in Mexico seems immediately counterintuitive in a country with high levels of income inequality and migration, specially taking into account that these two characteristics are well documented as having a strong correlation to the rise of PRR in other parts of the world[35]. It is this apparent strange absence that leads the scholar to process tracing as the ideal method to explain such a peculiar outcome as this methodology will allow to construct and validate loosely connected variables in a set period of time utilizing all the tools available to the discipline in a plural and varied manner[36]. Process tracing helps us establish multiple links in a causal chain that can be diagramed and formalized in order to explain as much in a sufficient manner a specific outcome, that would not be able to be explained with more common research methodologies[37]. In this method I use multiple types of evidence in order to verify a number of expectations, such types of evidence can include qualitative, such as interviews, historic recollections, media content, opinion pieces, amongst others; and quantitative data such as election result information, demographic data, economic indicators, opinion polls, and such, as well as general inferences about the case being studied, that will help construct the widest explanation possible for the studied outcome.

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[34] Loaeza, n.d.
[35] Passari, 2020
[36] Cf. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, n.d.
[37] Gerring, 2006

In this work the author will carry out a sort of detective work in order to explain a particular outcome linked, in this particular account, to the Mexican scenario for far right parties and organizations, their characteristics, existence and success. Beach and Pedersen conceptualize this type of process tracing method as "Explaining outcome process-tracing". They go on to explain how in practice this the most common used method is, instead of "theory-building" or "theory explaining" in which causal hypotheses have a much stronger role in explaining relationships[38].

To summarize, "explaining outcome process-tracing" consists of the next four elements: first, it is case-centric; second, it aims to build theorized causal mechanisms; three, it looks to identify case-specific mechanisms instead of building generalizations; and finally, fourth, it *enables inferences about the sufficiency of the explanation to be made[39]*. Additionally, given the specificity of the Mexican case and the necessary local knowledge, the author sticks to John Gerring when he says that in some circumstances non-comparable observation might be more scientific than sample-based inferences (Gerring 2006:172-187).

The author also consulted other research works that use process tracing, such as *The Regional Dimension of Statebuilding Interventions* by Benjamin Brast. In his work, Brast uses process tracing as an ideal tool to build a causal mechanism for a single case study, in this particular work Brast is looking at how the state building efforts in Sierra Leone were successful despite having very adverse conditions, much like in this work, Brast is trying to explain an outlier case. Brast also establishes a number of theoretical expectations that will help establish the process and its characteristics in the conclusions. He also explains why process tracing is ideal for single cases or small research designs because it allows to bypass the indeterminacy of larger studies and can look into the inside of causation instead of whether a cause and an outcome are present. Brast proceeds to explain the historical context in which Sierra Leone state

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[38] Beach & Pedersen, 2013pp. 10-12
[39] Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp. 13-14

building efforts took place and then into the process itself, reaching conclusions that matched and also surprised his expectations[40].

The main channel for this work will be a timeline from 2008 to late 2019 (Annex 1) in which the most relevant happenings and benchmarks from different far right organizations in Mexico will be included, as well as general information about elections, legislative efforts of controversial topics such as abortion and equal marriage, public protest, and migration. This timeline allowed to author to construct a narrative and systematize patterns in the processes that took place in Mexico in the time the author observed a notable activity of far right groups in the country. While the timeline remains an additional part of the work it provided the foundation for most of the expectations and structure for this work.

In the view of the author 2008 marks a new start of public activity for far right groups in Mexico, sparked by the equal marriage proposal in Mexico City, and in so works as a good starting point for making informed observations in their scope, size and goals; in such, 2019 is a also a good finishing point as the COVID-19 crisis hasn't begun and the political situation in the country fostered some interesting findings and observed activity without the additional shake up of the new pandemic crisis distorting further the data. It is also important to mention, that while the focus of this work is pointed towards this specific period of time as it aligns itself with the latest developments explained by some of the studies and papers consulted for this work; it will be critical for the validation of expectations ,derived from the previous work, to span a much wider time frame in order to include numerous historical records that help better explain the research question.

This method does not come without challenges; according to Venneson we need to look out for 4 main challenges while using process tracing: first, the reliance on pre-

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[40] Brast, 2015, pp. 82-90

existing theories, for this the author must refer to the theoretical framework and literature review present in this work, in order to prove that he has analyzed the necessary frameworks for such a work; second, the assumption that each case can be treated autonomously and that the cases are distinct from one another, for this have revised other cases, where there is available information, in order to verify that the conditions in Mexico haven not been found as such in another published case; third, the need for empirical data: there is widely available data regarding the socio economic situation in Mexico, as well as opinion data for a number of issues that will address in this work such as immigration, political compass polls, elections, programmatic agendas from parties, party sympathy, etc., as well as a number, albeit small, of previously published works on the far right in Mexico and its history. However, recognize that there are not many contemporary works on the subject and less so in line with the phenomenon we can observe in Europe or the United States, this I will tackle by using data from works in ethnography and political compass that can give us an insight into the most contemporary characteristics of populist radical right organizations in Mexico and their ideology; finally, fourth, cognitive biases, this being the biggest challenge as the author comes from a politicized environment in Mexico and might already have bound biases, however well sourced quantitative data and a strong theoretical framework should suffice to avoid this last challenge, however the insight of the author will be necessary in order to explore the sources available[41].

Data overview

Data gathering and analysis for a work such as the present one produces a number of very specific challenges: first, the lack of organized and readily available information that presents a coherent storyline on the subject does not, for the most part, exist yet; the nature of the methodological approach, even if correct, requires the casting of the widest net possible in order to obtain as much information as possible for the author to generate enough links in the storyline to produce recognizable results; and third, the

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[41] Della, 2008, pp. 236-239

mass media panorama in Mexico is unique in its historical dependance on public funding that might have distorted coverage on controversial or critical issues.

In order to address these issues, this work has been organized both chronologically and by addressing one by one each of the expectations that complement the research question, which will be finally focused on in the analysis and conclusions section. Furthermore, each expectation is accompanied by a myriad of data sources that attempt to create an academic and historical picture of the process that the populist radical right has followed in the country, it's main characteristics, contemporary social context, and maybe even possible scenarios for the immediate future.

As explained before this paper has been structured in a way that allows the reader to follow on the historical process of the far right in Mexico, both inside the contemporary timeframe of 2008-2019 and in a wider scale from the beginning of the XX century. This historical approach proves necessary as it builds enough social, cultural and historical context to frame the contemporary scenario in Mexico for the far right and its contemporary inception the populist radical right to exist, as well as it's specific characteristics, product of this process.

To construct this first historical narrative it was unavoidable to tap into historical sources, mainly secondary material from journalistic and academic origin. First, we begin by setting up the contemporary context of the populist radical right early in 2008 as well as narrating political context, elections and other relevant information; the information and data was gathered mostly from newspaper and digital media sources. News sources provide us with specific insight that scholarly sources may not, or that it could take them a long time to process. Here we can find contemporary opinions, as well as to evaluate the mood of society as well as of organized groups that made it into the headlines of the day[42].

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[42] Learning & Libraries, 2015

A further differentiation needs to be made evident between mass media and more specialized investigative journalism. Two main reasons for this specific choice: first, Mexico's media ecosystem has been historically coopted by government agencies as official marketing efforts coopt media organizations with mass payouts without which most media wouldn't be able to survive, generating a vicious cycle of structural censorship, heavily distorting what's been covered and how[43]; and second, Mexico stands as one of the most dangerous places for journalists worldwide, with more than 7 killings in 2020 so far, as corroborated by the World Free Press ranking from Journalists without borders[44]; further distorting coverage of critical or controversial issues around the country. Groups, such as the ones depicted further ahead, linked to the far right could have wished to remain secretive and take advantage of such a media scenario to censor coverage about them.

It has been noted before in this research that there exists a persistent lack of information about the far right in Mexico, specially from academic sources. However, with notable exceptions such as weekly political investigative magazine Proceso, massive media in Mexico has overall failed to cover far right organizations in a way accessible to most of the public. As will become evident further down this work as we analyze the underground nature of said groups.

Using process tracing in such an environment turns into a further challenge; however, being methodical and structured in the research allows the author to gather all auxiliary information, not usually found in large data sets. Instead rely on *disparate, qualitative fragments of evidence about context, process, or mechanism[45]*. In so, following the best practices of Bennett and Checkel, the widest net must be cast to acquire useful information. If we apply this principle to media in Mexico, it was evident that a mixture of different media sources would be necessary to avoid misinterpreting data and the social, political and cultural context of the studied timeframe from 2008 to 2019.

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[43] Article 19 & Fundar, n.d.
[44] *Mexico*, n.d.
[45] Bennett & Checkel, 2015, pp. 211-212

Distinct types of journalism were included, such as news reports, coverage of live events, posterior analysis pieces, opinion pieces, poll reports, interviews, coverage of official sources, investigative pieces, breaking news reports, statistical analysis, amongst other.

As such, an increasing number of Mexican media organizations have been included while trying to build the sought-after narrative: Animal Politico, Nacion321, El Economista, El Sol de Mexico, Nexos, El Universal, ADNPolitico, Sopitas, HuffPost Mexico, Contralínea, Expansión, El Cotidiano and Proceso. These are some of the most relevant printed media outlets in the country, with a digital presence from which the information was gathered from. They range in the size of their public from small to massive, as well as in their regional scope, association to the government, independence, and prestige. Media sources selected, where not limited only to topics involving the radical right, but they were used widely in order to build a complete narrative of the political context around the topic at hand in its respective time, this was complemented with historical and scholarly sources that study the early conception of the radical right in early XX century and ahead. The lack for academic data other than historical accounts, required the author to include as many sources as possible in order to generate a general overview of the information required, this in itself presented additional challenges, such as selecting data sources and sets that would fulfill minimal academic rigor standards. The author adhered to qualitative and quantitative scholarly standards while exercising personal criterion while including these sources.

Not only where these sources included, but a number of additional sources were utilized to contrast and corroborate some of the stories and information. As well as a thorough effort was made to only include sources that seemed to have a rigorous journalistic process in order to avoid propaganda and misleading information as much as possible, following guidelines found in academic sources[46].

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[46] Engle, n.d.

Withing this effort, two exceptions are noteworthy: first, media such as Cultura Colectiva, that have a clear left bias were included for the specialization in covering controversial issues such as LGBT rights and Abortion rights that in a way haven't found adequate coverage in other types of media, as stated in the report Digital Media in Mexico carried out by Open Society Foundation Mexico in 2011[47], such as their coverage on the anniversary of the 10 years of equal marriage laws in Mexico City; and second some openly stated opinion pieces that contributed to the building of the narrative but stated as such when presented. This media is included with the appropriate caution as to not misinterpret the achieved results.

Finally, regarding media, a number of international sources were also included such as the New York Review, El País, Vox, BBC News, The Guardian and the Huffington Post in order to further solidify the historical narrative with international coverage of relevant events. This media was vetted utilizing the best practices from academic sources to select news media: such as history, prestige, journalistic process, perceived bias, amongst others[48].

Media sources however are not enough when constructing the historical narrative in how the far right emerged in Mexico and where its main characteristics come from. With this in mind a number of historical academic sources have been included: published books, academic papers and peer reviewed journal articles. This in order to utilize secondary historical sources so the author can overview and familiarize itself with the topic[49]. Secondary sources seem to be enough to aid in the generalization of insights to be utilized in the further analysis of the topic in this work.

As has been mentioned before, the lack of scholarly work on the far right and its subdivisions rises a challenge when selecting the kind of scholarly work to include in

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[47] Gómez & Sosa-Plata, 2011
[48] Engle, *Ibid.,*
[49] *A Step by Step Guide to Doing Historical Research*, n.d.

this work: there seems to be an increase in scholarly research into the history of the far right in Mexico that began in 2008 in the experience of this author, added to a few scattered works from the early 80s and 90s. With this in mind most of the scholarly work found has been included in one way or another. Disregarding the prestige or political bias of the authors; repeating the strategy with mass media, including as many sources as possible might give a general overview on the topic at hand without substantial distortion. It is important to mention that the majority of these academic works included approach to the topic of the far right from an historical perspective, without going deep into the analysis and interpretation of the data, mostly just generating historical narratives that tell the story of where it comes from and where it might be today. However, those sources that do provide analysis and insight will be also included to build on the general structure of this paper.

Finally, to close the gap between mass media and academic historical sources a small number of mass media periodicals, that come with additional rigor were included. For example, the weekly magazine from newspaper El País from Spain, that keeps historical records of important events around the world or Nexos, Mexican academic magazine with both mainstream and academic collaborators. With these three main groups of sources: mass media, secondary academic sources and specialized publications, it is possible to gather enough historical information that will allow the narrative to be constructed and enriched with further hard data.

It is important to note that one more historical source was included in this work: an interview with Dra. Moreno Toscano; Mexican historian, researcher from El Colegio de Mexico, former head of research in the National Institute for Anthropology and History, amongst other things. Because of the nature of this interview, it was impossible to record and transcribe. However, the author included sayings and opinions from Dra. Moreno given her closeness and authority on the subject to the best of his ability.

Additional to the historical perspective on the far right, this work presents a series of expectations that will derive from the data analysis; in order to prove or disprove them

a number of academic sources on various topics, as well as statistical data on different issues, opinions and electoral results have been included. We begin by trying to provide dimension to the support far right parties and organizations have in Mexico today, as well as past support in the previous decades. Electoral results provide a clear-cut source of hard data, including party support in polls, electoral results for congress, president, local assemblies, municipalities, and other. The main source for this information is the National Electoral Institute, organization tasked with the handling and execution of elections in Mexico; additionally a number of secondary academic digital platforms have been utilized in order to better process and visualize the results in order to further analyze and interpret them, these platforms are mainly hosted by researchers of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the most prestigious academic institution in the country, as well as publicly funded research centers in regional universities.

Furthermore, in order to establish a connection between the electoral results and the voter's different voter profiles have been included, specifically those regarding elections in 2015 and 2018, for these were the most complete profiles that could be found from trusted sources such as professional polling companies and universities. Some information prior to these elections were also found and included in specific cases such as the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) voter profile from the 90s as well as data analyzed between 1997-2003 in an academic work

This connection between voter, party and electoral results was also complemented by the different party manifestos, and public statements from party leaders. The manifestos, when possible, were taken from the own party websites, and public statements from press coverage and the social media accounts of the covered individuals.

Racial components of the argument made in this work were approached by two different ways: first establishing a baseline with the inclusion of several academic works by American authors, these works mostly focused on the effects of the Obama presidency, before and after his election and how these reactions had a strong racial

and economic component; and second, by including specific academic research about racial attitudes in Mexico between White and non-White populations around the country. While the argument can't be directly compared, due to a lack of specific academic works, especially on the Mexican academic panorama, it is possible to extrapolate certain attitudes such as democratic values of different sections of Mexican society, into the argument of "White anxiety" carried by certain authors described further ahead in this work.

The connection between "White anxiety" in Mexico and US is made through a series of economic and social indicators, as well as attitudes towards certain economic policies, carried out by academic surveys, as well as obtained from official statistical sources such as the Institute for Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) in Mexico. Also, it is important to mention that a very specific set of indicators were chosen from secondary media sources and academic research in other topics to illustrate the contemporary social context in Mexico, such as: population that has traveled by plane, people that identify with a "liberal" ideology, income distribution index, attitude towards the government, amongst other.

This argument is carried further ahead as the attitudes towards migration in Mexico are explored and compared to statistical data in Mexico and Europe; data that describes the ethnic composition of different countries in Europe as well as their comparison to Mexico. The statistical information is obtained from trusted statistical sources such as specialized media that use secondary sources that aim to explain the situation of migration in Europe. Theis last section is complimented with polling data focused on attitudes of different population groups towards migration in Mexico, and statistical information from academic sources in the same topic focused on European countries as well as media reports from Mexican local media sources that narrate migration-related protests in specific cities with migration issues.

Another important source of information, particularly when talking about controversial issues such as abortion or LGBT rights is reports from advocacy groups. Such as the

Group for Information in Elective Reproduction (GIRE), a prestigious advocacy group for women's rights in Mexico, Open Society Foundations and Journalists without borders. These reports have proven an invaluable source of updated and relevant context source for the completion of this work. These organizations appear to have positive national and international reputation, but the bias in their advocacy is taken into consideration for the inclusion of their materials in this academic pursuit.

Regarding the section that describes public policies focused on multiculturalism, historical analysis of different secondary sources that focus on public policies implemented since the Mexican revolution was used. More specifically how these policies have affected social attitudes towards a multi-cultural society and its impact in attitudes towards migration and migrants.

It is also important to explain the process in which the far right groups studied in Mexico where selected. It is important to note that almost all groups have a common origin in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution and the Cristero War, this historical link was important to identify far right groups and organizations, in so, most of the groups listed in this work have substantial connections to the historic far right in Mexico, embodied for the most part in Sinarquism, described below. Also, when observing the contemporary PRR and radical right groups in Mexico between 2008-2019, the author realized that these groups took part in efforts to counter same-sex marriage, abortion rights, amongst other progressive measures. While this groups differ in size, scope and topics, most of them at least fulfilled these two characteristics, narrowing the scope of the study carried out.

Finally, to accompany the analytical chapter in the contemporary far right in Mexico it is important to note that organizational manifestos, press releases, information on their websites and public statements by their leaders have been utilized in order to construct a profile and establish the ideology and characteristics of these organizations. As they are of recent formation there's little no none academic work that would help in this

research; however, their links to historical radical right organizations in Mexico can also be auxiliary in their definition by this present work.

Genesis of the Far Right in Mexico

Battleground Mexico City: progressive ideas and the Christian Right

The first half of 2007 was a turning point for social policies in Mexico City. In one of the most progressive public policy changes in the history of the country, the then Local Assembly passed the *Civil-Union law* for same sex couples to form a legal union and allowing abortions to be carried out and paid for by the local health ministry. For example, the first time a same sex civil union bill was presented was in 2001, failing due to the lack of support from the city's mayor, the now president and devote evangelical Andrés Manuel López Obrador[50], a process that repeated itself in 2003. These reforms sparked a strong, and sometimes controversial, reaction from ultra conservative groups and the higher echelon of the Catholic church in Mexico and even the Vatican. In this chapter I will attempt to conceptualize these groups in the theory of the contemporary far right and narrate how they transitioned from being private and secretive groups, to the forefront of the social debate in Mexico. In so, identifying one of the main characteristics of the far right in Mexico: their deep connection to religious conservatism, somehow in line with the Christian right of the United States or Poland but different in their origin, their place within the radical right family, historical acumen and secretive ways, but also their strong vocation as a social actor in their own communities.

Just a bit over a month after abortion was legalized in Mexico City, the National Association of Catholic Lawyers presented a petition to the electoral authorities to carry out a binding referendum on the approved reform, the petition was dismissed because of their failure to gather the 36,000 signatures required by law to carry out such an

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[50] "Sociedades de Convivencia festejan 10 años en la CDMX," March 15, 2017, https://news.culturacolectiva.com/noticias/matrimonios-gay-cumplen-10-anos-en-el-df/.

initiative[51]. A few weeks later a string of protests, coordinated by different groups of the Mexican Catholic church, were carried out in different cities across the country. However, none of these protests were large in magnitude, as documented by the women's rights association GIRE and local authorities[52].

As a general note, before we carry on with this work, it is noteworthy to explain that the media and informative documents included in this work, such as the report from GIRE, have been included in a general strategy to generate the social, political and cultural context in Mexico. While the highest degree of rigor was sought after in the sources included, the author, being from Mexico, also possesses research reflectivity in the prestige and validity of said sources.

We proceed to identify something notable about these protests, it was not the lack of participation, but the origin of those who did participate that is relevant. According to Sánchez and Ubaldi, amongst the participants could be found the Knights Templar, the Knights of the Maltese Order, The Knights of Columbus, Cristo Rey Movement and the National Guard[53]. Most of these organizations and groups have been historically linked to the Catholic church in Mexico and can find their origins in the Cristero War of the early 20th century in which the Catholic church funded and promoted a popular uprising against the anti-religious government of the time, emanated from the secular laws of the 1917 Constitution[54].

Groups like the Knights of Columbus emanated from a popular conception of the Catholic Church in Mexico that saw it as not only a spiritual institution but also as a promoter of social work and was more in line with Christian Democratic ideas and socialism. These groups continued to be a support network for the rebellion until a

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[51] Cf. María Luisa Sánchez Fuentes and Norma Ubaldi Garcete, eds., *El proceso de despenalización del aborto en la Ciudad de México*, 1. ed., 1. reimpr, Temas para el debate 7 (México, DF: Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida, GIRE, 2008).
[52] *Ibid.,*
[53] *Ibid.,*
[54] Cf. "Cristero War," accessed May 17, 2020, https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/c/Cristero_War.htm.

copular agreement was reached between the Catholic authorities in Mexico and the government in order to pacify the country. This agreement was seen as equivalent to treason by some of these groups and provoked a schism in the catholic organizations, giving birth to the two main sides of the historical right in Mexico: first, the National Action Party, with liberal and secular values; and second, the Sinarquist movement, which saw armed conflict as a valid strategy for achieving its religious goals, and has been historically linked to the Spanish Falange and the Franco regime[55]. In sum, it could be said that the common root of the political right in Mexico was the social vocation of the church and liberalism in opposition to religious freedom, positions radicalized by the far right and that today exist in organizations that carry that message forward such as do the above-mentioned groups.

Moreover, Sinarquism has been historically considered to be the umbrella organization in which all far right, both radical and extreme right, organizations use to operate and connect. Its ideological origin derives from the *Rerum Novarum,* a Catholic encyclical letter from Pope León XIII in which he intended to systematically oppose liberal secular doctrine. With this in mind Pope León attempted to launch a Christian democrat movement that would use political and social methods in order to achieve economic, spiritual, political, and social influence around the world[56]. The movement in Mexico, however, went beyond the Christian democrat ideas, with parts of it radicalizing in order to counter the also radical secular government of the time.

As was mentioned before the movement began after the pacification of the country following the religious rebellions in the 1920's and 1930's[57]. "The Base", as it was known, remained active and was composed of non-connected small cells of members organized by territory and profession. Its members swore allegiance to the Catholic church, even if the leadership remained composed of non-ordained members. Uribe

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[55] Mónica Uribe, "La ultraderecha en México: el conservadurismo moderno," n.d., 39-57

[56] González Flores and José Gustavo, "Los Motivos Del Sinarquista: La Organización y La Ideología de La Unión Nacional Sinarquista," *Culturales* 3, no. 1 (June 2015): 49–76.

[57] Uribe, *Ibid.,*

also makes the connection between the Fascist regimes in Europe and Sinarquism in Mexico, as a way for Germany, through Spain, to gather support and contain the United States. However, the religious differences and extreme catholic views of the Spanish Falange provoked Sinarquism to disassociate itself from them and follow its own path[58].

Although there existed outside elements interested in promoting Sinarquism and its ideology, the movement remained a popular movement of Catholics that promoted on the one side a stoic way of life, nationalism, private property and religious education; and on the other, the things it fought against, being communism, the revolution, and protestant "yankee" liberalism, its main ethereal enemies[59].

Despite its secretive modus operandi, Sinarquist leaders attempted to establish public political organizations on several occasions, however none of them became viable political forces. Salvador Abascal Infante, became leader of the National Sinarquist Union (UNS) in 1939, and was instrumental in the exponential growth of members, going from a few dozen to almost 250,000 in 1941. By 1946 the UNS split between two groups, one led by Carlos Athié Carrasco who advocated for education and social cooperatives; and the other a short-lived political party Frente Popular who went in alliance with the National Action Party (PAN). In 1948 the party lost its registry, and the movement went clandestine again[60].

The UNS became active again in the late 60's, when the National Union of Parents was formed in response to the Cuban Revolution with the campaign "Christianism yes, Communism no". In a way, setting the picture for a new attempt at a political party: the Mexican Democratic Party. Again, however, it was a short-lived effort as the party lost the registry a couple of years later in 1988[61]. Finally, the UNS made one last

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[58] *Ibid.,*
[59] González Flores and José Gustavo, *Ibid.,*
[60] Uribe*, Ibid.,*
[61] *Ibid.,*

attempt to form a political party in 2008, despite their efforts the minimum threshold for legal registry was not achieved and the registry was denied by the electoral authority in Mexico[62]. It is important to mention than, despite all these efforts to develop public political organizations the UNS and other far right groups have mostly operated in the shadows, under the cover of unions, business organizations, catholic organizations, and such[63].

The ideology of Sinarquism hasn't changed much in the last few decades, however, there seems to be an important change in how the movement and leadership have accepted the democratic order as a legitimate way to gain power. According to the research made by Monica Uribe in the links between PAN, the national business community and the far right (Uribe defines these groups as extreme right, but a closer analysis shows that according to contemporary definitions they are more aligned to the radical right); it is possible to establish how the Sinarquist movement survived politically by the systematic infiltration of its members into PAN, and its youth movements. To the degree that Carlos Abascal, the son of the historic Sinarquist leader Salvador Abascal became Ministry of the Interior in Mexico during the first democratic government in 2000[64]. Moreover, PAN local groups in the center-north of the country, area known as the Bajío, the historic cradle of Sinarquism and the Cristeros, have been taken over by sympathizers or members of the far right[65]. An example of this is the former governor of Guanajuato, Juan Carlos Romero Hicks, with links to secretive organization *El Yunque*, or Luis Felipe Bravo Mena, who became national leader of PAN[66].

There has been another seismic change in the relationship of far right organizations with society as a whole: they have become, somewhat, a part of public discourse. Two main reasons for this to have happened: first, a series of journalistic endeavors that had

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[62] "Frena el IFE A sinarquistas y panistas de extrema derecha," 2008
[63] Uribe, *Ibid.,*
[64] *Ibid.,*
[65] *Ibid.,*
[66] *Ibid.,*

unmasked the current activities of organizations such as *El Yunque*, linking them to non-governmental organization *Hazte Oír* in Spain, which even derived in criminal investigations because of their role in threatening the journalists doing research on them[67]; and second a new opportunity to polarize and galvanize their support in the context of legal reforms in different countries referring to abortion and same sex unions, as they have done in the past with issues such as opposition to communism.

Derived of this public exposure came an unprecedented acceptance of their own existence by the current leadership of the organization. José Luis Castellanos López, former press secretary for the Ministry of Social Development and rector of the Vasco de Quiroga University in Michoacán, recognized the existence of the organization and gave a rare glimpse on the inside. He went as far as sharing the actual name as *Organization for the Common Good*, or just *The Organization*; he also explained the reason for its secrecy, and how it's been based on humility of its members and security reasons[68]. Further ahead *The Organization*, or *El Yunque* will be used indistinctively.

The Organization is probably one of the only cases in which a Christian radical right organization in Mexico can be properly comparable to the dynamics of the Christian right in the United States, albeit on a smaller scale. Fitzgerald and Provost document the deep link between Christian organization's money in the United States and populist radical right organizations in Europe. Their explicit political vision seeks to take power away from women and LGBTQIA people, as well as promote anti-abortion initiatives, traditional gender roles and the freedom of institutions, specifically Christian ones, above the freedoms of others[69].

According to an Open Democracy investigation, Christian right organizations, some linked to the Trump administration and Steve Bannon, have sent over 50 million USD

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[67] *"El Yunque", la sociedad paramilitar vinculada con HazteOír, cada vez menos secreta*, n.d.
[68] *El Yunque Reconoce Públicamente Su Existencia y Operación En Varios Países - Proceso Portal de Noticias*, n.d.
[69] Provost & Fitzgerald, 2019

of "dark money" into Europe over the last ten years. These contributions have been funneled to lawyers, political activists, as well as campaigns against LGBTQIA rights, sex education and abortion. More importantly these organizations seem to be linked increasingly to Europe's populist radical right parties and organizations in Italy, Hungary, Poland, Spain and Serbia[70]. One of the biggest spenders include an organization led by Jake Sekulow, Donald Trump's personal lawyer, and some of its bigger donors are famous conservative billionaires the Koch brothers. The links between these organizations and the European PPR were evident in the World Congress of Families in Verona, Italy; where politicians such as Mateo Salvini advocated for the type of Europe that "They like"[71].

The Organization has followed a similar path, on a smaller scale, in Spain and France. As mentioned above, *The Organization* has links to Spanish NGO HazteOír and similar collectives. These groups financed campaigns against abortion, equal marriage or the secularism of the Spanish state, especially during the government of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero[72]. The links to *The Organization* have been clearly validated by Spanish courts and their success was curtailed by opposition from moderate catholic groups and religious leaders[73]. According the investigation by journal El Plural, *The Organization* was exported from Mexico following the death of Francisco Franco, so Spain would again be ruled by religious values[74].

The internationalization of the Christian right in the US and the one in Mexico, seem similar in their objectives, however the scope of their activities remains distinct. On the one side the Christian Right in the US is attempting, under the protection and promotion of the Trump Administration and its operatives, to promote a change of regime in Europe, or at the very least to undermine the democratic institutions on what it is based on, under the guise of a Europe of Christian Values; on the other groups like *The*

[70] *Revealed*, n.d.
[71] *Ibid.,*
[72] *"El Yunque", la sociedad paramilitar vinculada con HazteOír, cada vez menos secreta*, n.d.
[73] *Ibid.,*
[74] *Ibid.,*

Organization seem to be more in line with promoting Christian values because of their intrinsic benefit they believe they bring to society, there is not clear evidence if such organizations do have a link between the new rise of parties like Vox in Spain that could be a part of a wider populist radical right movement in the continent. It is important to note that unlike its US counterparts, *The Organization* has been operating in Spain for decades.

In this section we've attempted to establish the historic roots for the Christian right in Mexico, and how it has evolved from its origins as a popular movement for religious freedom in the center of the country in the early XXth century to a secretive network of ultra conservative organizations and finally to embody a public discourse in opposition to progressive laws in Mexico City and the country. In a way there is a continuity and evolution in how far right parties have existed in Mexico for the past near 100 years, from the armed struggle to become legitimate players in the democratic game, albeit operating in the shadows, and now as banner holders for conservatism and their own conception of "family values".

Mudde defines of the main characteristics of the populist radical right as being authoritarian. In the case of the Mexican far right organizations it is clear that for a long time and as part of the opposition, they were advocates for democracy in the country to a certain degree. Its members, as part of PAN, were part of the transition to democracy. Their motives to be a part of the democratic transition remain unclear, but their role is hard to deny. The historical continuity, democratic advocacy and focused scope of action are some of the main traits that help identify some of these groups as the Christian radical right in Mexico.

Where are the people? Far Right and the upper and middle class in Mexico

Contemporary PRR parties and organizations rely heavily on a public discourse vilifying the elites and building an aura of being the "true" people. Often you can find these organizations building their base around working class folks who feel

disenfranchised by economic growth, globalization, progressive changes, or the political system[75]. As true as this may be in other parts of the world, it does not seem to hold in Mexico. Historically the far right has emanated from a middle and upper class setting, in which conservative values seem to thrive. It's also geographically localized to regions in which religious conservatism is deeper embedded in society, regions economically linked to industrial corridors, thriving middle classes and the opposition to the PRI rule for over 70 years.

This is one of the main problems PRR parties and organizations find in Mexico, a lack of widespread support, as their historical ancestors haven't possessed. In a country with such economic disparities, a political trend emanated from the economic elites, which historically might be different from the political elites of the day, might find a hard time finding growing support in the working classes.

In order to establish a connection between the middle and upper classes in Mexico to the far right parties, organization and ideologies this chapter will focus on two different narratives: first, since we observe that the radical right and the center-right party PAN have been historically connected, it is possible to infer similar characteristics for their average voter, in this way, voting trends and the type of voter should suffice as a sufficient enough connection between middle and upper classes and the radical right and so, the populist radical right; and second, the author will try and make evident the profound connection of the far right parties and organizations with large money interests in Mexico, these groups have been funded and protected from the very top of the largest family fortunes in the country, as ways to further their agenda, oppose the government, communism or any type of progressive values.

It is widely considered that the democratic transition began in Mexico in 1997 with the electoral reforms that allowed for proportional representation in Congress. Up until then, parties with a considerable vote were not able to win seats in the Chamber of

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[75] Beauchamp, 2016

Deputies because the system of direct representation excluded them against the well-oiled electoral machine of the one-party system led by PRI[76].

As shown in *Table 1* there have been eight congressional elections in Mexico since 1997, however the far right has only been represented in 4 of them, never reaching more than 3.3% of the popular vote. In *Table 1* we can see the comparison between the share of the vote for far right parties and right/center-right parties in Mexico between 1997 and 2018. The data shown below comes from secondary academic sources that syphon their raw data from the open tools from the National Electoral Institute INE, this in order to better visualize and interpret the information. The INE (previously IFE) is a trusted autonomous organization, tasked to handle and certify elections, they remain the top authority in electoral results; the secondary sources are hosted by the National Autonomous University of Mexico. These sources provide little risk to misinterpretation or falsified data. The information was systematized by year, percentage of the vote and historical connection of the parties to the far right as researched by the author.

Table 1 Electoral Results of the Far Right and Right parties in Mexico 1997-2018

	1997	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	2018
Far Right Parties	0.60%	0.00%	0.70%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.30%	2.40%
Right Parties	25.90%	38.20%	30.70%	33.40%	28.00%	25.90%	21.00%	17.90%

[77]

The radical right party term is loosely used here, in order to accommodate for the different parties that emanated from the historical far right movement such as Sinarquism. Three parties have participated in said 4 elections: first, the Mexican Democrat Party(PDM), closely associated with the Sinarquism Movement, that had

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[76] Vianello, n.d.

[77] *Recursos Electorales En La Internet: Elecciones Federales En México - Consulta de Resultados*, n.d.

previously lost its registry in 1988 but once again managed to participate in the election of 1997, reaching around 190,000 votes and 0.6% of the national vote for the Chamber of Deputies; second, Social Alliance Party (PAS), formed with the remains of the PDM and reaching a very similar vote share in the 2003 elections with 0.6% and around 197,000 votes; and finally, third, the Social Encounter Party (PES), that participated in both the 2015 and 2018 elections, with far wider support that its predecessors reaching around 1.3 million votes in both elections, but losing its national registry for failing to reach the 3% threshold required by the electoral authorities.

Regarding the PES, it is important to mention that this party does not fit the historic characteristics of radical right organizations in México. Firstly, it is a party heavily linked to Evangelical Christian groups, in contrast to Catholic organizations, also its leadership won't accept the fact that the party is linked to any religious organization. However, they do promote positions against progressive values, women's autonomy or abortion as a right, same-sex marriage, amongst others[78]. So, in a way they partake in similar contemporary vocal efforts as their catholic counterparts in the National Family Front or *The Organization*[79]. This last reason is why they have been included in this group.

On the other side, the PAN, has been a steady player in the Mexican democratic system. The electoral reform of 1997 and clever bargaining with the government of the time allowed PAN to compete in the 2000 election with candidate Vicente Fox from a strong position. Thus, for the first time in Mexico's contemporary history the PRI party was out of government and the democratic transition began[80]. PAN won 223 seats in the chamber of deputies with 38.2% of the vote, so far, it's been their highest vote share until today.
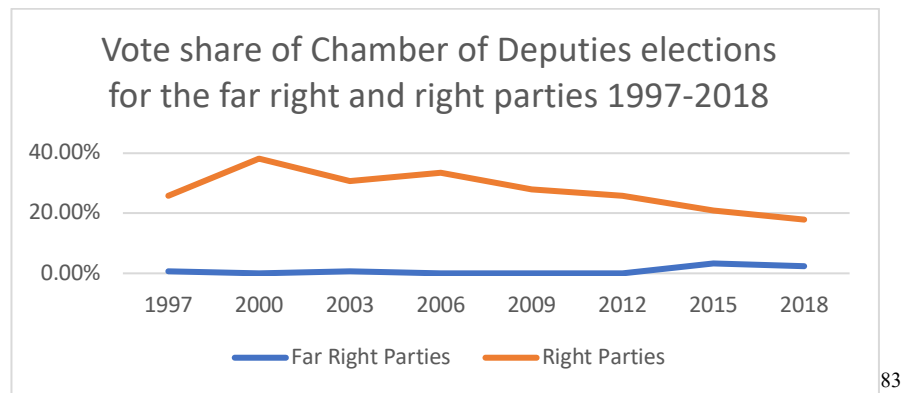
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[78] *Partido Encuentro Social*, n.d.
[79] *Se Opone El PES a Validar El Aborto - El Sol de Tlaxcala*, n.d.)
[80] *La Transición Democrática En México | Internacional | EL PAÍS*, n.d.)

In figure 1, we can see how from the victory in 2000 there's a steady decline in the vote share of PAN in subsequent elections. From 38.2% to 30.7% in 2003, 33.4% in 2006, and so on. In the last major federal election in 2018, PAN only got 17.9% of the vote share for the Chamber of Deputies[81]. Two presidential administrations from 2000 to 2012, plagued with scandals and mismanagements, chipped away the halo of PAN as the flag bearer for the democratic transition, and it set circumstances for a return of PRI and eventually for the victory of the now President Andrés Manuel López Obrador from the left leaning Movement for National Regeneration (MORENA)[82].

Figure 2 Vote share of the Chamber of Deputies elections for far right and right parties 1997-2018

The 2018 election provoked a seismic change in the political scenario in Mexico, in this regard there is still need for further research in the implications this had in party preferences. With this in mind, the author will attempt to further the hypotheses that PRR in Mexico is more focused in middle and upper classes, in two ways: first by giving a PAN voter profile based on the last legislative exclusive federal election of 2015; and second, elaborating in how PAN stronghold electoral districts are located mostly on affluent and developed areas.

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[81] *Recursos Electorales En La Internet: Elecciones Federales En México - Consulta de Resultados*, n.d.
[82] Rojas, 2018)
[83] *Recursos Electorales En La Internet: Elecciones Federales En México - Consulta de Resultados*, n.d.

When the National Action Party was founded their main objective as a group was to create a viable opposition against the one-party system of PRI and its predecessors. The party was mostly made up of middle-class people, small business owners, professionals, catholic conservatives and businessmen[84]. At least until the 2015 election some of the original sectors of the party seem to hold. The level of academic achievement for PAN voters is by far the highest of the main parties with 45% of voters who would prefer PAN in the election having studied in a University, compared to 29% for PRI and 13% for the Democratic Revolution party (PRD). Income also seems to be one of the main differences in voter characteristics, 58% of PAN voters find themselves in the higher income percentile with more than $20,000 MXN monthly income, in comparison to 27% for PRI and 9% for PRD[85].

Taking these two main characteristics, academic achievement and income we can further infer the profile of the regular PAN voter if we take into account the work by Luvianos and Aparicio (2005) in which they cross reference party electoral strongholds and economic and social development. Taking into account electoral results from 1997 to 2003, it was found that PAN had their strongest support bases in 41 electoral districts out of 300, these districts were reliable and rarely switched. The authors generated a 5-tier economic development chart, in which Levels 1 and 2 would be the most developed. Out of 41 districts, 32 of PAN strongholds belonged to the first and second levels of the chart, with the strongest support in Nuevo León, Coahuila, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Tamaulipas and Tabasco[86]. With these numbers we can comfortably build a general profile of the average PAN voter: economically affluent, educated and probably living in the north of the country.

Having established a minimum floor for voter profiles for the right in Mexico, we can move on to specific connections between far right groups and the economic elites. Historically, the right and populist radical right in Mexico have found shelter and

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[84] Tirado, 1985, pp. 107-108

[85] *Perfil del votante del 5 de julio | PARAMETRIA*, n.d.

[86] Luvianos & Aparicio, 52-53.

resources in the middle and upper classes. PAN, Sinarquism and other populist radical right organizations share a complex and convoluted history in which they have thrived under the protection and promotion of the Catholic Church, the higher echelons of the business community such as the Confederation of Patrons of the Mexican Republic (COPARMEX), one of the fiercest business organizations in the country[87], and other national and local business associations. It is important to note that the author was not able to establish any relevant connection between the far right and other mainstream parties in Mexico such as PRI or PRD, being PAN the only party with relevant links.

After the Mexican Revolution and the establishment of the National Revolutionary Party and the Mexican Revolutionary Party, both antecessors of PRI, it was clear the business community in the Bajío and North of the country would be sidelined in the political process. However, these business sectors found in PAN and other organizations, channels to have influence in the political life of the country[88]. Being PAN the largest representative of the right in Mexico, this work focuses on its interconnections with the business communities. At the same time making evident the connections between the largest and more politically relevant business organizations and populist radical right organizations and parties. However, it is important to make emphasis on the fact that members of the far right have always been involved in the inner structures of the party, so the connections can be inferred.

From the very beginning of PAN, it was clear their close relationship to capital, the party's first national board consisted of 38% of bankers and businessmen according to author Ricardo Tirado (1985). Amongst the founding members of PAN, we could find the secretary of COPARMEX, Daniel Kuri Breña, and local COPARMEX leaders Isaac Guzmán Valdivia, who was also leader of the National Sinarquist Union, Antonio L. Rodriguez, founding member of COPARMEX, historic PAN figure and COPARMEX leader in 1930, Manuel Gómez Morín, amongst many others[89].

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[87] Tirado, 1985, pp. 107-108
[88] *Ibid.,*
[89] Tirado, *Ibid.,*

As the 1960's approached and the cold war cemented as the ideological battleground of the day, a number of new far right organizations emerged. Organizations such as the University Movement for Orientation and Renovation (MURO) which embodied the most virulent and violent of the extreme right of the day. MURO was a radical anti-communist student organization; they were supported by a number of businessmen, particularly from Nuevo León, Coahuila and other parts of Northern Mexico[90]. Their main activities consisted in harassment of students, theft, counter-protesting, amongst others. One of the main promoters of MURO was businessman Hugo Salinas Price, founder of retail chain Elektra[91], at some point he declared to have been directly involved in a student clash during the anniversary of the Cuban revolution in 1962, a clash that left several students gravely injured. Another relevant promoter of MURO was René Capistrán Garza, former Cristero leader, that used his newspaper *Atisbos* as a propaganda tool against the USSR and to promote MURO activities[92]. One of the darkest periods of MURO was in 1968, as they, ironically, became enablers and promoters of the government's repression on the massive student movement demanding political freedoms; movement that found its climax in the massacre of Tlatelolco on the 2nd of October, date remembered to this day with protests and memorials[93].

MURO leadership kept close ties with other far right organizations, like the National Sinarquist Union and the National Union of Parents; they are also closely linked to *el Yunque or The Organization[94]*. It is important to mention that there's an in going discussion between scholars since it is not clear if MURO evolved and thus *The Organization* was founded, or if MURO was just a part of *The Organization* itself. MURO operatives went as far as participating in terrorist plots in lieu of international

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[90] "La derecha anticomunista," 2014
[91] "Hugo Salinas Price," 2020
[92] "La derecha anticomunista," 2014
[93] *Ibid.,*
[94] *Ibid.,*

anti-communist groups against newspapers in Florida in 1965 believed to be collaborators with the Cuban regime in Havana[95].

In this section the author has tried to establish clear connections between specific demographic segments in Mexico, as well as historical processes to the far right. On the one hand exposing the link that has existed amongst the different right and far right groups and parties such as PAN, PAS, MURO, The Organization, and others. On the other hand, tried to define a minimum general profile of the PAN voter, them being affluent, educated and living in specific areas of the country, in a way that we could extrapolate those characteristics for the right and the far right as a whole, further validating the hypothesis that the far right and the PRR in Mexico are not well established in the working and lower classes. There is little academic research on the populist radical right in Mexico, but these connections should suffice to establish the clear intersections between the established and systemic political right, the business communities ,the far right embodied by radical groups and shadowy organizations, and perhaps the recent developments that point into an incipient populist radical right.

These characteristics and interdependence between the above-mentioned groups, probably wouldn't mean much on their own. However, when framed inside specific political and historical processes, they attain new significance. Political exclusion, and minority oppression, even when it comes from radical religious communities, can lead to specific acts of rebellion and the creation of viable oppositions. The sidelining of specific groups in Mexico by the one-party system, specifically of businessmen non-aligned with the regime, and conservative forces that opposed center-left policies seemed to have created a good enough brewing ground for populist radical right forces to subsist. Middle and upper classes disenfranchised with the government of the day agglutinated around number of oppositions from which PAN was the most successful, but not the only one. Radical right groups were also a vocal enough force to be recognized and managed to shape some of the political discourse of mainstream

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[95] *Ibid.,*

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political groups; some of its members, mostly from affluent and powerful families, even went as far as to be part of future administrations during the democratic transition in Mexico[96].

The Far Right in Mexico today
Victorious left and the echoes of white anxiety during the Obama years in the political transition in Mexico

Much like on the night of Barack Obama's victory in 2008, there was a joyful air of excitement in many parts of Mexico the night Andrés Manuel López Obrador won the presidential elections in 2018 as the live feed from the streets of Mexico City following the victory announcement showed. It was his third and final attempt, after almost 15 years of continuous campaigning around every single electoral district in the country. Crowds gathered and cheered on the streets to see the official convoy going from campaign headquarters to his victory speech in the Zocalo of Mexico City, he gave a message of hope, change, and much needed justice in a country that had been struggling with poverty, violence and corruption for decades[97].

The campaign was fierce, especially on social media, where both sides deployed a myriad of resources, bots and fake news, in order to vilify or promote one or another candidate. The fear from the economic elites of Andrés Manuel López Obrador has been documented in slogans such as -He is a danger for Mexico- as his discourse about change would for sure interfere with their economic interests[98].

Not only was the excitement similar to Obama's but also the strong reactions against. Large economic, political, and social interests in Mexico have found renewed energy to oppose the new administration, not only on ideological and economic terms, but also racially and perhaps even class-wise. Polarization has been one of the main

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[96] Mónica Uribe, "La ultraderecha en México: el conservadurismo moderno," n.d., 49-50.
[97] Animal Político, 2018
[98] *Así Era La Campaña "AMLO, Un Peligro Para México", de Antonio Solá*, n.d.

characteristics of the new political context, not only fired up by the opposition, but also from the presidential palace. If the far right in Mexico lacks characteristics of populism because of their elite origins, the political elites, now in power, certainly seem to be more in line with it.

In order to illustrate the main point of this chapter the author will make a comparison between the reaction from a certain segment of the white population in the United States after the victory of Barack Obama, and the reaction from certain sectors of the economic elites in Mexico after the victory of Andrés Manuel López Obrador. The author will attempt to establish the main characteristics of these groups, going in depth into racial perception, issues and conflict, as well as look into the connections between opposition groups and parties with far right organizations. This in order to compare the perception of white anxiety, understood as the racial bias derived from a perceived loss of majority by Whites and how this affects their reaction to demographic or power relation changes,[99] and the rise of radical right populism in the United States, and the perceived, albeit seemingly small, contemporary rise of populist radical right groups in Mexico.

If one were to watch mass media in the United States on the weeks leading to the 2008 election, racial differences as such would hardly be mentioned in a negative light; the country seemed to be riding on a wave of post-racism in which Obama's apparent victory would cement that evolution for good. However, research carried out in the month prior to the election showed that around one third of white voters was troubled by the idea of Barack Hussein Obama to become the first black President of the United States[100]. The embedded prejudices against black people such as being lazy, unpatriotic, susceptible to commit crimes, and others, seemed to remain[101].

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[99] Craig & Richeson, 2014, pp. 750-759
[100] Redlawsk et al., 2010, p. 884
[101] *Ibid.,*

Crucially, this study discounted for variables such as party preference (being a democrat or a republican), or if they perceived Obama to be fair in his role as a policy maker. A black president went against what was socially desirable for certain voters and thus generating negative anxiety emotions that would mean, even if the candidate were to be fairhanded in his policies, voters might be influenced by some latent racial attitudes that otherwise might have remained dormant[102]. It is important to note that when social desirability is involved, the idea of a black president can either be positive or negative. The main take of this study is that emotions can play a very important role in a voter's decision at the polling stations, depending on what the desires of said voter for society are; and that excitement and enthusiasm can help overcome racial concerns, just as anxiety can increase them, especially when said voters identify with conservatism[103].

This white anxiety on its own would be a little piece of a larger political system, with negative effects surely but not enough to provoke the kind of backlash seen during the Obama presidency. It could be said that this Obama effect in white conservatives in the US is but the latest itinerancy of regular reactions by the far right that seek to stop social change by any means necessary[104]. A similar backlash took place during the Civil rights movement in the 1960s, or the Americanism in the 1920s, and we can see some of the same players such as the Ku Klux Klan making their comeback[105]. It is important to mention that this current episode did not begin with Obama's victory, but perhaps with the fear and anxiety infused by the Tea Party in American politics, spilling over inside the Republican party and further pushing them to the right[106].

It could be said that racism in Mexico is even older than in the United States, we can find it in the establishment of the New Spain as a colony and the need to justify the economic and exploitation of indigenous communities, African slaves and its

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[102] Redlawsk et al., 2010, p. 885
[103] *Ibid.,*
[104] Ornstein & Mann, 2012, in Parker, 2016, pp. 3-27
[105] *Ibid.,*
[106] *Ibid.,*

descendants[107]. Furthermore, during the next few centuries of colonial rule, this hierarchical racism, linked to specific ancestries was institutionalized in a caste system that forbade the mix between races. It was during that time that the belief of the superiority of the European descendances was developed and promoted which legitimized their important material advantages over other racial groups[108].

These advantages seem to continue to this day; based on a national survey, a recent study managed to identify the profound differences between whites (of European descendance) and people of color in México. White people seem to be on the higher end of the academic achievement, followed by light brown skinned people (LB), in the bottom dark brown skinned people (DB) and people who speak an indigenous language (ILS). Whites come on top of the probability of being business owners, in contrast DB people have a higher probability of being part of the informal economic sector[109]. DB people also mention more frequently to have been discriminated against because of their accent or skin color; thus, more DB people think their human rights have not been respected, in contrast to white people who mention their human rights not being respected the least. There is a similar scenario in access to public space and public services, where DB people mentioned more often not being accepted in hospitals or schools, followed by LB people and finally whites[110]. Moreover, it is important to mention how the value of one race or color over the other seems to have been internalized since the likeability rate for DB and LB people over the general population seems to be considerably lower than that of the white population; meaning that DB and LB people seem to also favor the notions of white people and the idea that they do not have the same value because from that physical characteristic[111]. This study carried out by the Autonomous University of Mexico was executed by Mexican social scientists for the Latin American Faculty of Social Science (FLACSO), research institution devoted to Latin American studies formed by 18 member states. While this study could fall victim of racial vias the methodology followed, and peer review ensured the

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[107] Ortiz Hernández et al., 2018, p. 222
[108] *Ibid.,*
[109] Ortiz Hernández et al., 2018, pp. 226-228
[110] *Ibid.,* pp. 228-229
[111] *Ibid.,* pp. 230-231

academic rigor of its findings. This work is also relevant for its focus on Latin America, giving it additional validity in the context of this work. Similar academic approaches have been followed in the use of other data sets.

It is remarkable, that somehow, and despite having more political influence and access to wealth, there's a portion of white people in the United States that perceive themselves as victims of a changing demographic composition in their own country and so a shift in power. Being, political correctness, reverse discrimination, Latin-American immigration, or the mass media, they appear to see themselves as under attack[112]. However, if we were to connect this white anxiety with the reaction a part of society in Mexico is having against the López Obrador administration, racial considerations, as relevant as they are, would not show the whole picture.

Hence, the scholar needs to rely on the argument made by Luigi Esposito, in which he links white anxiety directly to the challenge made towards a set of neoliberal values, that have worked transversally to maintain racial and social inequalities; it is a similar argument to the one made by Norris and Inglehart in the way that the spread of social liberal values generates a feeling of being threatened between traditionalists in fear of their core values and social stance being eroded[113]. In this argument it is possible to find common ground between the Mexican and the United States' case. First, Esposito mentions how Obama's economic policies aimed to regulate and enhance the federal structures were perceived as an attack of neoliberal and free market principles, thus reinforcing assumptions about white victimhood in the United States; second, that the public discourse about neoliberal values, linked to notions of a post-racial United States, and assumptions of self-reliance and the need to treat everyone as individuals, furthers current structures of racial inequality that are sustained and normalized; and finally, third, that if a serious effort ought to be carried out to challenge racial inequality there would be a specific need to engage critically with neoliberalism, not only as an

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[112] Esposito, 2011, pp. 1-2
[113] Norris and Inglehart, 2019, pp. 87-88

economic policy but also as a set of public values[114]. I will address these three points in regard of the first year of government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and in that way build a connection between the triggers of white anxiety in the US and those that seem to be igniting the far right in Mexico today.

We begin on the main economic policies of the new government: first, the labor reform, carried out in the context of the new commercial treaty due to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement, whose main purpose was to enhance democracy in labor unions, increase salaries in specific sectors, and finally, include historically forgotten segments such as house maids into the social security schemes; second, the cancellation of the new airport for Mexico City, one of the symbols of the previous administration that jeopardized over 300,000 million pesos (around 16 billion USD of the day) in public expenditure, setting up the stage for a major confrontation with the private sector, who would receive most of that investment in government contracts, and would-be users of said airport; third, an array of austerity measures that would cancel or diminish a number of government programs and contracts, effectively provoking a technical recession and cooling off the Mexican economy; fourth, the major investment program for the state oil company PEMEX, while suspending private contracts for oil exploration and exploitation, making clear the private sector would not be able to go ahead with a number of planned investments in deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico and other areas[115]; fifth, the reorientation of around 25 billion USD from public expenditure towards economic transfers via social programs[116]; and finally, sixth, an effective campaign against tax evasion, that would bring extra thousands of millions of pesos, mainly from the top corporations in the country[117].

It could be argued that some of these policies would have a direct negative impact on the economic expectations of people on the higher percentiles of the income

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[114] Esposito, 2011, pp. 1-4
[115] El Economista, Redacción, n.d.
[116] *Recorta AMLO Gasto de Gobierno; Mantiene Planes Sociales y Obras - Política - La Jornada*, n.d.
[117] El Economista, Redacción, n.d.

distribution index, it is important to note that half of the current income in Mexico is concentrated in just 20% of the households[118]; usually identified with lighter skin[119]. This while at the same time having a very direct and tangible positive impact on the lower income households, around 41,9% that live in poverty[120], usually identified with darker skin tones. While there is no direct data to fully corroborate the assumption that white people hold most of the wealth in the country, there is a myriad of indirect indicators such as the mentioned above about academic prowess, percentage of people in managerial positions, and participation in the economically active population, that would justify such an inference. Therefore, making the connection between some economic policies and the feeling of being victimized by a government that is trying to redirect public policies from favoring a specific economic minority, traditionally linked with white people is more than plausible. And in so, creating some of the conditions that can brew a degree or far right ideas and dynamics.

So, the question remains, why do the economic elites in Mexico have internalized the values of neoliberalism to such a degree that it is now part of their class identity? For this we must revisit the origins of neoliberal policies in Mexico, first introduced during the De la Madrid (1982-1988) and Salinas (1988-1944) administrations[121]. The core principles of neoliberalism in Mexico were: first, it was seen as an instrument to decrease the inflationary tendency of the Mexican Economy; second, liberalization of the market from government intervention; third, it allowed foreign investment; fourth, it diminished the power of unions and decreased some benefits of the working class. More importantly, the economic reforms and trade deals, such as NAFTA, that came with these new paradigms, were sold to the public as Mexico's grand entrance into the coveted group of developed countries, and away from the continuous economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s[122].

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[118] *Mexico | Evolution of Poverty and Income Distribution | BBVA Research*;1
[119] Ortiz Hernández et al., 2018, pp. 231-234)
[120] *Mexico | Evolution of Poverty and Income Distribution | BBVA Research*;1
[121] García-Bedoy, 1992; 11
[122] *Ibid.,* pp. 11-34

However, the development promised by neoliberalism in Mexico came heavily distorted; during the De La Madrid administration, salaries lost 50% of their purchase power, millions became unemployed, while at the same time the 300 richest businessmen had record earnings between 1982-1988[123]. Rural communities and farmers neglected with no government subsidies became victims of speculative prices by distributors who managed to get a hold on the food staples market[124]. Overall, the Gini coefficient to measure inequality, went up from 0.54 in 1989 to almost 0.56 at the height of the neoliberal period in 1996[125]. It is possible to observe here how upper classes benefited from neoliberal policies, as well as middle classes to a certain degree.

It is also possible to observe the social desirability of White people in the United States, linked to an image of the white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant, free market sort of country, an echo of the same desirability in the middle and upper classes in Mexico seems to exist. Who have been promised a grand entrance into the developed world, even if on the backs of their fellow poorer Mexicans[126]. These differences and promises between how benefited certain segments of the population were or were to be by neoliberal policies might be enough proof on how these paradigms could have been internalized by large swaths of the middle and upper classes in Mexico. Saying it in blunt terms – if it's good for me, it must be good, and anything that goes against it must be bad-.

So, as the new administration of Andrés Manuel López Obrador enters in with strong support from lower income households[127], a public discourse of -first the poor people- as the campaign slogan from AMLO in the 2018 election stated, and the power and will to enforce those views into the federal budget, opposition was soon to follow. One of the most controversial decisions, was the cancellation of the new airport for Mexico City, and ongoing project with 30% of completion[128]. If the fact that only 30% of

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[123] *Ibid.,* pp. 43-44
[124] *Ibid.,* pp. 44-47
[125] García, n.d.
[126] *México Llega al Primer Mundo | Edición Impresa | EL PAÍS*, n.d.
[127] María, n.d.
[128] Corona, 2018

people in Mexico have ever traveled by air is taken into account, it comes as no surprise that those numbers intersect with income pattern[129], and the cancellation of the building of the airport would affect a very specific income bracket.

In this chapter I have showcased racial issues in the United States and Mexico, and how they have a strong connection to economic paradigms. While the patterns might not seem immediately obvious to the reader, when taking the previously drawn up picture in mind, we can identify economic and anxiety patterns here and there. It is true the lack of literature makes it difficult to fully and scientifically proof some of these assumptions, given the social and cultural charge of some of them we can rely on the reader's discretion in valuing them.

So far, the scholar has established the common characteristics of the Mexican far right and the contemporary populist radical right, their historical context, their lack of a large popular support base, and some the conditions in which them seem to be "growing" today. Further ahead the scholar will further explain one of the main obstacles these groups run into when attempting to grow and recruit. Finally, continue to elaborate on the contemporary groups and the causes they seem to defend and promote.

No migration, no problem: Mexican xenophobia as the missing link between the populist radical right and power

Having discussed the history and some of the characteristics of the far right in Mexico, we must proceed to begin the more specific conceptualization of the populist radical right in the country. Populist radical right groups today, find in Mexico a very specific set of circumstances that make recruiting and growing harder, than in most other countries with comparable economic indicators of inequality. In this chapter the author will addresses two general phenomenon that define Mexican attitudes towards one of

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[129] "70% de mexicanos no han viajado en avión, pero la mayoría apoya las compensaciones por retrasos," 2017

the populist radical right main dogmas: nativism[130]. First the scholar will address migration, both from the statistical point of view to explain how migration into Mexico has remained small in numbers and the fact that in Mexico there exists a complicated relationship with migration, in part attributed to Mexican migration to the United States and Mexico being mostly a country of transit; and second, I will make the case for multiculturalism in the Mexican social and political construct, and narrate how the Mexican Government has made a sustained effort since the early twentieth century to solidify the idea of a single nation and has established specific public policies to this end, creating the idea of *Mexicaness* but at the same time encouraging multiculturalism in order to promote cohesion in a culturally and racially diverse country.

In order to establish the relationship between migration and the rise of radical right populism the author must look, first, into the European political scenario in the last twenty years. The European Union and the Schengen area have brought an unprecedented freedom of movement and labor across the continent; however, a number of unintended consequences have taken hold in the social and political structures of the region that have been used to explain the rise of populist radical right parties and organizations within the democratic process[131]. In a study carried out between 2002 and 2017 in 15 of the largest countries in Europe, a significant direct correlation between an increase in migration and the rise of populist radical right parties in elections could be found. This numbers when adjusted to socio-economic indicators revealed that unemployed and rural voters are more susceptible to vote for radical right and PRR parties than its urban and employed counterparts[132]. For context, it is important to mention the actual percentage of migrant population in some of these countries, for example: at the end of 2018, 17.9% of the population of Germany was foreign-born; 14.9% of Estonian population, 13.9% of Spanish, 10.4% of Italian, 19.1% of Finnish, 2% of Polish and 5.8% of Hungarian[133]. The study concludes

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[130] Mudde, 2017
[131] Davis & Deole; pp. 10-11
[132] *Ibid.,* pp. 12-14
[133] *Foreign-Born Population by Country of Birth, 1 January 2019.Png - Statistics Explained*, n.d.

reflecting in how migration policies and influxes have the potential to disrupt political equilibriums and that continued rapid immigration into a certain country can foster support for populist radical right parties and the xenophobic, ethno-nationalist identities that support them[134]. While some criticism can be expressed for the methodology in which these correlations were found, the general findings seem to be sound enough for use in this work, the academic rigor of the authors contributes to the acceptability of the results.

In a sharp contrast to these European countries, there are only 1.06 million foreign-born residents in Mexico. In a country with a population of around 126 million, that's equivalent to around 0.85% in 2019[135]. The largest groups from these are from the United States with 71%, Guatemala with 4.16% and Spain with 2.22%, followed closely by Colombia, Venezuela and Argentina. Mexico ranks 162 in the list of countries by percentage of foreign-born residents[136]. More importantly the share of population who are immigrants in the country has not been steady in the last 25 years: from 1990 to 1995 it decreased from around 695,000 to around 458,000, only to increase erratically until 2017 to almost 1.2 million and begin a decreasing rate onwards. Just between 2017 and 2019 it decreased from .99% of the population, the highest percentage in more than 30 years, to 0.85%[137].

Despite these numbers, however, one in three Mexicans believe there's too many immigrants in Mexico[138]. Mexicans seem to be at odds with themselves when it comes to feelings about emigration and immigration. For the next series of statistics, rely on the information from studies carried out by polling agency Parametria in 2006, a study by Meseguer and Maldonado in 2015, Defoe Consultancy in 2018, and a poll by national newspaper El Universal in 2019, it is important to mention that these datasets are generated by recognized polling and media companies, that adhere to minimum

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[134] Davis & Deole; 10-11
[135] *México - Inmigración 2019*, n.d.
[136] *Ibid.,*
[137] *Ibid.,*
[138] Meseguer & Maldonado, 2015, pp. 772-773

standards of credibility, however standard error margins persist. Overall, these results paint a picture pretty much in line with immigration feeling trends in more developed countries but with specific particularities for the Mexican case, these being a path of transmigration to the United States, and the small numbers of foreign-born residents in the country.

According to Parametria, 46% of Mexicans felt very much or somewhat related to migrants from Central America, 62% of Mexicans have the opinion that the federal government should decrease migration into Mexico, while at the same time 41% of people think the government mistreats migrants[139]. Meseguer and Maldonado elaborate and align their results with similar results in developed countries with higher immigration rates, they conclude social factors have greater influence in attitudes than economic factors, however education does not have a significant influence in attitude, in contrast to developed countries academic achievement does not have a correlation to acceptance of diversity[140].

Adding to these results, the study carried out by Defoe Consultancy goes one step further and includes some opinions on emigration from Mexico to the United States. 43% of respondents believed emigration to the US was higher than 2017, albeit they are almost equally divided in their positive or negative opinion towards it (31% vs 33%). Generally, Mexicans believe immigrants are worsening the situation in food, music and arts (35%), work opportunities (49%), economy in general (52%), crime (50%). On the other hand, 28% believe immigrants are better workers than Mexicans, against 44% that believe it's the same and 9% worse workers. Despite these beliefs, 62% of Mexicans don't think they discriminate against immigrants[141].

Overall, these results help explain, the complex feelings in Mexico towards migration. On the one hand almost half of Mexicans feel related to central American immigrants,

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[139] *Migrando a La Discriminación*, Parametría, n.d.
[140] Meseguer & Maldonado, 2015, pp. 799-800
[141] "Qué pensamos y cómo vemos la migración los mexicanos," n.d.

which is the second largest group overall in the foreign-born population, but they feel they should not be coming in large numbers, that the government should do something in that order, but also almost half recognize the government mistreats migrants. Being more educated does not influence your attitudes towards migrations, further proven by the fact that immigrants are considered hard workers but at the same time bad for the economy. Moreover, almost half of respondents had negative views on immigrants regarding crime rates, moral and values, music and arts, etc., while at the same time an overwhelming 62% believe they do not discriminate against them.

However, this ambivalence might be about to change for the worse: the phenomenon of the Migrant Caravans from Central America seems to be playing a key role in the profound worsening of attitudes against migrations in the Mexican social sphere, much like the 2015 migration crisis in Europe. Historically, migrants traveling through Mexico have made so in small groups, sometimes being smuggled by organized criminal gangs[142]. However, deep economic crisis and droughts in the north of Central America, added to political pressures in the United States to fight illegal migration from the south, created the conditions for a new way of migrant travel to appear. Thousands of central American migrants, organized by social media, started traveling by foot, together in very large groups, in order to remain safe and take advantage of their numbers as they approached migratory authorities both in Mexico and the United States[143].

This situation created a visible crisis, enlarged by the media in both sides of the border. Pictures of thousands of migrants overflowing border controls, and rioting, quickly became staples of news shows and social media[144]. The visibility of the caravans had a quick impact in attitudes in Mexico towards migration: Mexicans seem to be more aware of the presence of central American migrants in the country, while in 2018 45% admitted seeing them in their communities, 52% did in 2019; 60% think central

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[142] Garcia, 2018
[143] Santos Ramirez, 2020, pp. 1-12
[144] *Ibid.*,

American migrants damage their communities in 2019, a 24% increase from 2018; and finally, while in 2018 37% of people were against migrants being let into the country, in 2019 that number rose to 62%[145]. While these numbers seem dramatic, the nature of the caravans makes it difficult to extrapolate general attitudes towards immigrants in Mexico, however they work well as a warning of how immigration can disrupt the political and social context of a country in a dramatic way. Additional data from 2020 would be useful to observe if the feelings remain or are just a product of media coverage of the caravans. It is also relevant to mention that the caravans have for the most part stopped since the beginning of 2020.

As a reaction to these caravans, something extraordinary happened in Tijuana, as over 5,000 migrants gathered in the city before attempting to cross into the United States: an anti-migrant protests sparked near one of the temporary shelters provided by the city government; a few hundred people, organized on social media and gathered to try and storm the migrant shelter, stopped by police in riot-gear, they chanted against migrants, and "the invasion" as they called it in their chants during the protest[146]. It is believed the protest was organized by the National Mexican Front (FNM), a contemporary extreme right group, working mostly in internet forums, much like its counterparts in the US and Europe[147].

The FNM is a self-described nationalist group, that uses national-socialist paraphernalia and aims to reject the United States illegal occupation of northern Mexico, derived from the Guadalupe-Hidalgo treaty of 1848 in which Mexico was coerced into the sale of massive amounts of territory. The group also supports the reinstatement of the Second Mexican Empire (1864 -1867) and the incorporation of Central America into Mexico. However, the group came into spotlight in the context of the Migrant Caravans, as they organized protests in different parts of the country; these protests have been met with a significant opposition, linking their discourse to

[145] *Opinan en encuesta que AMLO debe frenar a migrantes*, 2019
[146] *Un grupo protesta este domingo contra los migrantes en Tijuana*, 2018
[147] Aguilera & ContributorEconomist, 400 C.E.

Donald Trump's stance on migrants[148]. Despite their best efforts, groups like the FNM have not found prosperous breeding grounds for their anti-migrant rhetoric.

The argument made here, for that lack of potential support, is that multiculturalism is embedded in the Mexican social and political construct. Mainly derived from specific socio-cultural characteristics and the active participation of the state in the context of nation-building after the Mexican Revolution. According to historian Alejandra Moreno Toscano, Mexican multiculturalism comes originally from the type of non-elitist community relations developed prior to the arrival of the Spanish to the continent, relationships that were allowed to continue during the colonial times, enshrined by the cast system, in which indigenous communities were allowed self-government and autonomy, as long as they converted to Catholicism[149]; this acceptance of indigenous customs persists until today with self-rule in a number of communities in modern day Mexico. She goes on to include the different waves of immigrants from Europe and Asia, some of them on their way to the United States, that were allowed to establish themselves in central and northern Mexico, immigrants that also held a degree of autonomy and the capacity to retain their cultural identity[150]. The degree of autonomy went as far as, perhaps to spark the Cristero wars when the Mexican Government attempted to regulate the Catholic faith, which was a large part of their cultural identity. [151]

Dr. Moreno Toscano also explains how the need for the construction of the Mexican Nation-State did not allow leaders of the time to reflect on the ideological contradictions it could have on local communities. Instead, choosing not to interfere with cultural identities or customs, looking for homogenization of the Mexican self, but allowing a multiplicity of cultural identities beneath. In stark contrast to the

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[148] "Frente Nacionalista de México," 2019
[149] A. Toscano, personal communication, 19/05/2020
[150] *Ibid.,*
[151] *Ibid.,*

integrationism followed in the United States where the individual was king, in Mexico communities were prioritized[152].

It could be said that the main scenario where the Mexican state has promoted multicultural policies over the years has been education. It began as the new state was being formed after the Mexican revolution, when José Vasconcelos was appointed Secretary of Education, Vasconcelos was an intellectual, philosopher and writer, part of the Youth Atheneo club, where a number of contemporary intellectuals began[153]. Vasconcelos' ideas about the mixing of races as a natural, and aesthetically positive, path for humanity, heavily influenced the notion of mestizaje, the product of the mix of European and indigenous races in Mexico, that produced a superior being: the cosmic race[154].

Under his tenure of the Education Secretariat (SEP), policies aimed at integrating indigenous people into the new mestizo nation were implemented. This was a process of planned culturization of indigenous communities in order to integrate and modernize. They used bilingual cultural promotors and teachers, that used indigenous languages in order to slowly transition children into Spanish[155]. While these policies did not aim at a multicultural society per se, however, they did establish the groundwork for such an effort in the future, as well as gave a degree of value to indigenous culture and languages.

It was clear by the 1970s that the policies had failed in their objective of integration, and where eventually revised to include the perspectives of indigenous communities all over Mexico. In 1978 SEP reorganized its bilingual programs to include a bicultural perspective and created the General Directorate for Indigenous Education. In this context, it was indigenous leaders who promoted the idea of multiculturalism, and the

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[152] *Ibid.,*
[153] Dietz, 2014; pp. 163-164
[154] *Ibid.,*
[155] *Ibid.,* p. *165*

use of community relations in order for teachers to become more active in this effort, not only in education, but also in culture and local economies[156]. These efforts seemed to be more successful than the previous integration-aimed policies, however they still lacked enough resources and manpower to be fully applied nationwide.

Finally, at the beginning of the 1990s, came the last leg of multicultural public policies implemented from the government. As the large government structures were being dismantled under the context of neoliberal reform, the new push for multiculturalism came from outside Mexico, as new global institutions, like the World Bank, demanded public policy approaches that protect cultural diversity, while at the same time land privatization, amongst other economic reforms, went against these very communities[157]. However, it is important to mention that the neoliberal reforms did provoke the open recognition of the country as culturally diverse and the existence of a great number of languages, identities and in a way, nations; process that reached a turning point in 1992 with the reform to article of the Constitution recognizing Mexico as a pluricultural nation[158].

These reforms provoked a renewed movement amongst indigenous communities in order to demand recognition of their collective rights. Groups such as the National Indigenous Council (CNI) were formed in order to better negotiate and represent indigenous people[159]. This process erupted when the Zapatist National Liberation Army, took arms against the government in the city of San Cristobal the 1st of January of 1994, reclaiming the defense of indigenous collective rights[160]. As the rebellion ended with the signing of the San Andrés Larrainzar Agreements the government, via the legislative branch, launched a new set of measures and policies in order to enshrine in law special protections for indigenous collective rights and citizen's cultural identity[161].

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[156] Dietz, 2014; pp. 167-168
[157] Valladares, n.d.
[158] *Ibid.,*
[159] *Ibid.,*
[160] Nájar, 2019
[161] Valladares, n.d.

It could be said that a new breed of nationalism has emerged in Mexico, one that has multinationalism embedded at its core. The recognition of the indigenous people in Mexico, and the inclusion of this recognition in the Constitution, goes beyond the authoritarian and homogeneous system that exhausted in the late 1980s. Furthermore, the new three characteristics of the Mexican State emerge as democracy, globalization and multinationalism[162].

In this section, the author has established two distinct characteristics of Mexico that create a difficult scenario for populist radical right groups and organizations to grow. The lack of a large migrant population added to a complex set of feelings about immigration and emigration deny PPR groups and parties to foster support and use rally around the flag tactics for recruitment. This added to very specific social and political historical constructs depicted above around culture and identity promoted by decades of conscious efforts by the government, that in a way promote the idea of multiculturalism as a primordial part of what it is to be Mexican in the first place, even if at some stages their results were limited.

This rough terrain for PRR groups is not a specific characteristic of the PPR in Mexico, but it helps to explain how Mexico has been able to avoid the rise of said groups. In a way, echoing multicultural positive public policies in Canada, that actively deny PRRs of public platforms, but at the same time in an opposite situation in which Canada actually has high levels of immigration from all over the world[163]. In a sense, Mexico protects historic communities via a multicultural approach, while Canada, protects its contemporary national construction via similar policies.

While Mexico is not a country of immigration to the degree of Germany, Spain or the United Kingdom, it could be susceptible to political and social changes derived from

[162] *Ibid.,*
[163] Ambrose & Mudde, 2015; 230-231

immigration policies just as many countries in Europe, as we could see with the reaction to the Migrant Caravans between 2018 and 2020. However, it would be premature to extrapolate these perceptions into the general public in a sustained way.

Analysis and Comparison

Fundamentals of the Mexican Far Right

Having done an extensive review of the historical process that the far right has followed in Mexico; from its earliest inception in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, to its contemporary expressions such as the PRR; focusing in the 2008-2019 period, it is possible to identify a number of characteristics for the far right in Mexico, while extrapolating them to the populist radical right given the incipient stage it is in: first, the far right in Mexico today has a very clear link to Catholic underground groups that advocated for freedom of religion, this links have survived until today and they shape the tactics, objectives and nature of most of these groups; second, there is no widespread popular support for the far right in the country, moreover its support base is focalized in medium and higher income households, undermining its expansion strategies, albeit politically they have not always been a part of the elite; third, far right in Mexico does not seem to adopt a nativist ideology for the most part, despite localized recent and historical efforts to exploit the issue; and finally, fourth, far right groups and organizations in Mexico have chosen to operate, for the most part, within the democratic system, opting instead to either form their own parties, with little success, or infiltrate existing and successful political parties to further their agenda.

We begin by briefly assessing the historical process of the far right in Mexico. As developed in the first section of this work we can observe a direct connecting line between groups that were formed in response to the secular Constitution of 1917 and those of the far right in Mexico today[164] .Historical research allows us to pinpoint most the origins of the historical far right movement in Mexico to Sinarquism, that would eventually become the umbrella organizations from which most of the groups emanated. Sinarquism is a byproduct of the covert underground group known as "The Base" that continued to operate after the religious rebellions, also known as the Cristero Wars, ended. This movement would eventually produce a number of short-lived

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[164] Uribe, 2008, pp. 39-50

political parties in the 40s such as the UNS and Frente Popular[165], none of them successful.

Having failed in producing a long-lived political party, the movement became active again in the 60s by forming some of the public non-governmental organizations that still operate today, such as National Union of Parents or the Catholic Lawyers Association (López, 2018, pp. 177-178). Around that same time another byproduct of Sinarquism was founded, *The Organization* as is known to its members, group that remains active and just recently has become openly acknowledged by its leader[166]. It is some members of this organization who have been the most successful in occupying office in subsequent PAN governments in Mexico and even controlling the national leadership of the party posterior to the democratic transition in Mexico[167]. Finally, it is Sinarquism emanated organizations that jumpstarted the current wave of activity of far right in Mexico: first, in opposition to progressive laws in Mexico City embodied eventually in the FNF as a radical right group, and now embodied by the most visible group: Frente Nacional (FRENA) who oppose the current left-government in the country[168], this last group could be considered part of the populist radical right family.

As we observe this links between the origins of far right in Mexico and its contemporary expressions, we can also observe some echoes of its original goals and objectives. The ideological origin of the movement being linked to the Rerum Novarum encyclical from Pope León XIII in which a crusade to achieve economic, spiritual, political and social influence was launched[169]. Added to the values promoted by Sinarquism like private property, nationalism, religious education and a fervent opposition to communism and liberalism[170].

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[165] Flores & Gustavo, 2015, pp. 57-70
[166] *El Yunque Reconoce Públicamente Su Existencia y Operación En Varios Países - Proceso Portal de Noticias*, n.d.
[167] Uribe, 2008, pp. 49-50
[168] Fonseca, 2020
[169] Flores & Gustavo, 2015, pp. 53-72
[170] *Ibid.,*

Different iterations of far right parties and organizations in Mexico have embodied these same values and objectives. For example: the National Union of Parents and their campaign in the 60s against communism; the National Family Front that was formed in opposition to progressive liberal laws in Mexico City in 2008; the infiltration of PAN by members of *El Yunque* in order to further their radical conservative agenda; the historical links between wealthy business groups in central and northern Mexico and extreme right groups; the current campaign being carried out against the government of Mexico by FRENA, with slogans in favor of private property and against communism while there's suspicion that this group is funded by wealthy business groups from Nuevo León, such as the same ones that funded MURO in the 1960s[171]. Taking into account these different actions and strategies it is sufficiently clear the historical values and objectives of far right in Mexico remain very much aligned to the original ideas of "The Base" and Early Sinarquism.

While the far right movements have remained active and alive for almost 100 years, it is difficult to ascertain a widespread success in participating in public life. If we take into account, the definition of success by David Art in which a PRR party can only be considered successful if it obtains 5% of the vote in three consecutive elections[172]; it becomes clear that no far right party in Mexico has ever been successful. They have historically lacked a popular base from which to pursue their agenda; focusing instead on wealthy and powerful sectors of Mexican society as demonstrated above. It is worth mentioning that Mexico was not a democracy until 1997, when the electoral glass ceiling was broken in congress[173], and that far right groups and parties were repressed actively by the government prior to that, as depicted in government documents that narrate the close attention paid to Sinarquist events that usually ended up in arrests[174]. The argument could be made that in advocating for democracy, far right organizations

[171] *El FRENA marcha en la CDMX y extiende su plantón en el Zócalo*, 2020

[172] Art, D. (2011). *Inside the Radical Right*. Cambridge University Press, p. 4

[173] Martinez & Perez, n.d., pp. 25-30

[174] *Informe sobre el seguimiento al mitin Sinarquista en San Luis de Potosí por la Dirección de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales, 3 de septiembre de 1952 · Biblioteca Digital de los archivos de la represión*, n.d.

became anti-elite, at least on the political level. And so, perhaps the discourse of populism could be framed if democracy was an anti-political-elite discourse.

It is true that there exist some focalized contemporary efforts to exploit anti-migrant propaganda in Mexico, for example the National Mexican Front and their recent protest against Haitian migrants in Tijuana[175]; it could be even said that during the 1940s the Golden Shirts, a fascist group with links to Sinarquism promoted a xenophobic and nationalist stance to little success[176]. However, far right parties and organizations have not adopted a nativist stance in contemporary Mexico, two main reasons argued here: first, Mexico is a country of migrants[177], in which a high percentage of the population identifies to some degree with the type of migrant that comes to the country[178], such as people from Central America or South America and the Caribbean; and second, the percentage of foreign-born population in Mexico is minuscule[179], especially when compared to countries in Europe or the United States[180], in so, migration in Mexico is a non-issue, suffocating almost any nativist ideology, apart from the regular soccer nationalism that rises during every World Cup.

As mentioned above, far right organizations in Mexico, have historically been a part of democratizing efforts, particularly the electoral success of Vicente Fox in the 2000 elections, the first time in which an opposition party won the Presidency in over 70 years[181]. Vicente Fox was a former Coca-Cola executive and governor of Guanajuato, one of the cradles of Sinarquism, it is believed his political group included several members of *El Yunque*, including some who would eventually form his cabinet[182]. Several far right organizations were part of a wide coalition that supported Vicente Fox and PAN in their run for the Presidential elections, such as the National Union of

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[175] *Un grupo protesta este domingo contra los migrantes en Tijuana*, 2018
[176] de Backal, 1988, pp. 292-302
[177] *Panorama de Migración En Mexico*, n.d.
[178] Meseguer & Maldonado, 2015, pp. 792-800
[179] *Panorama de Migración En Mexico*, n.d.
[180] Davis & Deole, n.d.
[181] *La Transición Democrática En México | Internacional | EL PAÍS*, n.d.
[182] Uribe, 2008, p. 49

Parents or business councils linked to Sinarquism, such as the ones that supported political NGO "Amigos de Fox", that would be instrumental in financing his presidential run[183] without .

It would be important to mention, that it is not clear if far right organizations in Mexico have democracy as an intrinsic value, however their public actions and efforts of its precursors have systematically supported the democratic transition in Mexico, and members of the organization have continuously taken part in the electoral process such as governorships in Guanajuato or Aguascalientes[184] without the perception of being outliers in their authoritarian tendencies within the Mexican political system. So, other than specific cases such as the fascist Golden Shirts, or terrorist organizations such as MURO, it is hard to generalize the authoritarian trait for the rest of the far right organizations, unless we were to frame it within the authoritarian traits of governance in Mexico, but this last point remains beyond the scope of this work. To conclude with this section, we have stated the contemporary and historical characteristics of the far right in Mexico, and some incipient depth for the current PRR efforts or at the very least the closest Mexican relative to PRR, according to Western theory, has in the country.

Finally, there seems to be a profound disconnection between factors such as low educational levels[185], or economic inequality[186], that are also attributed to be triggers to the current rise or the PRR in other parts of the world. The demand-side for PRR parties and organizations seem to exist, however it does not seems be able to garner support from this demand. This, however, could be explained by a similar case in Ireland, where both conditions exist on a segment of the population, however this segment seems to historically identify with a left leaning nationalistic party: Sinn Féin, by no means a populist radical right party. However, its core ideology seems to be able

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[183] *"Amigos de Fox", la otra impunidad*, n.d.
[184] Uribe, 2008, p. 50
[185] (Ivarsflaten & Stubager, 2011, pp. 9-15
[186] Han, 2016, pp. 58-63

to suck up the air from any PRR party that tries to aim for the young, poor or uneducated masses[187]. Could it be the same scenario in Mexico? for example with a party such a MORENA, with popular social policies and a discourse against corruption MORENA was able to win a successful presidential election in 2018[188]. While this assumption appears to point in the right direction further research is needed in order to establish and corroborate a secondary hypothesis.

EU, US and Mexico: divergent paths?

If we continue to use Mudde's definition for the PRR and consider its three main characteristics: Nativism, Authoritarianism and Populism we can already observe how the Mexican far right starts to look intrinsically different to its counterparts in the United States and Europe. First; migration and xenophobia are a non-issue in Mexico, as the country itself is a source of migration and most migrants that come into the country are from ethnic origins similar to the Mexican, added to the multicultural notion of Mexicaness derived from its indigenous past and the official recognition by authorities by embedding it in the Constitution and educational programs, so nativism becomes largely irrelevant in sharp contrast to the rally-around-the-flag rhetoric against migration in the EU, made worst by the migrant crisis of 2015[189], and the US and the build-the-wall flag spued by President Trump[190]; second, far right groups and organizations in Mexico, from which the PRR emanates, have been willing to participate in the democratic institutions of the country, even avoiding authoritarianism by becoming proponents of a democratic change in the country in the late 90s as participants in opposition parties aiming for political change[191], in comparison we have seen a democratic decline in countries where PRR parties have become successful, such

[187] *Why Is There No Radical Right Party in Ireland?: West European Politics: Vol 31, No 5*, n.d., pp. 967-974
[188] Rojas, 2018

[189] Ratkovic, 2017, p. 57
[190] Cineas, 2020
[191] Uribe, 2008, pp. 39-50

as Hungary, Poland or even the United States[192]; and finally, third, it comes as no surprise that populist anti-elite discourse becomes unattainable if the main source of support to PRR in the country remains focalized in the middle and higher income brackets of Mexican society while this argument could gain strength with PRR opposing the current government, they are by no means not a part of the countries' economic liberal elite anymore, this while we observe distinct discourses from the leadership of PRR parties or groups in Europe against liberal elites, the EU, and democratic institutions across the continent, in a clear polarization between the "good people, and the bad" such as statements made by Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban[193].

The issue arises, if the contemporary PRR in Mexico does not seem to conform to characteristics imbedded in the mainstream theory about the topic, how can we even consider it PRR? It is a complicated issue to make a clear-cut definition of the characteristics of the PRR in Mexico, it is also complex to qualify PRR groups and organizations in the country as a part of the greater family of PRR around the world, although they would fit within the radical right family. However, recent developments in 2019 and 2020 give nascent evidence of an evolution going on within the radical right and PRR in Mexico that would possibly align them more with its international counterparts[194]. For this section we will attempt at finding the alignments with mainstream PRR parties and organizations in Europe and the US and Mexico; furthermore, make the argument that while PRR groups and organizations in Mexico remain distinct, they have adopted some of the tactics and dynamics of PRR in Europe and the US, which would fit them within the group family even if they don't share some or all of their main characteristics.

In order to continue this analysis, we must dig deeper into the similarities and differences between the PRR in Europe and the US and the equivalent organizations in

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[192] *Democracy in Retreat*, n.d.
[193] Welle (www.dw.com), n.d.
[194] Aguilera & ContributorEconomist, 400 C.E.

Mexico. For this, we will focus in two organizations that have recently emerged as the most visible examples of radical right or PRR in the country: first, FRENA, as mentioned above, as a reactionary group that seeks the immediate resignation of Mexico's president, openly calling for civil disobedience and military intervention in order to oust the democratically elected government[195]; and second, Si Por México (SPM), an umbrella movement that agglomerates multiple organizations, with quite a few having connections to Sinarquism and the radical right in Mexico, such as the National Parents Union, National Family Front, Citizen Go, Nationalist Front of Mexico, and others, with the explicit goal of furthering their agenda through a call to action for opposition political parties[196].

This work aims to frame the contemporary radical right and PRR in Mexico within the fourth wave of the radical right as conceptualized by Cas Mudde. Albeit for the information gathered through the timeline accompanying this work, this fourth wave would have been belated by a few years in Mexico. It is in 2008, when we start seeing the first evidence in the public sphere of radical right organizations such as the National Family Front or as a PRR cousin in the National Citizens Front (FRENA).

We can move forward by analyzing the different approaches adopted by FRENA and SPM. On the one side SPM is pushing for its agenda by calling opposition political parties to adopt it as their own, they have been successful so far in securing support from the three major opposition parties PRI, PAN, the historical right party, and PRD[197]; much in line with the new acceptability and mainstreaming of far right parties and organizations within the fourth wave[198]. It is important to note however that it is not clear what the extents of the agenda of SPM is as of today, it focuses on social spending, security and fighting corruption, but gives no further details about the specifics of it[199], so while we are including it within the radical right for their links to

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[195] *Plan B de FRENA*, n.d.
[196] *Si Por México*, n.d.
[197] *Sí por México formaliza alianza PRI-PAN-PRD*, 2020
[198] Mudde, 2019, pp. 50-51
[199] *Propuesta Ciudadana*, n.d.

Sinarquism, this approach could change in the future as they evolve. Political parties such as the Conservatives in the UK have been able to seize the opportunity for renovated support by adopting populist radical right policies into their government programs such as tougher stances on migration[200]. On the other side, however, FRENA doesn't seem to have a public stance on relevant issues or public policies from analysis made from its website and social media platforms, nor a particular ideology from which these could emanate; instead, their core message implies a call to action to overthrow the government in Mexico embodied by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador by categorizing him as a "communist dictator"[201].

It is becoming increasingly evident that the main link that connects the PRR in Mexico to its western cousins could be authoritarianism. It is true, radical right organizations in Mexico have openly participated in the democratic transition in the country, however, we can't overlook the fact that organizations such as FRENA are, at the very least, calling for the Mexican military to intervene. This while the extended radical right in Mexico has been involved in a crusade against insecurity and violence, at least since the government of Felipe Calderón of PAN in 2006, who deployed the military internally and called for an all-out-war against the drug cartels in Mexico[202]; much like Viktor Orban deployed the Hungarian military across the Hungarian border in order to push migrants back to Serbia in 2016[203]. This last strategy by President Calderón, was acknowledged by many as a way to legitimize his government in the aftermath of a very contested election[204]. While Calderón himself was not considered part of any radical right group, it is widely believed he made an alliance with *The Organization*[205] in order to secure power and was supported in his law & order focused policies while in office. Furthermore, during his administration other types of authoritarian policies were followed; if we embrace Cas Mudde's use of authoritarianism as the notion that

[200] "The Revenge of Farage," n.d.
[201] *Plan B de FRENA*, n.d.
[202] *Así Comenzó La "Guerra" Contra El Narcotráfico de Felipe Calderón*, n.d.
[203] "Hungary Deploys Army to Push Migrants Back to Serbia," 2016
[204] Anguiano, 2014
[205] *Calderón y El Yunque - José Francisco Parra | La Crónica de Hoy*, n.d.

infringements of authority must be severely punished[206], such as drug-addiction or sexual deviancy, we could say the authoritarian policies followed during Calderon's administration include the judicial fight against same-sex partnerships in Mexico City by the General Prosecutor's Office[207] and harsher prison sentences for drug users[208].

Much like the PRR in the United States, the PRR, and its extended family the radical right has a very close relationship with religion. While the US has leaders that openly call for the influence of Christianity in politics such as Pat Buchanan or Sarah Palin[209], Mexico has far right organizations emanated from an historical struggle from Catholic groups first for freedom of religion, and now against progressive values for example. It is also important to note that Mexican PRR could be more aligned religiously with the PiS Government in Poland[210] or the credos of VOX in Spain[211], exploiting Catholicism in order to secure electoral support. For example, PAN party in its electoral platform for 2021 includes two issues that have been championed by the ultra-catholic National Family Front: first, a ban on abortion[212]; and second, the right of parents to forbid sexual education in schools or to allow public displays of religious cult[213]. This electoral platform will surely transcend into the general platform for SPM in which PAN takes part.

It could be said that the Mexican radical right and the populist radical right are starting to differ one from the other; however, that is not the focus of the present work. However, we can observe a continuation from the far right to PRR, not only historical but also ideological. While the Mexican PRR remains a nascent phenomenon, we can already observe some characteristics that resonate from its counterparts in the West. It

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[206] Mudde, 2019, p. 65
[207] *Impugnan bodas gay en Ciudad de México*, 2010
[208] Hernández, n.d., p. 61
[209] Mudde, 2019, pp. 87-88
[210] *Politics of the Polish Church Scares off Believers*, 2019
[211] *La estafa progre consiste en un espejismo de alternativas. Hay tres tabús intocables*, 2019
[212] PAN, n.d., p. 14
[213] Ibid., p. 49

might still be theoretically distinct, but it seems to possess enough similitudes to be considered a functional equivalent in Mexico.

Conclusions

The populist radical right appears to remain somehow elusive in Mexico. There is enough evidence to suggest that groups exist, and that they are active and have incidence in the political process. However, they remain marginal, for now, in terms of numbers. The far right for its part has remained a part of the political life of Mexico for at least 100 years, with its origins in the post-revolutionary years and continuing today in organizations that can be linked to its very conception and the many seedlings that have appeared and disappeared once and again along the years.

Its secretive nature and lack of representation via successful political parties makes it difficult for extensive academic research other than historical accounts. Even today, it is not always clear which organizations are behind certain movements or causes in the public debate, or even who the real leaders or financiers are. Its codependent relationship with the historical center-right party blurs the line of its influence and size even more.

This work began by stating the research question of *Why has there not been an increase in support for far right parties and organizations in Mexico?,* it also included four expectations to be found during the research process, ahead they will be addressed in order:

First, the expectation that the spark that ignited the re-appearance of the far right in the country was due to the introduction of highly controversial new laws in Mexico City. It is fair to say that far right groups appeared as a response to the announcement and approval of laws that allowed for same-sex partnerships and legalized abortions freely up to the 12th week. These groups such as the National Family Front managed to catalyze the sentiment of conservatives across the country, setting up the scene for further radical right, and eventually populist radical right groups to appear in the public debate. Groups like FRENA, closer to the populist radical right definition, now nourish

themselves from smaller groups and organizations, such as the "Viva Cristo Rey" group, that emanated from historical far right groups and organizations dating back to the Mexican Revolution and the Cristero Wars.

Second, the notion that the far right in Mexico hasn't been able to appeal to the masses, in order to gather enough support and eventually transcend into a successful political party or group. As this research progressed it became clear that the radical right in Mexico and in that way, also, the populist radical right, as well as the extreme right, have its grassroot component emanating from the middle- and higher-income segments, with a small component in the traditional population targets of the PRR in the young uneducated target groups. This seems to hinder their ability to recruit and grow.

Third, the political context of Mexico has created a particular set of circumstances that have had a direct impact in how the far right, and so the PRR develop in the country. There seems to be a movement contrary to the left-leaning government of Mexico, gathering support in many of the organizations identified as part of the radical right, and even a new organization such as FRENA that is starting to resemble PRR organizations in other parts of the world. Some of the slogans of FRENA echo the anti-communist rhetoric of far right movements in the 1960s and 1970s; as they are quick to identify the current government with a communist authoritarian regime, as noted above.

Fourth, the far right and PRR in Mexico still seems to lack any specific hot topic that would serve as a rally-around-the-flag catalyzer. With this in mind we can observe that immigration into Mexico is not a relevant enough issue to work as such. There is not a comparable population of foreign-born residents in the country in contrast to the United States or several European countries, nor does the perception amongst Mexicans is grave enough for their arrival into the country to represent a serious political issue. This in great part to the multicultural character of the Mexican society and the lack of otherness towards most migrants that happen to cross into Mexico. There are also

additional notions that could be ventured from the research efforts carried out for the present work:

First, the Mexican far right seems to be entrenched in political dynamics that reminisce of the time when it was actively repressed by the Mexican government, for the most part they remain in the margins of the public dialogue and seem to rather be in the shadows forging alliances or giving quiet support to mainstream political parties. Despite the appearance of very public organizations such as FRENA or the National Family Front, the leaders behind these movements, providing support and financing have not yet come forward, nor materialized these efforts into their own viable political organizations.

Second, as these organizations fail to gather systemic support for their agenda, beyond opposition parties taking advantage of the issues for their own political gain, there doesn't seem to be enough appetite in Mexico for the far right or populist radical right to become successful. It could even be guessed that there won't be a PRR party anytime soon in Mexico.

Third, despite this previous notion, there is evidence that at least in what concerns the PRR in Mexico, there is some organic growth in its ranks. The Mexican PRR is starting to resemble its counterparts in the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland, and so on, something that the far right, as a whole, never managed to accomplish. And while there doesn't seem to be space for a PRR party in the country, there will probably be PRR organizations as a part of public discourse for the time to come, albeit in the fringes.

There is also, one additional notion, that has not been properly studied in this work, but that could probably make for further work on the matter. Octavio Paz, prominent narrator of Mexican culture and identity, believed that Mexicans possess an unhealthy obsession with forms, this being understood as rituals, protocols, publicly accepted speech, social norms, amongst others. Paz elaborated that this obsession denies

Mexicans of a proclivity to radical thoughts, where the far right and the PRR are located, as they become, in a way, unacceptable expressions of political thought[214].

The political context of Mexico seems to be quickly evolving, the current government and the opposition remain at odds in the middle of a pandemic that has deeply transformed the public life of the country. The aftermath of the democratic transition left power vacuums that have been filled with democratic processes but the shortcomings of several administrations still present challenges that so far haven't been met. Distribution of wealth, social reform, healthcare, corruption and violence remain systemic problems in Mexico, and while the PRR hasn't been able to capitalize on these issues, there's no certainty that they won't be able to do it in the future.

The study of the far right and PRR in Mexico, while historically neglected, may still prove useful in the further understanding in how these ideologies are born, how they evolve and how they may be countered. It is possible to observe a new branch of the worldwide PRR movement during its consolidation; while at the same time we already have some theoretical and analytical tools to measure and analyze; this while incorporating new knowledge from alternative regions that enrich our understanding on the radical right and its most recent iteration in the populist radical right.

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[214] *Octavio Paz: The Search for Mexican Identity*, 2021, p. 372

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Annexes
Annex 1: PRR in Mexico 2008-2019

Timeline of the Far Right in Mexico 2008-2019

16/03/2007

The recently approved "Sociedades de Convivencia" law enters into force allowing civil-unions between same-sex couples, falling short of calling it marriage and still not allowing adoption[215].

24/04/2007

Mexico City Assembly passed a law legalizing abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy despite fierce opposition by Catholic groups such as the Catholic Lawyers Association that presented a petition for a referendum with 36,000 signatures[216].

25/05/2007

Knights Templar, the Kings of Columbus and of Malta, made a pilgrimage in support of Cardinal Norberto Rivera, this in protest to the legalization of abortion in Mexico City[217].

26/06/2008

The Federal Institute for Elections declines to register the Solidaridad political party for irregularities in their founding assemblies. This party had links to the historical Sinarquist movement and extreme right former PAN members Fernando Rivera and René Bolio, both linked to former President Fox and José Luis Luegue the then head of the National Water Comission under a PAN government. The party is said to have

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[215] "Diez años de Sociedades de Convivencia, el inicio de una nueva era," 2017
[216] *Ciudad de México Despenaliza El Aborto | Internacional | EL PAÍS*, n.d.
[217] Sánchez Fuentes & Ubaldi Garcete, 2008, pp. 39-44

funding from Lorenzo Servitje and Patricio Slim Domit, two of the richest men in the country[218].

1/08/2008

The National Citizen's Congress is formed in Nuevo Leon, Mexico[219]. The group has characteristics of being anti political establishment, ultra-capitalist[220] and promotes the death penalty for corrupt public officials[221]. It's leader Gilberto Lozano, has over 200,000 followers on FB, he also boasts that migration, abortion and equal marriage are a cancer in Mexico and actively protests against it[222].

27/08/2008

Mexico's Supreme Court upholds Mexico City's legislation legalizing the right for abortion in the city[223].

21/12/2009

Mexico City's Assembly approved a modification to the civil code in order to allow same-sex marriages and adoption. Project championed by local congressman David Razú[224].

10/02/2010

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[218] "Frena el IFE A sinarquistas y panistas de extrema derecha," 2008
[219] Nunes, n.d., p.324
[220] *Gilberto Lozano, el hombre que grita*, n.d.
[221] *Él Es Gilberto Lozano, Empresario Que Estuvo En El Gabinete de Fox e Intenta Sacar a AMLO Con FRENA | SinEmbargo MX*, n.d.

[222] *Gilberto Lozano, el hombre que grita*, n.d.
[223] *México*, 2008
[224] *BBC Mundo - América Latina - México DF*, n.d.

Mexican President Felipe Calderón's government (PAN) presented a constitutional controversy to annul Mexico City's equal marriage law. It's unprecedented for a sitting president to meddle in the civil code of the states. The Supreme Court upholds the local law[225].

13/06/2015

The Supreme Court ruled that marriage was not to be defined with procreation ends or between only man and woman, opening the door for same sex marriage in the entire country, with this ruling the jurisprudence is enforced, and same-sex couples will be able to marry in the entire country albeit with the need of an injunction in some states[226].

23/02/2016

Confamilia presents a citizen's law initiative to reform article 4th of the Mexican Constitution to establish marriage exclusively as a union between a man and a woman. This initiative came with more than 200,000 signatures, surpassing the minimum requirement to be considered by Congress. The proposal is frozen in Congress still[227].

25/05/2016

The National Front for the Family is formed, claiming to unite more than 1,000 organizations nationwide, and in direct response to President Enrique Peña Nieto's constitutional change proposal to recognize the Supreme Court ruling in favor of equal marriage[228].
5/06/2016

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[225] *Calderón cuestiona bodas gay en DF*, 2010
[226] *Una jurisprudencia de la SCJN respalda a los matrimonios homosexuales*, 2015
[227] *ConFamilia impulsa reforma constitucional al artículo 4*, 2016
[228] *Nuestra Historia -*, n.d.

Debacle for the ruling PRI party at the governor elections, losing 7 out of 12 governor races and moving out to the opposition in 4 of them[229]. The NFF claims the results are evidence of the citizen's being against the President's proposal for equal marriage presented a few weeks earlier. Conservative party PAN, alone or allied with left parties won 7 races overall[230].

1/08/2016

"National Forum for a Citizen's Initiative", organized by organizations part of the NFF takes place in Mexico, with PAN politician Claudia Sánchez saying "It's our responsibility to respect all expressions in favor of the family"[231].

8/08/2016

President of the National Union of Parents, part of the NFF, Miguel Raygoza declared that Homosexuality is a disease, that Marriage must be exclusively between Man and Woman and discarded that the NFF is looking to establish itself as a political party[232].

30/08/2016

Former PAN leader and congressman Rodrigo Iván Cortés met with pope Francis to inform him about the intentions of the NFF of "creating trouble" on the streets of México[233].

9/09/2016

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[229] *El PAN Rompe En Las Elecciones de México Frente al Descalabro Del PRI | Internacional | EL PAÍS*, n.d.
[230] *Histórica Derrota Del PRI En 7 de 12 Estados: Influyó El Voto de Castigo Profamilia Por Su Giro LGBT – Andoc*, n.d.
[231] Plascencia, 2016
[232] *Homosexualidad Es Una Enfermedad: Dice Frente Nacional Por La Familia*, n.d.
[233] *'¡Hagan lío!", aconsejó el Papa al líder de los defensores de la familia 'natural"*, n.d.

Periodical investigative journal Proceso links ultra-catholic reactionary group El Yunque to the protests being organized for the 10th of September, replicating the strategy of Hazte Oír and Citizen Go in Spain against the government of Rodriguez Zapatero when he proposed to legalize abortion in the country. Confamilia president Juan Dabdoub affirms they are working hard to influence the election in 2018[234].

10/09/2016

18,000 people marched in Mexico City against Equal Marriage, protest organized by the NFF, a great number or religious organizations participated in the protest, including nuns, and priests. There was a counter march in favor of Gay Rights of a comparable size. Similar protests took place in more than 25 cities across Mexico; organizers claimed that more than 1,2 million protestors took to the streets, however real numbers might be lower according to authorities[235].

24/09/2016

The leadership of the National Front for the Family acknowledges that between its memberships there are religious leaders from the Catholic Church and also politicians linked to PES party such as Edith Martínez (she took part in protests in favor of the NFF on September 11 2016) and the rest of the PES legislative group in , former politician from PAN Fernando Guzman Peláez, now vice-president of Confamilia, one of the NFF founding organizations as well as congresswoman Cecilia Romero and Alejandra Reynoso from PAN in the federal Congress, as well as former congressman Iván Cortés, also from PAN[236].

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[234] *El Yunque, la mano que mece al Frente Nacional por la Familia*, n.d.

[235] Sin Embargo, n.d.
[236] Plascencia, 2016

14/05/2017

Candidate for governor of the State of Mexico and former presidential candidate Josefina Vazquez Mota signs a commitment with the National Family Front in exchange for political support. She promises to enact policies to maintain a prohibition stance against abortion and religious liberty[237].

11/12/2018

Senator Ana Guevara is assaulted by 4 men, and later seen publicly showing her injuries promoted the emergence of the hashtag #GolpearMujeresFelicidad, as an example of anti-feminist rhetoric in social media, reminiscent of trolling attacks in the US. The hashtag was created by an alt right group called Legión Holk, who also promoted the hashtag #MatarGaysNoEsDelito after the Orlando Pulse Massacre. The groups mascot is Pepe the Frog. A month after the Pulse Massacre the group would be again in the news after member Federico Guevara left a final message prior to perpetrating a school shooting that left 4 wounded and the shooter dead[238].

19/06/2018

Presidential candidate Ricardo Anaya from the collation PAN-PRD-Movimiento Ciudadano met with the leadership of the NFF and agreed to reject policies that would allow abortions to be carried out legally. Previously José Meade from PRI party also met with the NFF and agreed to similar terms[239].

18/11/2018

[237] *Elecciones Edomex 2017: El PRI y El PAN Se Disputan El Voto Conservador En El Estado de México | Internacional | EL PAÍS*, n.d.
[238] Aguilera & ContributorEconomist, 400 C.E.
[239] *Anaya Coincide Con Frente Nacional Por La Familia En Rechazo al Aborto*, n.d.

A group of protesters in Tijuana numbered in the hundreds tried to overrun a police blockade in order to reach a migrant safe haven in the city. The protestors were against migrants and any time of migration to Mexico, claiming they brought crime and chaos to the country[240].

01/02/2019

Group Leaders for Life and Family is created, the group advocates anti-abortion policies and a traditional family model. They are linked to Cristero (Such as Guardia Cristera CDMX) organizations and the NFF. Media personalities and celebrities with conservative values form their main core of activists. The group also has an explicit anti-feminist stance and seems to be inspired by the blue scarf movement in Argentina. They also echo informative campaigns from Citizen GO, Yunque linked organization from Spain[241].

5/05/2019

16,000 march in Mexico City and in another 30 cities in the country to protest against the Mexican President. This march was organized by Nosotros Somos Chalecos Mexico[242].

30/06/2019

The Nacional Citizen's Congress along with Chalecos Mexico calls for protests in different cities of Mexico, around 6,000 people join. They call for the destitution of the President for treason and call for and end of sex education and gender studies, as well

[240] *Un Grupo Protesta Contra Migrantes En Tijuana; Se Enfrentan Con Policías al Tratar de Avanzar Hacia Un Albergue*, n.d.
[241] *Lideres por la Vida y la Familia (@LideresXlaVida) / Twitter*, n.d.
[242] "Así no, AMLO," 2019

as abortion rights and equal marriage. One protest in Coahuila state also called for directing all government support for Mexicans instead of migrants[243].

21/09/2019

Around 1,000 people protested in the state of Nuevo Leon against legalizing abortions in the state, the protest was organized and promoted by the NFF. In the protest former PAN state congressman Francisco Treviño declared that the new federal amnesty bill includes pardoning women in jail for abortion. The organization also stated that they are vetting local and federal candidates in order to influence the election in 2021[244].

26/09/2019

Oaxaca becomes the second state in Mexico to legalize women's right to abortion[245].

8/10/2019

The state congress of Puebla rejected a proposal to decriminalize abortion in the state, as well as to recognize same-sex marriages. The main votes against came from the majority party MORENA, in contrast to a similar vote in the state of Oaxaca a couple of weeks early in which MORENA politicians voted in favor. The recently elected governor from the same party, previously in favor of both causes now rejects them in lieu of the "values" of the state[246].

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[243] *Realizan protestas contra AMLO en varios estados del país*, 2019
[244] *Frente Nacional por la Familia se manifiesta contra el aborto en NL*, 2019

[245] *El Congreso de Oaxaca Aprueba La Despenalización Del Aborto*, n.d.
[246] *En Puebla Rechazan Despenalizar El Abordo; Sólo Reducen Condena*, n.d.