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**TUMOR: The (Dis)organization of the Right-Wing
Opposition against Mexico's 'Fourth Transformation'**

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TUMOR: The (Dis)organization of the Right-Wing Opposition against Mexico's 'Fourth Transformation'

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Abstract

Mexico's current government, led by president Andrés Manuel López Obrador (December 2018-November 2024), launched a program of major overhaul of the country's governance named "The Fourth Transformation (4T)". While the reform agenda is largely supported by the masses, these measures have met a strong, multifaceted and relentless reaction from the social and political interests being affected, couched in a right-wing discourse. This opposition, carried out either by individual actors or by coalitions of organized interests, has been sarcastically dubbed TUMOR ("Todos unidos contra Morena", All United against Morena, the party in power) by 4T supporters.

This article aims at mapping and analyzing the right-wing movement of resistance to the 4T, identifying its main individual and collective actors, their strategies and their international allies. It tests the hypothesis suggested in Kevin Middlebrook's theory about conservatism and the right in Latin America: when economically and socially privileged actors feel deprived of political power to protect their interests, they resort to whatever means and strategy is at their disposal to regain the lost influence. If no political party offers them a reasonable expectation of representing them, winning elections and protecting their unquestioned influence, they will not hesitate to sabotage democracy and disrupt the legal order.

Empirical information—under the form of a mostly qualitative narrative detailed in Annex (Appendix) 1—to test the hypothesis was obtained with a systematic follow up of events spanning from the inauguration of Mexico's current government on December 1, 2018 to June 6 2021 midterm elections; as reported in mainstream media, the president's office and internet-based information sources. Annex (Appendix) 2 offers a profile of the main actors in the opposition movement.

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Introduction

After two previous failed attempts, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO from now on) was elected president of Mexico, riding on a wave of massive popular support. AMLO was the candidate of a party created in 2014 under his leadership, Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional (Movement of National Regeneration, MORENA¹). MORENA is the most recent iteration of a mainstream, competitive left-wing party in Mexico's political scene.

As president from December 2018 until November 2024, AMLO launched an ambitious government program that he named "Mexico's Fourth Transformation" (4T for short). According to his discourse, 4T is the 21st century equivalent to the country's three previous major transformations: independence in 1821, liberal reforms in 1857, and social revolution in 1917. AMLO promised to overhaul the country's institutions, affected by neoliberal policies and privatizations, growing inequality, manipulated democracy, complacent media, public budget waste and rampant corruption. He offered to put the poor and marginalized sectors of society at the top of his government's priorities.

Attacking the roots of Mexico's perceived evils means confronting powerful interests: traditional political parties, large domestic and foreign corporations, lobbyists, clientelistic networks, overpaid public officials, media conglomerates, corrupt lawyers and judges. The list seems endless. Those interests have grown comfortable over the decades, benefitting from a system that generously rewarded the privileged while abusing the working class and neglecting the disenfranchised.

These powerful interests found an ally in sectors of the middle classes and professionals, who also somewhat benefitted from the skewed system through good quality employment and government contracts. These sectors are also the most receptive to the messages praising the status quo, available in the mainstream media. Their opposition to 4T is couched in a right-wing discourse, eagerly supported by conservative parties, politicians, business, religious and other social leaders.

Kevin J. Middlebrook explored the attitudes of Latin American economic and social elites toward democracy, and the conditions under which they may be supportive of

¹ "Morena" is also the Spanish word for dark-skinned woman or girl. The party adopted the acronym on purpose, thus highlighting its popular origins and the goal of representing common, rank and file people in Mexico.

democratic political institutions.² Comparing the historical experience of various Latin American countries, he proposed that conservative parties are necessary to give elites a reasonable opportunity to democratically compete for power, in order to "...advance their policy preferences through electoral means"³. He added:

...electorally viable conservative parties are the most important potential basis for the long-term political representation of elite interests in a democratic regime... Democracy could be consolidated only where there were two or more strong competing political parties, at least one of which effectively protected dominant class interests, or where the party system allowed for direct access of the dominant classes to the state apparatus.⁴

Emergence of such parties was precisely what made transitions from authoritarian rule to democracy possible. Otherwise, elites may be tempted to resort to whatever multiple means they have at their disposal to preserve their position and privilege; including some strategies that gradually depart from liberal democracy: string of lawsuits against government policies, boycotts, astroturfing, violent mobilizations, and ultimately military coups.

Along the same lines, Martha Chew Sánchez explains how national oligarchies respect democratic processes as long as radical social and economic changes that would affect their interests are not being implemented⁵. Whenever national and international oligarchies think their opportunities for influence, profit and expansion are in jeopardy, and there is no viable electoral alternative, they will not hesitate to break the democratic process:

with a coup d'état, without any legal basis... only without democracy, only with a state of exception, is it possible to have a government that implements an economic policy against the needs of the vast majority of people⁶.

² Middlebrook, Kevin J. "Introduction: Conservative Parties, Elite Representation, and Democracy in Latin America" in Middlebrook, K. J. ed. *Conservative Parties, the Right and Democracy in Latin America*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000; pp.1-50.

³ Middlebrook, "Introduction...", p. 2.

⁴ Middlebrook, "Introduction...", p. 5.

⁵ Martha I. Chew Sánchez, "From the "Pink Tide" to "Soft Coup d'État" in Latin America: the Case of Bolivia" in *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, Volume 19: Issue 5-6, Feb 2021: 597-625

⁶ Sader, Emir. 2020. "El neoliberalismo es incompatible con la democracia." *Pagina|12*. July 17. Accessed May 3, 2021.

(<https://www-pagina12-com-ar.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/278979-el-neoliberalismo-es-incompatible-con-la-democracia>).

Disruption of the democratic process may be violent, under the form of a traditional military coup such as the ones witnessed in most South American countries in the 1960s and 1970s. However, in the 21st century elites have resorted to so-called “soft” coups d’État. The wave of soft coups in Latin America started in 2009 in Honduras, followed by Paraguay in 2012, Brazil in 2016, and Bolivia in 2019. According to William I. Robinson⁷ there were some common elements in these cases:

- The opposition did not recognize the popular vote behind the elected governments.
- There was direct or indirect participation of the justice system. This participation was fundamental, either by omission (i.e. when the Supreme Court of Justice in Brazil refrained from declaring the unconstitutionality of prosecuting the president) or by creating a climate of political lynching, selective leaks, and speculation of ongoing investigations.
- The media oligopoly actively participated in the creation of a political climate of uncertainty and chaos, that made people believe that impeachment was the only solution to put an end to instability while at the same protecting the interests of the elite.

Soft coups are carried out mostly by civilians with the tacit and explicit complicity of the military. They tend to make partial illegal use of current ruling institutions and leave some of those institutions temporarily intact in order to keep the façade of legality even though there might be persecutions of members of previous governments.⁸ Legal principles are stretched to fit the right-wing agenda, the discourse about civil rights and absolute abstract principles (democracy, freedom, checks and balances, federalism, etc.) is adapted to embrace the opposition discourse. Renato Perissinotto adds that soft coup d’États tend to make “the criteria of the impeachment process more flexible, which is constitutional, so that government officials without a crime of responsibility could be removed, which is unconstitutional”⁹.

In the task of delegitimizing the government in place to create an environment of uncertainty, the right has a valuable instrument in its tool box: the internet and social media. The contemporary power of the web to wage political battles—first used in Barack Obama’s campaign in 2008—has grown ever since to become one of the main spaces of political debate. The internet nowadays competes with the traditional media in setting the political agenda.

⁷ Robinson, William I. “Don’t Cry for Me, Latin America.” in *Human Geography*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2020:91–94.

⁸ Bianchi, Alvaro.. “O que é um golpe de estado?” *JUNHO Blog*. March 16, 2016. Accessed May 3, 2021. (<http://blogjunho.com.br/login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/o-que-e-um-golpe-de-estado/>).

⁹ Perissinotto, Renato. “*Por que golpe?*” Rio de Janeiro: The Institute of Social and Political Studies (IESP) of the State University of Rio de Janeiro, October 16, 2016. Accessed May 3, 2021. (https://www.academia.edu/29221192/Por_que_golpe)

The right knows this, it has created virtual communities that give their participants the illusion of belonging, and reinforce their ideas with the help of algorithms who feed their perceptions and biases. The web is a space where extreme ideas can be expressed under the cover of anonymity, where no restraints on discourse are practiced, where polarization and confrontation occur every day, where manipulation of emotions for political purposes is common. The right has vastly exploited these features of online communication to its benefit.¹⁰

Another perspective on soft coup d'États is provided by US academic Gene Sharp. Sharp's definition of a soft coup portrays this strategy as an alternative to violence when confronting dictatorships. This non-violent struggle is implemented through several methods, the ones that stand out for the purposes of this article are social boycotts, economic boycotts, rejection of legitimacy, and boycott of government officials.¹¹ Sharp's handbook *From Dictatorship to Democracy* enumerates various steps required to overthrow a dictatorship and prevent further coups attempting to restore it. According to Sharp, fair elections are not available under dictatorial governments, so the possibilities of the alleged dictatorial parties being re-elected under the new system are high. Therefore, it is necessary to resort to other means.

Sharp's nonviolence theory has served as an inspiration for many revolutionary movements around the world (the 2010's Arab Spring,¹² Serbia's Otpor, for instance).¹³ His theory earned him three Nobel Peace Prize nominations,¹⁴ his own semi-biographical movie,¹⁵ and many other awards. However, we believe that Sharp's theory is not applicable to the current situation in Mexico for various reasons.

First of all, AMLO's government is not a dictatorship, but a democratically elected government that lives by the rules of a liberal democracy, respects human rights and supports the rule of law. Besides, Sharp's theory suggests that "[soft coup's] objectives should not be expressed as vague platitudes, such as "peace," "freedom," or "justice"¹⁶, but they must avoid excess in the details. However, these very concepts in fact work as Sharp's founding values that validate the need for a revolution. In his mind, a revolution is not the solution to the legacy of authoritarian regimes (poverty, crime, bureaucratic

¹⁰ Castro-Rea, Julián, "My Girlfriend Became Neo-Nazi: The Right's Presence and Activity in the Internet", *UC Berkeley: Center for Right-Wing Studies Working Papers* (Berkeley), May 2019, pp. 2-7. Online URL: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6q68m0sr>

¹¹ Paulson, Joshua, and Gene Sharp, "Facing Acute Conflicts" in Paulson, J. and Sharp, G. ed. *Waging nonviolent struggle : 20th century practice and 21st century potential*, Boston : Extending Horizons Books, 2005; pp. 14-18.

¹² <https://www.cnn.com/2012/06/23/world/gene-sharp-revolutionary/index.html>

¹³ <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/otpor-struggle-democracy-serbia-1998-2000/>

¹⁴ <https://www.afsc.org/story/nonviolence-scholar-nominated-2013-nobel-peace-prize>

¹⁵ <https://www.howtostartarevolution.org/>

¹⁶ Joshua, Sharp, "Some strategic guidelines", p. 474.

inefficiency, and environmental destruction), but it is the tool that starts the rebuilding of a country through greater political democracy, personal liberties, and social justice.¹⁷ And this is precisely what the 4T aims to accomplish.

Of greater concern to us is the fact that Sharp's work has been criticized as being the theoretical basis of interventionist agendas. For example, Wikileaks revealed that the U.S. Embassy in Damascus cited Sharp in a cable as one of the main influences of the Kurdish's Yekiti Party, one of the main actors within the events of the Rojava conflict during the Arab Spring.¹⁸ Sharp himself is the founder of the Albert Einstein Foundation, an organization accused by late-Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez Frías of fostering a soft coup d'État in his country.¹⁹

Moreover, Sharp's accusations of promoting interventionism are present within the academia as well. City University of New York's professor Marcie Smith argues that Sharp is a neoliberal theorist with an intellectual quarrel against the "centralized State."²⁰ Smith adds that Sharp's work "*puts protest movements in a position where they can be easily co-opted, where they can serve as a kind of battering ram, and then the neoliberal experts with the 'good ideas' come rolling out and with the content.*"²¹ Peter Gelderloos' *The Failure of Nonviolence* points out that the Albert Einstein Foundation receives funding from several European and US institutions such as USAID, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, and Freedom House²²; therefore upholding and promoting the agendas and interests behind these agencies.

All of these facts and the format in which Sharp presents his views on soft coup d'États (a manual, a recipe book) makes us believe that his theory is not a useful theoretical tool while discussing the opposition against AMLO's government. It is possible, although we have no proof of that, that the right-wing opposition uses this theory to frame their efforts to defeat the 4T; because it misleadingly identifies the government as the oppressor and glorifies the opposition as the liberator.

Be it as it may, it is clear that the Mexican right-wing opposition does not apply Sharp's recipe to the letter. For example, the theory does not suggest the use of racist or

¹⁷ Sharp, Gene, "Facing Dictatorships Realistically" in Sharp, G. ed. *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, Boston : The Albert Einstein Institution, 2010; pp. 1-2.

¹⁸<https://web.archive.org/web/20120109101535/http://cablesearch.org/cable/view.php?id=06DAMASCUS1058&hl=>

¹⁹https://web.archive.org/web/20070606090904/http://www.eluniversal.com/2007/06/04/pol_ava_chavez-ropone-que-p_04A879211.shtml

²⁰ <https://nonsite.org/change-agent-gene-sharps-neoliberal-nonviolence-part-one/>

²¹ <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/06/gene-sharp-cold-war-intellectual-marcie-smith>

²² Gelderloos, Peter, "The Color Revolutions" in Gelderloos, P. *The Failure of Nonviolence*, Seattle : Left Bank Books, 2013; p. 49.

classist prejudice and epithets as part of the soft coup strategy; a discourse profusely employed by the right-wing opposition in Mexico as it will be evident on Annex 1 in this text. In short, Sharp's theory may only serve as an ideological justification for a dirty, antidemocratic war waged against a socially accountable, democratically elected government attempting to implement a progressive transformational agenda.

Mexico's Political Background

Is Mexico witnessing the rise of a right-wing undemocratic faction? To what extent is a soft coup d'État scenario unfolding in Mexico? This article will track the right-wing opposition moves over the last three years in order to determine if such a scenario is a real possibility.

After having unsuccessfully run for the presidency in 2006 and again in 2012, AMLO was finally elected on July 1st, 2018 with a tidal wave of votes, impossible to hide even for Mexico's National Electoral Institute (INE), known at least since 2006 for its patchy record of integrity and its hostility toward left-wing parties and candidates. With a turnout of 63.43%, AMLO received 53.19% of the popular vote; which means that 30,113,483 citizens chose him. Moreover, Morena secured the election of 308 out of 500 deputies (lower house members) and 69 out of 128 senators. AMLO's closest rival, National Action Party's (PAN) candidate Ricardo Anaya obtained 22.28% of the vote, or the support of 12,610,120 voters. Moreover, AMLO obtained the majority of the vote in each Mexican state except for one (Guanajuato), won by Anaya.

These results left the partisan opposition in disarray, entangled in a game of finger pointing, putting blame for their defeat alternatively on the system, the allegedly ignorant masses or on one another. More importantly for the purposes of this paper, the defeat of Mexico's two major parties—PAN and the Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI—left the elites with limited representation and cut their direct access to the centres of power and influence in the country.

However, the elites' economic and social power was still intact. From the moment presidential campaigns started, and especially since AMLO's victory was confirmed, the elites have made use of one strategy after another to put pressure on AMLO and force him to stop or at least slow down the 4T.

This article will tell the story of the manifold ways in which once privileged groups in Mexico have attempted to derail the current government's transformative agenda. The persistence of these strategies and their ultimate failure raises the question of how far the elites and their allies are willing to go in order to recover their privileges, and to what extent their adherence to democratic principles and practices is conditional upon the protection of their interests.

Strategies and Recurring Themes of the Right-Wing Opposition

Right-wing opposition to AMLO's transformative project has been relentless. Never mind the smart PR strategy adopted by the new president from day one of his mandate: a morning press conference held every working day at 7 AM, called "*La Mañanera*", where he presents his government's projects and achievements, and takes open questions from the press on every conceivable current event. The opposition will usually react to, try to hide, manipulate, distort the messages and send provocations to the president over the weekend so he cannot react immediately.

Some of the common tropes and strategies that the right-wing opposition resorts to are the following:

- portraying AMLO's supporters as mindless masses, fascinated by the president's rhetoric and lies,
- classist and racist attacks on AMLO's followers, employing loaded terms to dismiss AMLO supporters as being motivated by hunger or desire of revenge against middle- and upper class people,
- accusing the president of being a "populist", simplifying the term and understanding it as irresponsible public budget spending intended to sway the masses,
- flooding the internet with messages, particularly social media like Tweeter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram. It has been proven that many of those messages originate from a limited number of sources, which shows that the right's presence is fueled by bots run by presumably paid individuals. Their ubiquitous presence in those media gives the impression that opposition to the 4T is much stronger than what it actually is.
- use of aggressive, offensive language; attempting humiliation of AMLO and his supporters rather than a reasoned debate. This rhetoric is vastly popular among internet users who align with far-right ideas. This notably includes the use of degrading nicknames applied to the president: López (a very ordinary last name in Mexico, omitting the president's signature second last name "Obrador"), El Cacas (Mr. Shit), El Viejito (The Old Man), etc.

This is the reason why heavily edited videos of right-wing opinion leaders and politicians soar on the internet. The far-right thrives with bashing the other side of the political spectrum, and it seems that opposition to the 4T has decided to move from institutionalized speeches to a more combative discourse, always in search of demeaning and degrading their enemies.

- manipulated use of legal procedures against the federal government, taking advantage of the corrupt enclaves still existing in the Mexican justice system. This strategy has been used in particular to direct a barrage of lawsuits (*amparos* in the Mexican legal jargon) against 4T's signature infrastructure projects, and to punish Morena's candidates in the 2021 electoral process.

A neoliberal-inspired legalist language is a *sine qua non* characteristic in most legal cases, conforming to the uniformity of the arguments presented by the right-wing opposition against any legislation presented by the current administration.

- adoption and adaptation of themes of the left; using and reinterpreting some trendy sociopolitical tropes (feminism, environmentalism, freedom of expression, etc.) to support the right-wing opposition's agenda,
- crisis exaltation, invoking incompetency as a general characteristic of the 4T moments after an unexpected event (accident, natural disaster, pandemic management, etc.) occurs. Alarming assessments made by right-wing think-tanks and international financial media, among other sources, contribute to blow unexpected events out of proportion and cast a negative light upon the 4T government,
- alleged neutrality. Many non-institutional actors within the opposition argue that they do not have any political bias or affiliation, especially with opposition parties. However, on the eve of the upcoming midterm elections in June 2021, they have agreed to support opposition parties to give a "useful vote" against MORENA.

Conclusions

The current political situation in Mexico is increasingly alarming. The right-wing opposition has repeatedly, relentlessly tried to derail the government's sweeping reform agenda, with limited success so far. Their continued failure has made the opposition more strident, less restrained in their calls for toppling the president. The mainstream media and the web's social media provide an echo chamber for these calls, listened to and replicated by some sectors in the middle class and the international media.

When the country held midterm elections in early June 2021, attacks of the right-wing opposition became bolder and louder. The political climate is tense, inching toward the soft coup d'État destabilization scenario.

However, AMLO can still count on at least two major assets:

- the military seems to be firmly on his side. This situation excludes the violent coup scenario, and makes the soft coup option more difficult to achieve.

- massive popular support is still holding, despite the barrage of propaganda and disinformation aimed at the president. This popular support is not so much visible on the web, as the majorities in Mexico do not necessarily have access to the internet and are active on social media. This support is rather expressed in everyday silent support, that was measured at the polls in the midterm elections.

Indeed, despite all the efforts from the right-wing opposition, MORENA claimed a sound victory in the midterm elections, obtaining 198 positions in the Chamber of Deputies. Its allies, the Labour Party (PT), and the Green Party (PVEM), obtained 39 and 43 seats respectively, adding to a grand total of 280 elected legislators supporting the 4T. Moreover, the *Juntos Haremos Historia* coalition (composed by the aforementioned parties) won 11 governorships from the 15 that were in dispute. At the municipal level, MORENA won 240 mayorships by itself, and 67 in alliance with the PT.

Although AMLO's party did not obtain the qualified majority necessary to modify the Constitution (that is, two-thirds of the deputies or 334 votes out of 500), it is clear that the strategy of the opposition to defeat the 4T government did not grant them the victory that their main leaders wished for. However, the political pounding paid dividends within municipal elections in Mexico City, where the right-wing opposition won nine town halls against seven for AMLO's party. Before these elections, the opposition just had four municipalities under their control.

The aftermath of the elections has seen a significant decrease in popular attention to political life. In response, the right-wing opposition is repeating their campaign tactics (fear-mongering, fake news, racist epithets, among others) against AMLO's government. This can be seen in post-election events such as the debate regarding the cancer treatment shortage²³ and the aspirational middle class.²⁴

²³<https://elpais.com/mexico/sociedad/2021-06-17/el-desabasto-de-medicamentos-oncologicos-para-ninos-en-mexico-un-asunto-pendiente-por-mas-de-955-dias.html>

²⁴ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/claro-que-hay-superarnos-pero-no-volvernos-egoistas-fifi-amlo/>

Annex 1: Timeline of Right-Wing Opposition to the 4T

March 30th, 2018: The presidential campaign starts. **Margarita Zavala**²⁵ and **Felipe Calderón** attacked AMLO, calling him “*The Messiah*”.

Officially, the Mexican presidential campaign started on this day, as agreed by the National Electoral Institute (INE).²⁶ While AMLO postponed his first campaign day due to the start of the Holy Week,²⁷ two of his rival candidates did theirs in great fashion.

The candidate of the coalition *Por Mexico al Frente* (composed by the PAN-National Action Party, the PRD-Democratic Revolution Party, and the MC-Citizen Movement Party), **Ricardo Anaya**, vowed to remove the old political class from the presidency. His political speech attacked politicians in Mexico generally, not targeting anyone in particular.²⁸ However, at the exact same night, another contender for the presidency did exactly that. In front of the iconic Independence Angel statue, independent candidate **Margarita Zavala** started her campaign stating that Mexico does not need “enlightened”, but “worthy” leaders who care “for the people.”²⁹ Later that night, her husband, former president **Felipe Calderón**, tweeted the following:

*#tuSeguridad [your security] is the subject of the first spot of @Mzavalagc. While @lopezobrador_ proposes amnesty for criminals, she is committed to defending your family, supporting our soldiers and sailors and creating the best police in Mexico. She has #Values to do it.*³⁰

After this, it was clear that **Zavala**’s message was directed towards AMLO. During the campaign, **Calderón** accused AMLO of the following:

- Ignorance regarding environmental and security issues;
- Protecting Nestora Salgado, an activist who spent 2 years and 7 months in jail, accused of robbery, illegal deprivation of liberty and aggravated kidnapping. She was acquitted of all these crimes and was released on March 18th, 2016;
- Censoring the documentary “*Populismo en América Latina*”, which was never released but teased during electoral times. The producer of the project accused AMLO of censorship, even though the now President was just a candidate when the authorities ordered the documentary’s publicity to be removed.

²⁵ A brief profile of individuals mentioned in this timeline with names in bold characters is included in “Annex 2: Political actors in the right-wing opposition to the 4T” by the end of this paper.

²⁶<https://www.dw.com/es/m%C3%A9xico-2018-candidatos-presidenciales-inician-campa%C3%B1a/a-43192419>

²⁷ <http://redtampico.net/?p=193647>

²⁸ Supra note 1.

²⁹ Supra note 1.

³⁰ <https://twitter.com/FelipeCalderón/status/979744851666358273>

After AMLO's election, **Calderón** has remained as one of his main critics.

AMLO has been called a messiah by political rivals since his election as Head of Government of the now-extinct Federal District (renamed 'Mexico City' in 2016). In 2006, **Enrique Krauze**, a right-wing columnist and historian, wrote an article entitled "*The Tropical Messiah*" in *Letras Libres* magazine that he directs; in which he remembers several sympathizers of AMLO calling him a "messiah", "the anointed one", tying these alleged voices with Jung's "Mana personality". Krauze stated that "*the collective unconscious can drag a man into imbalance, demanding him to fulfill messianic expectations.*" This expression is still being used in 2021, and it has the objective to pinpoint AMLO's sympathizers as "mindless sheeps." A good example of this trend is a tweet from former president Vicente Fox:

Thank you god AMLO! Thank you tropical messiah. Thank you righteous prophet. You accuse and forgive us in front of the good people. Thank you.

According to this rhetoric, AMLO's messianic aspirations, allegedly makes him intolerant to criticism. He is also accused of ignorance regarding several national issues. Later, right-wingers would correct these expressions to call AMLO "outdated", changing to a more aggressive tone after AMLO's electoral victory.

Third, his censorship-prone persona. Any censorship allegations that occurred when he was not an elected official can be deemed invalid, since freedom of expression (per Article 19, section 3, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) can subject to certain restrictions, which must, however, be expressly set by law. AMLO would not have the legal power to conduct censorship as a candidate. However, this argument can and has been used now during AMLO's administration.

April 22nd, 2018: The First Presidential Debate.

INE programmed three presidential debates during the campaign. The first occurred within the facilities of Mexico City's *Palacio de Minería* (Mining Palace, old mining and engineering school). It featured the five presidential candidates: Andrés Manuel López Obrador (MORENA-National Regeneration Movement and others), **Ricardo Anaya Cortés** (*Por Mexico al Frente* coalition), **José Antonio Meade Kuribreña** (*Todos Por Mexico* coalition - PRI), **Margarita Zavala** (Independent) and Governor of Nuevo León Jaime Heliodoro Rodríguez Calderón (Independent). After two hours of stale and repetitive bickering, the only consensus that the press media reached was that all the other candidates attacked AMLO the most. *Reforma* Group (one of Mexico's biggest news outlets) published that 50 verbal accusations were made against him. Among them, we have Meade stating:

Regarding the amnesty idea that you, Andrés Manuel, want to put forward, I ask you: How are you going to explain to families that you want to sit down with criminals to talk? In your ambition for power and because of your fear of losing again, you have become those criminals' puppet.

The concept of amnesty is one frequently used by the opposition to point out an alleged alliance between AMLO and criminal cartels. However, when the concept became actual legislation in April 2020, it was directed to free imprisoned non-repeat offenders that are purging sentence or currently facing charges for criminal offenses such as abortion, Indigenous people that did not have access to a translator during the trial, political prosecuted, among others. Moreover, the Amnesty Law expressly states in its Article 2 that this benefit is not applicable to people that, for example, committed kidnapping.

The opposition nonetheless ignored the intent of the actual law. As an example, Meade's former spokesman, **Javier Lozano** tweeted the following statement:

As you can see, the president is a man of his word. He offered amnesty and complied with it. AMLO is the worst president in modern Mexican history. Period. #EICacas

Participation of Lozano and other political actors is to be noted since they have abandoned the political language etiquette and have decided to confront the 4T with an aggressive and insulting language.

May 20th, 2018: The Second Debate. The anachronistic candidate.

The newspaper *El Economista* reported that in this second debate, held in Tijuana, the candidate that got the most direct attacks from his adversaries was, once again, AMLO. **Anaya** threw the most interesting statement at AMLO, branding him as an anachronistic person:

Your problem is not age but that your ideas are very old, your problem is not that you do not speak English, but that you do not understand the world. (...) You are proposing a lot of nonsense (...) I invite you to update yourself.

In the eyes of opposition to the 4T, the anachronism of AMLO is especially tangible when dealing with green energies. This a tweet from **Margarita Zavala**:

What can be expected of a presidential initiative that begins like this: "In the framework of neoliberal or neo-Porfirian politics" (between contradiction and anachronism) a process was imposed to "deprive Mexicans of the national electricity industry ...

This argument was also addressed at AMLO by Spanish academics when he sent a letter to the Spanish Crown asking for an apology for the atrocities committed by the Spanish on the original peoples of Mexico during the Conquest and Colony; qualifying the letter as ridiculous and anachronistic.

June 12th, 2018: The third debate. Corruption allegations.

For the third time, AMLO's adversaries attacked him the most during the last presidential debate. Once again, **Ricardo Anaya** had the best punch at AMLO, pointing out that he had illegally awarded contracts during his tenure as head of the Mexico City government (2000-2005). At one point, Anaya showed a photo of AMLO with **Jose Maria Rioboó**, whom he said he had awarded contracts for 170 million pesos (US \$8.2 million).

Corruption accusations have appeared throughout AMLO's administration as Mexico City mayor. Most of them have been proven false, but there have been episodes of abuse of power and embezzlements within his administration.

The right-wing is using these events to compare AMLO and the 4T to the PRI, the party that governed Mexico for 76 years and who took Enrique Peña Nieto to the presidency. Peña Nieto's administration has been branded by the Unit of Financial Intelligence (UIF) as the most corrupt term in contemporary Mexican history. Commonly, the right-wing will make the comparison by stating that MORENA and the PRI are a hidden coalition, which they have called the PRI-MOR (charm in Spanish).

July 1st, 2018: Election Day's bash at the polls. AMLO's sound victory.

As unvarnished polls announced with months of anticipation, AMLO had a walk in the park while seeking the necessary votes to obtain the presidency. AMLO's numbers were so thrashing in the publication of the first results of the INE's exit polls, that his adversaries admitted defeat on Election Night, congratulating AMLO shortly after.

However, the opposition remained silent after AMLO's victory the days after. In contrast, the international community was celebrating loudly. This is a tweet of Spanish political scientist, Juan Carlos Monedero:

It had been a long time since the international community expected a President of Mexico with as much hope as AMLO. @lopezobrador_ puts Mexico on the global agenda again. Finally Mexico!

Alongside him, an array of world leaders congratulated AMLO on his victory. Donald Trump (USA), Justin Trudeau (Canada), Antonio Guterres (UN Secretary General), Vladimir Putin (Russia), Angela Merkel (Germany), Emmanuel Macron (France), Pedro

Sánchez (Spain), Theresa May (United Kingdom), and many others announced excitement and eagerness to work with the newly elected Mexican president.

October 25th-30th, 2018: The cancellation of the Texcoco Airport through a popular consultation

Throughout the campaign, AMLO stated that he was against the construction of Mexico City's New International Airport (based on Texcoco, State of Mexico) due to its high cost and alleged corruption in the contracts to build it. After his election, he announced that a popular consultation on the matter would be conducted between October 25th and 28th. Two days later, the president of the Arturo Rosenblueth Foundation, Enrique Calderón Alzati, to whom AMLO entrusted the coordination of the consultation and the counting of the votes, delivered the results: 310,463 people voted to continue the Texcoco airport (29%), while 747,000 (69%) voted in favour of the president's plan to expand the existing Santa Lucía military airport as an alternative location for the new airport. Up to 98.18% of the votes cast in the installed polling stations were counted; 2,722 votes were annulled.

After the cancellation was announced, the right-wing's response was mixed. While some actors solemnly appealed to the immediate response of foreign markets, others were ferociously attacking the decision. Here are some examples of the first kind of reaction:

@memobarba: "Still marginally, but notorious at the time of the announcement of the cancellation of #NAIM, the rise in the price of the dollar immediately appears. Only a few minutes have passed since the announcement that Santa Lucía won, but the market has already given its verdict: it is bad news for the future of Mexico. #AMLO, the sole responsible."

However, aggressiveness was more pronounced among those who did not agree with the cancellation of the Texcoco Airport:

@GlodeJo07: "Well, Santa Lucía won and they will be able to build their two dirt tracks and their fried food stands. Welcome to 1980's Mexico."

@tumbaburross: "What if we also build the Texcoco airport and call it Legitimate NAICM? Us, the fifis, could use that one, and let the chairros use Santa Lucía³¹."

³¹ "Fifi" is jargon for opponents of the 4T, "chairo" for supporters. These are classist epithets. "Chairo" is, as defined by El Colegio de México, a "person who defends social and political causes against the ideologies of the right, but who is attributed a lack of true commitment to what he claims to defend; a person who is self-satisfied with their attitudes."[#] On the other hand, the Mexican Academy of Language defines "fifi" as a "conceited person who takes care of following the fashions"[#], attitudes that are commonly associated with people from higher socioeconomic status.

The first two are famous influencers frequently cited among other right-wing sympathizers. Differently from the rise of right-wing opinion leaders in the US and Canada (Ben Shapiro, Gavin McInnes, Alex Jones, Jordan Peterson, among others), right-wing influencers do not actively engage in public debates against 4T's sympathizers outside of the reduced text-space provided by Twitter and other social media platforms. Mentioning each and one of them would be a titanic task, so we will be only detailing their profiles if they made national news due to their polemic stances against the 4T and, in most of the occasions, AMLO's persona.

December 1st, 2018: The rise of **Claudio X. González Guajardo** as the first head of the opposition.

Every six years this day, Mexicans see how the President elect is sworn in as the new President of the United Mexican States. Newly minted AMLO saw how the majority of the Mexican people celebrated his inauguration. However, one of AMLO's main antagonists, **Claudio X. González** made his proclamation of war on Twitter, stating:

*Inauguration - AMLO - **Against the free market, against energy reform and in favour of a retrograde, statist, interventionist, stagnant vision. The markets are going to react to this Manichaeism in a negative way. This is going to go bad, very bad. Pity.***

Alongside his public callouts on AMLO, **González Guajardo** is a common legal rival for the President's constitutional and legislative reforms. The most famous of them was the constitutional challenge that temporarily suspended the construction of the Santa Lucía Airport, one of AMLO's major public works.³²

These clashes have built up two arguments commonly used among the right-wing groups that oppose the president. First, the use of the expression "así no" (not that way) included in the Mexican Business Council's letter addressed to AMLO.³³ Ironically, this expression has been reclaimed by AMLO's sympathizers to mock his adversaries, who have abandoned it for more aggressive remarks. Secondly, the constant legal challenges issued by **González Guajardo** and colleagues against the legislation proposed by the president, triggering suspensions that have paralyzed federal projects in all fields; particularly public works. Moreover, these tactics have been used by right-wing politicians against other aspects of the 4T.

³² <https://contralacorrupcion.mx/suspension-construccion-de-santa-lucia/>

³³ <https://bit.ly/2RdniXA>

December 2nd, 2018: The #MarchaFifi takes the streets.

During the entirety of the Inauguration Day, there were celebrations across the country. However, the next day, a multitude of people took the streets of Mexico City to protest against AMLO. However, the reports stated that the attendance decreased in comparison to the march against the cancellation of the Texcoco Airport. Some of the slogans were: “Friend of Maduro, sure dictator”, “It is a horror to be with Obrador” and “Neither chairo nor fifís, do not divide the country.”³⁴ As it is common among right-wingers across the globe, AMLO is constantly branded a communist. During his inauguration, AMLO had photo ops with many political leaders that attended the event. One of them was Nicolás Maduro, president of Venezuela; *bête noire* of the Latin American right. This photo made some of the attendees of the march to point out an alleged friendship between the leaders, which made AMLO more propense to become a dictator.³⁵ Lastly, we have the slogan “It is a horror to be with Obrador”, which is a parody of one of the most famous phrases used among AMLO’s sympathizers: “It is an honour to be with Obrador.”

Supporters of the right-wing commonly accuse AMLO of how polarized the political debates are in Mexico. Precisely, the slogan “Neither chairo nor fifí, do not divide the country” aims at contesting AMLO’s alleged intents to create animosity among the population.

Marches against AMLO’s presidency will be recurrent throughout his administration, but they have never reached the massive characteristic of the sit-in in Reforma in 2006 and other similar protests made by the Mexican left. However, these protests were still far from their climax.

January 7th-January 20th, 2019: The gasoline shortage.

In the first days of 2019, AMLO announced a strategy to stop *huachicoleo* (gasoline theft), entailing the closure of gas ducts. The closure of some pipelines impacted consumers in states such as Jalisco, Michoacan, Guanajuato, Queretaro, Hidalgo, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila and Puebla. Immense lines of cars waited for hours for gas. The response of the right-wing, again, was motley. Whereas **Calderón** and other critics of the government recurred to the international press to highlight how the country’s reputation was going down the sink, other spheres of detractors were more aggressive:

@lopezdoriga: “In other words, according to the trolls and bots there is no shortage of gasoline, there is only a lack of supply as the government

³⁴ <https://www.nacion321.com/ciudadanos/es-un-horror-estar-con-obrador-el-nuevo-grito-de-la-marchafifi>

³⁵ *Ibid.*

says. So clear. They have no remedy. Oh dear pendejairros [chairo assholes]! I'll let you be while you receive instructions."³⁶

However, the most interesting tweet issued during the dates in which the shortage happened was the following:

*@vanessavallej0: "It is not Venezuela; it is Mexico a month after AMLO came to power. There is no gasoline, therefore there is no way to transport basic things like food."*³⁷

Surprisingly, Walmart took the headlines to respond to this last tweet, stating that all the tweets with images of alleged food shortage were false.³⁸ The Venezuela-Mexico comparison has been popular throughout AMLO's presidency. It is worth noting that, among the tweets recovered from the dates stipulated in the subtitle, there were a considerable number of foreign accounts making the same or similar claims:

*@GloriaAlvarez85: "Where is your gasoline, Mexicans?"*³⁹

*@cristiancrespoj: "It is not Venezuela, it is Mexico. How efficient that of @lopezobrador_. It has not been a month since he took office and there is already a lack of gasoline in some parts of Mexico. Socialist Efficiency of the XXI Century."*⁴⁰

From these accounts, the most relevant is the one coming from Guatemalan political scientist and lecturer, **Gloria Álvarez**, best seller author and lecturer who has been currently adopted as one of the poster children of the Latin American right⁴¹. The Mexican right-wing is keen to invite or cite foreign opinion leaders like her or members of certain diasporas to highlight how catastrophic an administration with "similar" ideas than AMLO could be. An example of the latter option is shown in the following tweet by **Claudio X. González Guajardo**:

I had a conversation with a Venezuelan friend this week. I am convinced that if there is not a citizen rebirth that manifests itself with force this June

³⁶ <https://twitter.com/Lópezdoriga/status/1082101476867096578>

³⁷ <https://twitter.com/vanessavallej0/status/108418245220903426>

³⁸ <https://www.radioformula.com.mx/noticias/mexico/20190115/walmart-desabasto-comida-mexico-anaqueles-vacios-twitter-2019/>

³⁹ <https://twitter.com/GloriaAlvarez85/status/1084543858099343362>

⁴⁰ <https://twitter.com/cristiancrespoj/status/1084163447309377537>

⁴¹ Castro-Rea, Julián, "Escrever com a direita: os best sellers da direita no espanhol e sua promoção nas redes transnacionais" in Bohoslavsky, Ernesto et al, eds. *Pensar as direitas na América Latina*, São Paulo: Alameda, 2019: 149.

*6, we are heading towards a future of authoritarianism, impoverishment, and destruction like that of Venezuela. It is in our hands to avoid it.*⁴²

January 18th, 2019: The explosion in Tlahuelilpan.

During the closure of oil pipelines to combat *huachicoleo*, a tragedy occurred in the municipality of Tlahuelilpan, Hidalgo. A clandestine milking of a PEMEX gasoline duct exploded in the community of San Primitivo, resulting in 137 deaths. It took more than four hours for the authorities to stop pumping through that specific duct. Previously, the National Guard arrived to prevent oil theft, but they were received by armed men who threatened the soldiers and warned them not to disrupt the ravaging crime. Videos of moments before of the explosion showed men with assault rifles intensely dialoguing with the officers, as well as citizens retrieving the gasoline and, ghastly enough, bathing with the flammable liquid.⁴³

After the tragedy, most of the messages were of grievance. However, the right-wing decided to throw some jabs at AMLO's administration, who they blamed as the main responsible of this episode due to his strategy against *huachicoleo*. **Ricardo Alemán**, for example, constantly cites the tragedy while criticizing AMLO:

*The humanist @lopezobrador_ who throws pepper spray at mayors, rewards kidnapers, who did nothing for the deaths of Tlahuelilpan, who left thousands of children without nurseries, without medicines; to women without shelters and who has 31 thousand dead in his government! Devilish humanist!*⁴⁴

February 28th, 2019: The elimination of fiscal incentives for kindergartens.

In February, the president canceled the delivery of public resources to kindergartens, because he said there was corruption in them. From then on, subsidies will be received by the mother, father, or guardian so that they pay daycare fees or a relative for the care of the minors. Posteriorly, the undersecretary of Welfare, Ariadna Montiel, announced that 97,180 children registered in the childcare program were not located during the census that was carried out, alongside other discrepancies. However, María Luisa Albores, Secretary of Welfare, assured that none of the current children's homes will be closed by the federal government, and the resources for this purpose will be delivered directly to the parents.⁴⁵

⁴² <https://twitter.com/ClaudioXGG/status/1379609708126822400>

⁴³ <https://www.nytimes.com/es/2019/01/21/espanol/amlo-ducto-explosion-hidalgo.html>

⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/RicardoAlemanMx/status/1186738810094264332>

⁴⁵ <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2019/04/estancias-infantiles-irregularidades-ninos-fantasma/>

Despite the existence of a decree that stated that the resources that were given in the form of subsidies to the kindergartens, the opposition claimed that AMLO decided to discontinue the program altogether. This is a tweet published by the current leader of the PAN, **Marko Cortés**:

The @GobiernoMX is incongruous. It does not hurt to pay 34 thousand million pesos to the fiber holders of the canceled [Texcoco Airport] but denies 2.1 million pesos for kindergartens or 3.4 million pesos for women's shelters. Those are the priorities?''⁴⁶

Although the money started flowing directly to the mothers that benefited from the kindergarten program, the elimination of it is still being used as an argument in 2021, which is an electoral year.

June 5th, 2019: A constitutional challenge halts the construction of the Santa Lucía Airport.

On this day, the collective #NoMasDerroches (composed by a myriad of civil associations, among them COPARMEX and MCCI) announced plans to suspend the works at the Santa Lucía Airport through the tribunals. The decision was celebrated by **de Hoyos** and the MCCI:

The construction of the Airport in Santa Lucía is inconvenient for Mexico. From @Coparmex we recognize the Federal Judicial Power that has determined the suspension of the irrational project. #NoMásDerroches''⁴⁷

The suspension of the Santa Lucía Airport shows that the Judiciary is a true counterweight to our democracy. The Collective #NoMasDerroches will continue to promote this type of legal action against megaprojects that damage the environment.''⁴⁸

It was reported that the collective #NoMasDerroches presented 147 *amparos* (constitutional trials) against the works at the Santa Lucía Airport. In fact, #NoMasDerroches plans to continue with this legal strategy throughout AMLO's administration.⁴⁹ However, the Tenth Collegiate Court in Administrative Matters of Mexico City revoked the last of the seven definitive suspensions that kept the project on hold, considering that they were notoriously inadmissible as well as frivolous and

⁴⁶ <https://twitter.com/MarkoCortes/status/1101586139339677696>

⁴⁷ <https://twitter.com/gdehoyoswalther/status/1136065699498139648>

⁴⁸ <https://twitter.com/MXvsCORRUPCION/status/1135964967503564801>

⁴⁹ <https://www.milenio.com/politica/hay-147-amparos-contras-el-aeropuerto-de-santa-lucia>

malicious.⁵⁰ The collective reacted to this arguing that they will continue their legal battle despite the revocation of the suspensions.⁵¹

August 13th, 2019: Rosario Robles detained

A judge ordered the preventive detention of **Rosario Robles Berlanga**, former Secretary of Social Development, who was admitted to the Santa Marta prison in Mexico City. She is accused of participating in a corruption network that allegedly diverted public resources for 5,073 million pesos, about US \$263 million.⁵² As of March 9th, 2021, she declined to negotiate with FGR, Mexico's public prosecution, claiming her innocence before court.⁵³

Several opposition actors and some press accused AMLO of exercising a political vendetta against Robles:

@VicenteFoxQue: "Bread and circus are the justice of this Government. The dignity of people, human rights and due process are "worthless" to them. "No one can be found guilty before ..." Why do they make public derision [with this case]? Rosario Robles arrives at the southern prison for a court hearing."⁵⁴

@CiroGomezL: "For an unproven crime that does not warrant jail, Rosario Robles sleeps in prison. Could she really escape or was it just trying to give her a lesson? Who would deny that the enemy of the regime has simply applied the law and in what we find out, that she rots in Santa Martha."⁵⁵

Robles, through her daughter, tweets details about her process:

@Rosario_Robles_: "Today's statements show that the president is misinformed. I am not accused of a crime of corruption, but of omission, which does not mean reparation of the damage. It is regrettable that it interferes in the affairs of an autonomous body. No Republic is possible without a balance of powers."⁵⁶

⁵⁰<https://web.archive.org/web/20200226214652/https://www.jornada.com.mx/ultimas/politica/2019/10/16/cae-ultimo-amparo-contrasanta-lucia-via-libre-a-las-obras-458.html>

⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/nomasderroches/status/1184615033705250817>

⁵² <https://www.france24.com/es/20190813-mexico-arresto-rosario-robles-corrupcion>

⁵³<https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/nacional/rosario-robles-declina-negociar-con-la-fiscalia-ira-a-juicio-por-estafa-maestra/>

⁵⁴ <https://twitter.com/VicenteFoxQue/status/1161051391206363137>

⁵⁵ <https://twitter.com/CiroGomezL/status/1161500276429393920>

⁵⁶ https://twitter.com/Rosario_Robles_/status/1367994082082095108

October 16th, 2019: The *Culiacanazo*

On October 17, 2019, a series of events took place in Culiacán, Sinaloa, which led to the arrest and subsequent release of Ovidio Guzmán, one of “El Chapo” Guzmán sons, Mexico’s biggest drug-trafficker. The scenes that occurred in Culiacán were worthy of a warzone.

That day, the security forces were overwhelmed by the operational capacity of organized crime, which forced them to release Ovidio and caused serious doubts about AMLO’s security strategy. The first version offered by the government was that the security officers had informed the president about the operation. When they noticed it was failing, in order not to put the population at risk and “to avoid a massacre”, Secretaries of Security, National Defense and the Navy had released the detainee. Former Public Safety Secretary Alfonso Durazo said that a National Guard patrol had been attacked from inside a house in Culiacán. After entering the house, the militarized police found four men, including Ovidio Guzmán. However, the elements were overwhelmed by an armed group and withdrew to avoid loss of life, according to the government’s version. Months later, AMLO revealed that he took the decision to release Guzmán.⁵⁷

This questionable decision caused a landslide of arguments from all the sectors of Mexican public life. The press, both national and international, addressed this case as a humiliation and delegitimizing of the presidential figure.⁵⁸

From the right-wing, there were two types of responses. First, we have arguments given by the institutional right. People like **Ricardo Anaya** criticized the failed strategy that the AMLO’s administration had that day:

*The violence did not begin 2 years ago, but it is getting worse, due to the lack of strategy and the AMLO’s quirky ideas to confront the crime, such as greeting El Chapo’s mother or freeing Ovidio. I propose a route for peace. #ProposeRatherThanOppose.*⁵⁹

However, the most common response from the position was mockery and even conspiracy theories, respectively shown here:

⁵⁷<https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/seguridad/un-ano-del-culiacanazo-el-dia-de-la-caceria-contra-ovidio-guzman>

⁵⁸<https://www.forbes.com.mx/gobierno-de-amlo-humillado-asi-vio-la-prensa-internacional-la-liberacion-de-ovidio-guzman/>

⁵⁹ <https://twitter.com/RicardoAnayaC/status/1315638567650156547>

@SergioSarmiento: *“I guess AMLO went to greet El Chapo’s mother to accuse Ovidio. He had already said that we must accuse those who misbehave with their mothers and grandmothers.”*⁶⁰

@JusticieroLetal: *“Ovidio Guzmán was a schoolmate of Alfonso Durazo’s son. It is understood who approached Amlo to pay for his campaign. #AmloOnThePayrollOfOvidio.”*⁶¹

According to journalist Lourdes Mendoza, Ovidio Guzmán López and the son of the Secretary of Public Safety, Alfonso Durazo, would have been classmates in elementary school. Through her social networks, the journalist, collaborator of Milenio Television, pointed out that she found this after reviewing a CEYCA’s school yearbook.⁶² This information went into *La Mañanera* daily press conference, where a journalist questioned AMLO about this coincidence, with the president denying the report.⁶³

Although it seems that Ovidio Guzmán and Alfonso Durazo’s son did attend the same school, to claim that there was a relationship between them can be a hyperextension of the facts. Several journals’ headlines (regardless of their size) asserted the existence of a friendship between the individuals⁶⁴ and, as we can see in the tweet cited by the authors, some people alleged that the tie went all the way up to AMLO, whom they accused of receiving campaign funds from the drug trafficker.

This episode is constantly reminded by right-wingers while criticizing AMLO’s administration and sympathizers.

November 4th, 2019: The LeBaron Family Massacre

Only two weeks after the *Culiacanazo*, nine members of a prominent Mormon family in northern Mexico, all women and children, were shot and killed in territory disputed by the Sinaloa Cartel and the La Línea criminal gangs. Unlike the majority of murder victims in Mexico, the LeBarons are US citizens and Mormons, part of a religious community that separated from the Church of Latter-Day Saints in the state of Utah, where the government prohibited polygamy. Although Mexico had it forbidden too, the Mexican administration allowed a broader definition of the concept of “family” and did not enforce the existing laws against them. They have been in Mexican territory since the 1880s.

⁶⁰ <https://twitter.com/SergioSarmiento/status/1244456218468306944>

⁶¹ <https://twitter.com/JusticieroLetal/status/1185328916095029248>

⁶² <https://www.milenio.com/policia/ovidio-guzman-nino-legionarios-cristo-narco>

⁶³ <https://www.sinembargo.mx/21-10-2019/3665207>

⁶⁴ <https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2019/10/20/las-fotos-que-probaron-la-relacion-entre-los-hijos-de-el-chapo-y-alfonso-durazo/>

Like everyone else in the country, the LeBarons saw Mexico going down in a spiral of violence after the war on drugs started during the Calderón administration. After the kidnapping of his son Eric and the murder of Benjamín, the leader of the LeBarons, Julián LeBaron, became an activist and joined poet Javier Sicilia in the National Movement for Peace. His activism has put him in the cross-hairs of the drug cartels governing the zone.

The LeBaron Family massacre caused tension between the family and the government since, without the consent of AMLO's administration, the family requested the US government to intervene by declaring Mexican drug trafficking cartels as terrorist cells. Under US law, this declaration would allow the United States' army to move into Mexican territory to apprehend or eliminate criminals that would entice danger to their citizens;⁶⁵ a petition that, two years after the unfortunate events, still resonates within Texan politics.⁶⁶

After the sad events, the right-wing opposition blamed AMLO for this awful situation:

@ChumelTorres: "Solalinde says that it is not time to protest against AMLO. Growth of 0%, Culiacán, Record of murders, LeBarón, Pemex losses, Fraud to elect CNDH commissioner, They closed children's rooms, They removed community kitchens, It is not time. God's word. We praise you Obrador."⁶⁷

In December 2020, AMLO inaugurated a monument in memory of the LeBaron Family in Bavispe, Sonora.⁶⁸ He promised that, although the perpetrators were detained, the investigation file would not be closed until *"all the truth is known."*⁶⁹

December 11th, 2019: The detention of Genaro García Luna

The top Mexican police chief during the government of **Felipe Calderón** and main strategist in the fight against drug trafficking, Genaro García Luna, was arrested in Dallas. The former secretary of Public Security in the Calderón Administration is accused by the same New York court that sentenced Joaquín El Chapo Guzmán of collaborating with the Sinaloa Cartel during the years of the war on drugs that the Mexican president undertook. García Luna faces three charges for organized crime and the US justice mentions him as the arm of the Mexican government that allowed the most powerful cartel in the world, in exchange for millionaire bribes, to operate with total

⁶⁵<https://aristeguinoticias.com/2411/mexico/familia-lebaron-solicita-a-eu-designar-a-los-carteles-de-la-droga-como-terroristas/>

⁶⁶ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/gobernador-de-texas-pide-designar-terroristas-a-carteles-mexicanos/>

⁶⁷ <https://twitter.com/ChumelTorres/status/1197221742995017728>

⁶⁸ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/politica-amlo-inaugura-memorial-por-matanza-de-familia-lebaron/>

⁶⁹ Ibid.

impunity in Mexico.⁷⁰ Not surprisingly, **Calderón** denied being aware of the links between García Luna and the Sinaloa Cartel.⁷¹

AMLO highlighted that the UIF sent all the information to the US government. The head of the UIF, Santiago Nieto, reported a transfer of 2 billion pesos from the Ministry of the Interior at the time to a company related to García Luna.⁷² Moreover, AMLO mentioned that, regarding the possible participation of **Calderón** in García Luna's wrongdoings, they were not anticipating whether he is involved, but that they will not defend him because if they did so they would be accomplices of corruption.⁷³ The opposition reacted to the news as it follows:

@CiroGomezL: "#FinalComment Statements of King Zambada, protected witnesses and a supposed ill-gotten fortune, that's why García Luna is imprisoned. Those are the facts so far. The rest is lynching from those who do not lose an opportunity."⁷⁴

Aside from **Calderón**, none of the characters that were in power in previous administrations manifested their opinion regarding García Luna's detention. However, that did not stop right-wing sympathizers from making their own assumptions about people that collaborated with AMLO in the past. None of the people cited on those tweets have had (at least officially known) connections with organized crime.

Drug traffickers have tentacles deep inside every level of Mexican politics. Recently, it was revealed that the candidate for governor of Nuevo León state, Samuel García Sepúlveda, is related to Gilberto "El June" García Mena, former leader of the Gulf Cartel.⁷⁵ However, García Luna's involvement is the highest profile scandal of this type in recent Mexican history. Before him, these allegations were mere assumptions that political rivals of **Calderón** constantly issued against him.

December 16th, 2019: The Mayan Train consultation

AMLO proposed the Mayan Train project during the campaign, and after his victory, his administration started the project in Palenque. The project consists of 1,554 km of railways, divided in three parts and 18 stations. Its intention is to bring economic

⁷⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-50735350>

⁷¹ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/Calderón-niega-saber-de-nexos-de-García-luna-con-el-narco/>

⁷² <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/detectan-transferencia-de-2-mmdp-una-empresa-de-genaro-García-luna>

⁷³ <https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2019/12/11/López-obrador-la-detencion-de-García-luna-es-la-derrota-del-regimen-corrupcto/>

⁷⁴ <https://twitter.com/CiroGomezL/status/1204638873902448640>

⁷⁵ <https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2021/04/17/quien-es-el-june-ex-lider-del-cartel-del-golfo-que-tiene-un-lazo-familiar-con-samuel-García/>

development to Southeast Mexico (Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatan, and Quintana Roo), one of the poorest regions in the country.⁷⁶

The details of the project regarding environmental and Indigenous land requirements were not made clear from the outset, causing a reaction by several Indigenous groups throughout the republic. In fact, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), an Indigenous historical leftist movement, vowed to defend the land against government economic projects with their lives,⁷⁷ marching to Mexico City on February 21st, 2020.⁷⁸

To obtain the consent necessary to continue with the Mayan Train project, AMLO ordered the National Institute for Indigenous People to run a public consultation to ask Indigenous groups their opinion. The invitations to participate were written in the dominant languages in the region (Maya, Ch'ol, Tzeltal, and Tzotzil).⁷⁹ With a participation of 70% of the 1,078 Indigenous communities summoned for the consultation, 92.3% voted “Yes” to continue with the mega infrastructure project, and 7.4% voted “No”.⁸⁰ The EZLN described the process as simulation.

Another group that rejected the results of the public consultation was the right-wing party PAN. The national coordinator of the PAN Environment Section pointed out that the Secretariat of the Interior oversaw the citizen consultation, which makes AMLO a judge and a party, removing all legitimacy from the process. In addition, he accused the government of not providing the population of the municipalities where the train will pass with the necessary information to form an opinion and vote for or against the project. Added to this, he continued, is the lack of impact studies that accurately determine the way in which the region’s ecosystems will be affected.⁸¹

Despite not being keen to environmental policies themselves, right-wing politicians have been drawn to these arguments to discredit their left-side colleagues or, in any case, to scratch off their brand of environmental “pariahs” and enter the mainstream debate.⁸² For instance, both the **Calderón** and Fox administrations invested money in urbanization activities to provide the project called “*Malecón Tajamar*” with the

⁷⁶ <https://www.trenmaya.gob.mx/>

⁷⁷ <https://www.nodal.am/2020/01/rechazo-a-megaproyectos-de-amlo-en-el-26-aniversario-del-alzamiento-zapatista/>

⁷⁸ <https://politica.expansion.mx/mexico/2020/01/08/el-ezln-protestara-el-21-de-febrero-en-la-cdmx-contra-proyectos-de-López-obrador>

⁷⁹ <https://www.gob.mx/inpi/documentos/convocatoria-al-proceso-de-consulta-indigena-sobre-el-proyecto-de-desarrollo-tren-maya>

⁸⁰ <https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/politica/En-la-consulta-sobre-el-Tren-Maya-92.3-voto-por-el-Si-y-7.4-por-el-No-20191216-0034.html>

⁸¹ <https://www.sdnoticias.com/nacional/pan-tren-maya-resultado-encuesta-consulta-ciudadana-riult-rivera.html>

⁸² <http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/19364/1/10.pdf#page=424>

necessary infrastructure to function properly; devastating the mangrove next to it.⁸³ Notwithstanding this, **Calderón** took on to Twitter to share his views about the Mayan Train:

*It's a shame, but this photo shows what will happen to the #[MayanTrain]: they are going to destroy the jungle, including the two most important reserves we have: Calakmul and Sian Ka'an. Even in the government ceremony, they showed us the threatening bulldozers ready for the mega ecocide.*⁸⁴

None of the main right-wing advocates have expressed their concern regarding the Indigenous rights that might be impacted by this project. However, they do throw the occasional hurrah for the legal victories obtained by certain Indigenous collectives to suspend the works.⁸⁵ In the past, Indigenous rights were in peril due to major green energy ventures. During Peña Nieto's administration, Indigenous groups in Oaxaca presented a constitutional challenge against the biggest wind farm in Latin America, financed by several multinationals such as Walmart, Mitsubishi, Femsa-Coca-Cola, Siemens, and Cemex.⁸⁶ The Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation (SCJN) ruled in favour of the companies in October 2018.⁸⁷

In contrast, there was only one newspaper column written the day the Indigenous public consultation approved the Mayan Train. Ironically enough, the column was written by the Energy Secretariat.

February 28th, 2020: COVID-19 arrives

On this day, Mexico registered its first infected person. AMLO instructed Undersecretary of Health Hugo López-Gatell and his scientific technical team to present daily data regarding the situation of the pandemic in Mexico, every night at 9 pm. April 21st saw the inauguration of Phase 3 restrictions which, at the time, was the most restrictive in terms of precautionary measures and instructions for social distancing. Despite the implementations of public health measures, the new SARS-CoV-2 virus ravaged Mexico's health system, causing (as of April 18th, 2021) 2,304,096 infected people and 212,228 dead.⁸⁸

⁸³<https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/articulo/nacion/sociedad/2016/02/8/Calderón-puso-lapida-manglar-de-tajamar>

⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/FelipeCalderón/status/1074387817235652608>

⁸⁵<https://lopezdoriga.com/nacional/conceden-suspension-definitiva-a-comunidades-indigenas-contra-obras-del-tren-maya/>

⁸⁶ <https://www.sinembargo.mx/16-06-2017/3240654>

⁸⁷<https://www.elsoldemexico.com.mx/mexico/justicia/corte-niega-amparo-a-indigenas-zapotecos-de-oaxaca-contra-proyecto-eolico-2667819.html>

⁸⁸ <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/region/mexico>

Alongside AMLO, Dr. López-Gatell has been a frequent target of the right-wing while criticizing the management of the pandemic. This is the position of opposition Senator **Lilly Téllez**:

@LillyTellez: “The numbers speak louder than @HLGatell’s erratic verbiage.”⁸⁹

“Little viceroy of the country of empty beds and the dead at home: You wanted to look good with the President of the Republic and offered to solve everything at low cost. Of course, with tests it would be very expensive and with the sentinel model, very cheap. You doctor López Gatell, you are the incarnation of that wise popular saying, “cheap turns out expensive.”⁹⁰

López-Gatell, despite the crushing circumstances that a pandemic represents, put himself into the spotlight. Recently and after testing positive for COVID-19, the press spotted him walking around Mexico City’s trendy Condesa neighbourhood without a mask and without receiving the epidemiological discharge.⁹¹

Due to social distancing actions, 555,000 formal jobs were lost until April.⁹² Between August and September, however, most of these positions were recovered.⁹³ According to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, the industrial sector (with a contraction of 10.2%) and the services sector (7.9%) were the most affected.⁹⁴ The right-wing opposition reacted to this economic debacle by blaming AMLO’s administration:

@gdehoyoswalther: “To face the economic crisis caused by #COVID19, the President @lopezobrador_ does not help, nor does he allow himself to be helped. But he lies. The financing program @BIDInvest-CMN for 30k companies does not involve (as he said) public resources. Here we are in “support mode”. How about him?”⁹⁵

March 8th, 2020: A day without women

During International Women’s Day (8M), Mexican women marched throughout the country, protesting gender violence. Moreover, women in non-essential industries

⁸⁹ <https://twitter.com/LillyTellez/status/1265717855288299520>

⁹⁰ <https://www.sopitas.com/noticias/senado-hugo-López-gatell-lilly-tellez-pan/>

⁹¹ <https://elpais.com/mexico/2021-03-11/el-bochornoso-paseo-de-López-gatell-por-la-condesa.html>

⁹² <https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/politica/Cronologia-de-la-pandemia-en-Mexico-20210301-0045.html>

⁹³ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/mexico-pierde-277000-empleos-en-diciembre-por-subcontratacion-amlo/>

⁹⁴ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/economia-pandemia-8-5-economia-mexico-2020-inegi/>

⁹⁵ <https://twitter.com/gdehoyoswalther/status/1254814616426708994>

skipped work in support of protests. AMLO stressed that during the 8M protests there were isolated “acts of provocation”. Although he said that women who fight for their rights and against gender violence participated in the marches, the president pointed out that there was another group “disguised as feminism” that seeks the failure of his government. However, AMLO affirmed that no action would be taken against groups that acted with “excess”.

Among the marchers, there were people that asserted that they “*wanted to remove AMLO from power.*”⁹⁶ Some of these individuals belong to the trans-exclusionary radical feminist group known as “***Brujas del Mar.***” (Sea Sorceress). The spokeswoman of the collective frequently criticizes AMLO with an aggressive tone:

*“For real, it would be super cool that at least one day no media shows up to La Mañanera of the old man and that he stays there alone as an asshole raving in the air.”*⁹⁷

The right-wing opposition claimed that AMLO ignored feminism objectives, branding him as an enemy of those who fight for a more equal society for women. Here are some takes on this idea:

@ChumelTorres: “*Feminism is going to be AMLO’s Ayotzinapa. Save this tweet.*”⁹⁸

April 15th, 2020: The AntiAMLO National Front appears.

Gilberto Lozano, businessman, published a video on his YouTube channel, announcing the creation of the AntiAMLO National Front (FRENAAA). They said they are a “citizen and peaceful” movement, which seeks to make the president resign via legal tools, social pressure, and the media. On May 28th-29th, FRENAAA summoned everyone who was against AMLO to march in their own cities. Multiple marches occurred across the country on May 30th.⁹⁹

During the caravans summoned by FRENAAA, we could see the type of opposition that was attracted by **Gilberto Lozano**. Racists, classists, and sexist messages were frequent in these protests. Among them we could find this motto: “*I want a place where my servants are not my authority.*”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶<https://aristeguinoticias.com/0803/mexico/queremos-quitara-amlo-del-poder-dice-mujer-embozada-en-marcha-8m-video/>

⁹⁷ <https://sinlineamx.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/7-768x650.jpg>

⁹⁸ <https://twitter.com/ChumelTorres/status/1365068025745928193>

⁹⁹ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/politica-que-es-el-frente-nacional-anti-amlo-quienes-lo-apoyan/>

¹⁰⁰<https://www.forbes.com.mx/politica-son-clasistas-racistas-y-no-les-ayudan-amlo-sobre-protestas-del-fre-na-en-su-contra/>

Mexican right-wingers and authorities have not been shy on using racist and classist expressions against not only AMLO's sympathizers, but against ordinary people. AMLO himself remembered an anecdote when Jorge Castañeda, former Secretary of the Foreign Affairs, called Putla, a rural municipality in the State of Oaxaca, a horrible slum town.¹⁰¹

FRENAAA functions as a perfect platform where racist and classist expressions can be uttered under the pretext of political debate and freedom of expression. Commonly, right-wingers accuse AMLO of polarizing Mexicans.¹⁰² However, the Manichean tone employed in FRENAAA messages emphasizes the elite's demeaning view of people outside their socio economic sphere.

From this moment on, AMLO, his administration, relatives, and sympathizers started to be on the receiving end of racist and classist insults. More often than not, freedom of expression was brandished to defend any heinous comments.

Other political actors equally employed racists or classist remarks to attack López Obrador or his collaborators and relatives, such as journalist Pedro Ferriz Hajar,¹⁰³ PAN politician Diego Fernández de Cevallos' *Sin Rodeos* column,¹⁰⁴ and former PRI leader Enrique Ochoa Reza calling MORENA's sympathizers *prietos*, a racist epithet against brown-skinned Mexicans.¹⁰⁵ AMLO is, according to these comments, a second-class citizen whose manners are not proper of a Mexican president. His Tabasco state accent and his slow-paced speech are constantly mocked by right-wingers. The derogatory comments and nicknames applied to him are nothing more than a classist posture that seeks to highlight AMLO's humble origins and his common last name (López is the fourth most common last name in Mexico) as proof of being unworthy of the presidential position.¹⁰⁶

July 8th-9th, 2020: AMLO meets with Donald Trump. César Duarte is detained in Florida.

AMLO pays an official visit to the President of the United States. Both mandataries met in the White House grounds. Initially, this was intended to be a North American trilateral reunion to celebrate the entry into force of the renegotiated Mexico-Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement. However, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau declined the invitation due to multiple scheduling conflicts and health and travel

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² <https://twitter.com/memobarba/status/1102624015963774977>

¹⁰³ <https://twitter.com/pedroferriz3/status/1118296644297089026>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.milenio.com/opinion/diego-fernandez-de-cevallos/sin-rodeos/sea-inconsciencia-o-desverguenza>

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/enrique-ochoa-llama-prietos-a-militantes-de-morena/>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/empresas/estos-son-los-12-apellidos-mas-comunes-de-mexico/>

regulations related to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰⁷ The opposition and some right-wing sympathizers reacted to the bilateral gathering:

*@soffiaaaa: "AMLO took the Covid test to go with Trump because "it would be irresponsible to travel sick to the US", but not to the entire Republic on his tour. He is taking care of the USA more than Mexico, and that is going to be the summary of that meeting."*¹⁰⁸

@ClaudioXGG: "What Trump and López Obrador have in common: populists, autocratic, nationalists, they lie in a systematic way, polarizing, a permanent threat to institutions, the division of powers, democracy and the Rule of Law (and AMLO to the eco[nomy], health, education)." ¹⁰⁹

The reunion occurred under diplomatic etiquette and there were no abrupt calls from any of the parties as many Mexican right-wingers pointed out as a possibility (especially coming from Trump) and even hoped for.¹¹⁰

However, prior to the reunion, another headline took Mexicans by surprise. Agents of the US Marshals Services detained César Duarte, former governor of Chihuahua, in Miami. Duarte is accused of the diversion of more than 6 billion pesos that would have been used to support PRI campaigns in 2015.¹¹¹ Many AMLO's sympathizers saw this as a "gift" from the Trump administration to Mexico:

*@NachoRgz: "Two gifts from Trump to AMLO: Fast and Furious and César Duarte."*¹¹²

@AlfredoJalife2: "Pay close attention to symbolic synchrony! The arrest in Florida of César Duarte was made while AMLO was in the White House. It is the appetizer of the delicacy to come..." ¹¹³

However, as expected, there were some right-wing detractors:

@JLozanoA: "Beyond the coincidences, I applaud the tenacity of @Javier_Corral [PAN governor of Chihuahua] to put César Duarte in his place. Congratulations." ¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷<https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/trudeau-turns-down-white-house-invitation-to-celebrate-new-nafta-in-washington-1.1461127>

¹⁰⁸ <https://twitter.com/soffiaaaa/status/1280331939791220736>

¹⁰⁹ <https://twitter.com/ClaudioXGG/status/1280850841616871424>

¹¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/carlosbravoreg/status/1281017702342029313>

¹¹¹ <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2020/07/detienen-cesar-duarte-miami-florida/>

¹¹² <https://twitter.com/NachoRgz/status/1280982698081824773>

¹¹³ <https://twitter.com/AlfredoJalife2/status/1281054736297480192>

¹¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/JLozanoA/status/1281000316712951810>

It is worth nothing Lozano's opportunism on this statement since, during the presidential campaign, he had attacked Governor Corral:

*"It is not fortifying to display the truth of a phony like Corral who tries to distract his ineptitude to govern. And I have never defended César Duarte. You already got the liar of #YoungDictator"*¹¹⁵

From this point on, the right-wing opposition started to hint that both presidents were, to put it kindly, in a loving relationship, which would explain the timorous reaction that AMLO had over the initial results of the 2020's presidential election results that put Joe Biden as the virtual winner.

July 28th, 2020: Emilio Lozoya detained. Will face trial at home.

Emilio Lozoya, former director of PEMEX, was arrested in Málaga, Spain. Judge José Artemio Zúñiga issued an order to link Lozoya to processes for the crime of carrying out operations with resources of illicit origin in the modality of buying real estate knowing that the money was illegal. Among the test data presented are the investigations carried out by the UIF and the complaint filed with the FGR by PEMEX, derived from the acquisition of the fertilizer plant that was carried out with knowledge that up to 82% of its facilities were unusable. In other words, they were already scrap, so their purchase caused patrimonial damage to the state-owned company. Various calculations made by PEMEX affirm that the purchase of the company *Agro Nitrogenados* has caused damages of more than 8 billion pesos, a debt that will increase as the due dates of the financing used by PEMEX for this operation are updated.

However, Lozoya will not go to prison nor will he be subjected to home security, so he will continue his process in freedom. The only precautionary measures to which he will be subjected are the use of an electronic bracelet that he must pay out of his pocket and the obligation to sign every 15 days at the Federal Criminal Justice Centre of the North Federal Prison. Derived from the criterion of opportunity requested (as a collaborating witness), the judge in the case endorsed the request of the prosecutors for Lozoya to have access to minimum precautionary measures.

After the resolution of the judge, several opposing figures reacted to the news:

@SergioSarmiento: "AMLO says that Lozoya "made his first statement ... where he is already beginning to mention personalities, politicians, and money management." Careful. If he does not present his statement before

¹¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/JLozanoA/status/956330492357414912>

a public prosecutor or a judge with his lawyer, the process could be annulled.”¹¹⁶

@FelipeCalderon: “The illegal and media handling of the case confirms that Lozoya (with the blackmail of having his mother imprisoned) is used by @lopezobrador_ as an instrument of revenge and political persecution. He [AMLO] is not interested in justice, but in lynching, making ridiculous accusations in my case.”¹¹⁷

Every criminal prosecution conducted during AMLO’s administration that involves officials of previous presidential terms has been deemed as a vindictive attempt by the right-wing opposition; even if there is solid evidence for the prosecution. Under that perspective, AMLO is constantly accused of getting involved with said judicial processes, which would be a transgression of the separation of powers. Being this the situation, the right-wing has put special attention on the sentences and, particularly, on the nomination process to occupy judicial positions. For example, catholic right-wingers targeted Supreme Court Judge Juan Luis González Alcántara Carrancá over his sentence project that ordered the local Congress of the State of Veracruz to decriminalize abortion.¹¹⁸⁻¹¹⁹

One of the most important statements made by Lozoya after his detention was that, under the instruction of former Secretary of Foreign Affairs Luis Videgaray, he delivered cash bribes to several PAN legislators to approve the 2013 energy constitutional reform. The senators involved were: Ernesto Cordero Arroyo, **Ricardo Anaya Cortés**, Francisco Domínguez Servién, Jorge Luis Lavalley Maury (recently arrested),¹²⁰ Salvador Vega Casillas, and **Francisco Javier García Cabeza de Vaca** (currently governor of Tamaulipas state).¹²¹

August 21st, 2020: Pío López Obrador receiving bribes

Pío López Obrador, AMLO’s brother, received funding for the campaign with which AMLO won the presidency for at least a year and a half. Funds were provided from a political operator of the Chiapas government. The money was given to him in at least three meetings by the then advisor to the Chiapas government David León, who today

¹¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/SergioSarmiento/status/1285284782910443522>

¹¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/FelipeCalderon/status/1296265553192067072>

¹¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/REDLideresC/status/1288185995201052677>

¹¹⁹ <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2020/07/corte-rechaza-proyecto-despenalizacion-aborto-veracruz/>

¹²⁰ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/fgr-acusa-de-lavado-de-dinero-a-jorge-luis-lavalle-maury-exsenador-del-pa>

¹²¹ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/politica-lozoya-dio-6-mdp-a-campana-de-ricardo-anaya-con-dinero-de-odeb-recht/>

is a senior official in the federal administration. Allegedly it was David León himself who made the recordings, to which the news agency LatinUS had access.¹²²

The two people involved claimed that the videos were fake. On November 9th, 2020, the UIF declared that it found no triangulations, no unusual deposits or transfers or relevant movements that could alert financial malversation or bribes.¹²³

AMLO stated:

“Let the law be applied like any other citizen, even if it is my brother. And let the public ministries and judges decide [if there was any wrongdoing]. There is no cronyism, there is no nepotism, none of those scourges of politics. I no longer belong to myself, I am leading a movement to transform Mexico and I am not going to fail the people.”¹²⁴

This was, arguably, the biggest political challenge that AMLO’s administration (and political persona) had so far had. Reactions from right-wingers were steady:

@ChumelTorres: “Also in the case of Pío López Obrador is it going to get to the bottom or does it not apply here?”¹²⁵

@MarkoCortes: “What cynicism and double standards of @lopezobrador_. President, as you said “the people get tired of so much fucking scams.” We demand that @FGRMexico and the UIF investigate his brother Pío and his collaborator @DavidLeonRomero. Enough of so much simulation and political use of justice!”¹²⁶

@ferbelaunzaran: “Didn’t Pío pocket the money that Manuel Velasco sent him month after month? Didn’t Felipa [AMLO’s sister] benefit from juicy Pemex contracts? Doesn’t Bartlett have 25 houses with figureheads? That is what hurts @lopezobrador_. That’s why he goes after @latinus_us.”¹²⁷

The Mexico-US binational news agency, LatinUS, frequently reports on the 4T. This platform was created by journalist **Carlos Loret de Mola**. AMLO has frequently responded to LatinUS’s reports on *La Mañanera*, with **Loret de Mola** replying as well. In *La Mañanera*, AMLO recalled an old scandal involving **Loret de Mola**, the “Cassez’ staging”, to which the journalist replied:

¹²² <https://www.milenio.com/politica/pio-López-david-leon-videos-falsos-ortiz-pinchetti>

¹²³ <https://www.milenio.com/politica/pio-López-obrador-exonerado-uif-hallo-irregularidades>

¹²⁴ <https://www.milenio.com/politica/amlo-hermano-pio-López-aplique-ley>

¹²⁵ <https://twitter.com/ChumelTorres/status/1297316252923428867>

¹²⁶ <https://twitter.com/MarkoCortes/status/1296809456261566464>

¹²⁷ <https://twitter.com/ferbelaunzaran/status/1376942260378566662>

“The onslaught is not because of Cassez-Vallarta. It is because of Pío, Felipa, Epigmenio, Bartlett, Irma Eréndira ... to avoid giving the society an explanation about a vaccine not applied, he relives a 16 year-old case that I did not realize [it was staged} and for which I have since apologized publicly.”¹²⁸

September 15th, 2020: The presidential plane raffle.

AMLO presented the presidential plane as a symbol of all that was wrong in traditional Mexican politics, in which leaders wasted public resources in a lavish lifestyle while the majority of the population remained in dire need. The plane, worth \$130 million dollars and bought by the **Calderón** administration, was an “insult to the people,” and “an example of the excesses” of the leaders of the past. Confirming this perception, among other abuses, **Calderón’s** successor, Enrique Peña Nieto, used the plane to take members of his family on luxurious trips; including one to China where his then-wife’s makeup artist was included.

AMLO offered to sell the plane and return the profits to the people as part of a radical transformation of Mexico that was to empower the marginalized, end corruption and eradicate inequality. After various failed attempts on selling it, AMLO announced a raffle, with the winners obtaining a “token” cash prize divided among 100 winners. Each winner would receive 20 million pesos.¹²⁹

The right-wing opposition mocked the idea:

@ChumelTorres: “Politicians tweeting that they bought raffle tickets is the most BALL-LICKER THING we’ve seen anyone do in the history of Twitter dot com. Know it. Sheep.”¹³⁰

@hdemauleon: “Simulating a sale was not enough. So now it will be [dealt with] by his balls. The problem for the president is that his counterfeit consultations - like the failed raffle of the plane - expose him and expose him more and more. Good news: he no longer reaches enough signatures, nor [sell enough] tickets.”¹³¹

The raffle went on nonetheless. The proceedings were used to fund 13 public hospitals with 2.3 billion pesos.¹³²

¹²⁸ <https://twitter.com/CarlosLoret/status/1379798476029038596>

¹²⁹ <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2020/09/16/la-extrana-historia-de-la-rifa-del-avion-presidencial-en-mexico/>

¹³⁰ <https://twitter.com/ChumelTorres/status/1305723646799785990>

¹³¹ <https://twitter.com/hdemauleon/status/1305865762566017032>

¹³² <https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2020/09/17/estos-son-los-13-hospitales-publicos-que-ganaran-premio-en-la-rifa-del-avion-presidencial/>

October 1st, 2020: The SCJN approves the consultation to bring former Mexican presidents to justice.

On November 21st, 2018, AMLO said that possible acts of corruption in previous governments (those of Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Ernesto Zedillo, **Vicente Fox**, **Felipe Calderón** and Enrique Peña Nieto) will be included in a new public consultation. However, he mentioned that he was against incarcerating them since it could bring political instability across the country.¹³³

Almost two years later, the SCJN validated the consultation. However, the question had to be modified in order to make it constitutional, leaving it as: *“Do you agree or not that the pertinent actions be carried out in accordance with the constitutional and legal framework to undertake a process of clarification of the political decisions made in recent years by political actors aimed at guaranteeing justice and rights of the possible victims?”*¹³⁴

Right-wing opposition declared that this was against the rule of law, questioning the integrity of the SCJN’s speaker, Judge Zaldívar:

*@damianzepeda: “Most of the @SCJN is subordinated to @lopezobrador_. What a shameful day for Justice in Mexico. Justice at the political service of the President. It does not belong to people, if there is a crime to prosecute anyone and if not, NO, it is the law. Justice is not consulted, it is applied!”*¹³⁵

This public consultation will be the next democractic battle to be sustained during 2021. The vote will take place on August 1. However, the INE has declared many times that they do not count with enough financial resources to conduct the consultation, leading them to present a constitutional controversy before the SCJN to plead their case; ultimately revoked by the latter under the argument that the INE has enough resources to organize the consultation.¹³⁶

October 21st, 2020: The cancellation of 109 public trusts.

With 65 votes in favour and 51 against, the Senate extinguished 109 trusts, which represented a public expenditure of more than 68 billion pesos. The draft decree sent by the Chamber of Deputies, Mexico’s lower legislative chamber, modifies 18 laws and repeals two more, *“with the aim of eliminating opacity and discretion in the use of public*

¹³³ <https://www.milenio.com/policia/juicio-presidentes-corte-aprueba-propuesta-consulta-amlo>

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ <https://twitter.com/damianzepeda/status/1311753736394481664>

¹³⁶ <https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2021/07/02/ine-reasignara-recursos-de-otras-areas-para-organizar-consulta-popular-de-ex-presidentes/>

resources, as well as promoting transparency, accountability and responsibility.” It indicates that one of the decree’s objectives is to put order in the operation of some trusts that must survive and specifies that the amount reported in available funds will be reallocated to address the effects of the pandemic, health, and economic issues; in addition to guaranteeing the continuity of the social programs.

The existence of public trusts in Mexico has been highly controversial since their inception. Organizations such as Fundar¹³⁷, the Superior Audit of the Federation (ASF),¹³⁸ and legal researchers such as Salvatierra Pineda¹³⁹ and Jorge Carpizo¹⁴⁰ have pointed out that the fact that the banks that administered these trusts had at their disposition the concept known as *“fiduciary secret”* made the disbursements opaque. Moreover, studies about Fundar and the ASF revealed that 93% of the resources available in trusts—905 billion pesos—do not have accountability controls.¹⁴¹

Despite the evidence on how problematic these public trusts and the funds allocated to them were, the right-wing opposition reacted ferociously:

@SergioSarmiento: “The trusts were transparent and auditable. AMLO extinguished them to concentrate [public] expenses in his hands.”¹⁴²

@OficialFrenaaa: “The cancellation of trusts, like Hugo Chávez did, is one more step than CONFIRMS, that the 4T = CHAVISMO. The Sao Paulo Forum agenda is still alive. #WeAreMexico and #FRENA know that with #AMLO you cannot have a dialogue.”¹⁴³

Whenever there is a shortage of medicines (which is worrying under the challenges that the COVID-19 presents), the elimination of public trusts is offered as an explanation.¹⁴⁴ However, scarcity is a constant of the Mexican public health sector even before AMLO started his administration.¹⁴⁵

October 23rd, 2020: Mario Delgado, new president of MORENA

INE’s Commission on Prerogatives and Political Parties declared Mario Delgado as the new president of MORENA, after defeating Porfirio Muñoz Ledo in a poll to renew the

¹³⁷ <https://fundar.org.mx/mexico/pdf/secretofiduciario.pdf>

¹³⁸ https://www.asf.gob.mx/uploads/63_Serie_de_Rendicion_de_Cuentas/Rc10.pdf

¹³⁹ <https://revistas.juridicas.unam.mx/index.php/derecho-informacion/article/download/10487/12652>

¹⁴⁰ <https://revistas.juridicas.unam.mx/index.php/derecho-comparado/article/view/3928/4962>

¹⁴¹ Supra note 137

¹⁴² <https://twitter.com/SergioSarmiento/status/1319239070720155648>

¹⁴³ <https://twitter.com/OficialFrenaaa/status/1319296523813806080>

¹⁴⁴ https://twitter.com/V_TrujilloM/status/1319080661664186368

¹⁴⁵

<https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/opinion/Desabasto-de-medicamentos-otra-vez...-20180109-0176.html>

party's leadership. Delgado obtained 58.6 points in the survey, against 41.4 points for Muñoz Ledo, according to the results delivered by three polling firms. The General Secretariat of the party was left in the hands of Senator Citlalli Hernández, according to the results of a previous survey released by INE on October 9th. Delgado and Hernández will be in office until August 31st, 2023. The survey carried out by the INE was derived from MORENA's failure to renew its leadership by consensus, a process that began in October 2019.¹⁴⁶

The entirety of the process was chaotic and disruptive. So much, in fact, that the INE had to intervene by imposing a survey to define the leadership.¹⁴⁷ This electoral bash saw a myriad of candidates trying to obtain the sympathy of the MORENA ranks: Gibrán Ramírez, Antonio Attolini, Yeidckol Polevnsky, Donají Alba, among many others.

In particular, the spotlight was on both the winner and the runner up, Delgado and Muñoz Ledo. During the second survey, Muñoz Ledo attained a brief advantage over Delgado, which led him to proclaim himself leader of MORENA. Muñoz Ledo even called for a symbolic swear-in act but, shortly before starting the event, he canceled after groups of women protested in front of MORENA's headquarters, accusing him of sexual harassment. He then pointed at Delgado as being the mastermind behind said denunciations. Muñoz Ledo called Delgado a chump and stupid who insults democracy.

¹⁴⁸

Delgado's election caused the opposition to raise some eyebrows:

@beltrandelrio: "The advantage of Muñoz Ledo in the first INE survey lit the alarm lights in the Palace. His victory in the final poll could spoil the plans that Mario Delgado is part of. But the Electoral Tribunal has come to the rescue."¹⁴⁹

@Arouet_V: "Mario Delgado wins the third preference poll and thus the will of López Obrador is fulfilled. The party does not know how to build, it is not in its nature, the main leaders are tearing it to pieces and that is good news for democracy in Mexico."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶<https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/politica/Encuesta-del-INE-da-victoria-a-Mario-Delgado-como-presidente-de-Morena-20201023-0050.html>

¹⁴⁷<https://centralectoral.ine.mx/2020/10/13/ordena-consejo-general-realizacion-de-la-tercera-encuesta-para-designar-presidencia-de-morena/>

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.milenio.com/politica/porfirio-munoz-ledo-mario-delgado-presidencia-morena>

¹⁴⁹ <https://twitter.com/beltrandelrio/status/1313440865650581504>

¹⁵⁰ https://twitter.com/Arouet_V/status/1319809754240151552

@CarlosLoret: *“In 3 weeks, Mario Delgado went from being 14 points below Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, to 17 points above.”*¹⁵¹

This way, the opposition directly pointed at AMLO as the main reason why Mario Delgado won the electoral contest. After his defeat, Muñoz Ledo became the main critic of both Delgado and AMLO inside MORENA. Recently, Muñoz Ledo argued that AMLO is accumulating all the power within the executive, which he considered an *“authoritarian restoration.”*¹⁵²

In 2021, Mario Delgado’s has faced strong criticism in terms of his participation during the elections, both from the opposition and from MORENA’s members and sympathizers:

@gibrarr: *“The candidacy of Saúl Huerta [accused of sexual harassment of a minor] was the product of the wrong criteria of @mario_delgado that all possible congresspeople repeated their terms. There are still candidates with current processes, including arrest warrants. He will not remove them because they did not become a scandal. The error will return to bite him.”*¹⁵³

November 11th, 2020: Hurricane Eta floods Tabasco

Hurricane Eta caused heavy damage in Mexico’s territory during its passage through Chiapas, Tabasco, and Veracruz states; leaving more than 238,000 people affected by the floods, as reported by Civil Protection coordinator Laura Velázquez Alzúa. In this sense, she mentioned that in Chiapas there are 54,976 people affected, while in Tabasco 160,596 were registered and in Veracruz 22,976.

AMLO suspended a tour in the states of Sinaloa and Nayarit to attend to the impacted zones, paying special attention to the state of Tabasco. In a video released in all his social media accounts, the President admitted that to save Villahermosa (capital of Tabasco and its most populated settlement) he ordered to close the gate of the Carrizal river dam, causing all the water from the dam to continue down the Samaria river, affecting the communities of Jalpa de Méndez, Nacajuca and Centla. These three municipalities are inhabited by the Chontal Indigenous people.¹⁵⁴

The opposition reacted:

¹⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/CarlosLoret/status/1319756325262364672>

¹⁵² <https://www.contrapesociudadano.com/munoz-ledo-acusa-que-amlo-acumula-poder-y-lo-califica-de-autoritario/>

¹⁵³ <https://twitter.com/gibrarr/status/1385411508503334914>

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2020/11/16/a-mi-me-duele-mucho-amlo-explico-la-decision-de-inundar-comunidades-indigenas-en-tabasco/>

@tumbaburross: *“During the floods of Tabasco in 2007, [Calderón], within a week, was already cleaning the disaster area, freed access roads and streets, pumped the water to areas to look for its cause; [public agencies] CONAGUA, PLAN DNIII, SEMARNAT and FONDEN arrived. AMLO has not even begun to remove rubble.”*¹⁵⁵

@RicardoAlemanMX: *“What do you think? The floods in Tabasco were caused by the stupidity of CFE director, @ManuelBartlett, the thief, friend of the criminal @lopezobrador_! The criminal Bartlett should have ordered the venting of the dams, but what do you know? He said that he had other things to do!”*¹⁵⁶

The Federal government has reported that 10 billion pesos in relief funds have been invested in the disaster zone.¹⁵⁷

December 3rd, 2020: Felipa Obrador and PEMEX

AMLO asked PEMEX to investigate the company owned by his cousin Felipa Guadalupe Obrador Olán. The company, named *Litoral Laboratorios Industriales*, received contracts from PEMEX by direct award totaling more than 365 million pesos. The report was published by LatinUS news network.

On December 5th, PEMEX announced that it terminated all contracts with participation of *Litoral Laboratorios Industriales*. PEMEX stressed that an “exhaustive investigation” would be carried out on the way in which the tenders in which those contracts were handled. The company acknowledged that *Litoral Laboratorios Industriales* participated in other tenders in which it did not obtain contracts, as was the case of a process in October 2019 in conjunction with the company *Services Inter Lab de Mexico*.¹⁵⁸

The corruption suspicion on AMLO’s administration caused a major reaction from the opposition:

@vampire: *“Felipa Obrador has made half a million pesos DAILY since her cousin is president. And it [the administration] is 4 years away [to be over]. Cool. How good you sweep the stairs, @lopezobrador_.”*¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ <https://twitter.com/tumbaburross/status/1329819494538240001>

¹⁵⁶ <https://twitter.com/RicardoAlemanMx/status/1326343108787908608>

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/van-10-mmdp-inyectados-a-tabasco-tras-inundaciones-de-2020/1440865>

¹⁵⁸ <https://www.animalpolitico.com/2020/12/pemex-prima-amlo-contratos-cancelados/>

¹⁵⁹ <https://twitter.com/vampire/status/1334718712583249922>

Obrador Olán tried to appeal PEMEX's decision before the courts, but her lawsuit was dismissed.¹⁶⁰

December 14th, 2020: *“You are not God, you are a fucking president”*

Comedian **Víctor Trujillo**—speaking through his TV character Brozo the Creepy Clown—became a trend on social media after insulting AMLO in his LatinUS program. **Trujillo** said:

“Remember, Andrés, you are not God, you are not the son of man, you are a fucking president, who either serves us or does not serve for shit.”¹⁶¹

The feud between **Trujillo** and AMLO goes all the way back to 2004. During his show *“El Mañanero”*, **Trujillo** showed a video of René Bejarano, then a close collaborator of AMLO's, receiving cash bribes from businessman Carlos Ahumada. Bejarano was a guest during said episode of the show.¹⁶²

AMLO's sympathizers criticized **Trujillo** severely. In contrast, the opposition defended him:

Emilio Álvarez Icaza: *“The #AMLO networks reacted furiously because @brozoxmiswebs spoke of @lopezobrador_ in the terms he did with other presidents. They celebrated it then. Today it offends them.”¹⁶³*

During the presidential campaign, **Trujillo** demanded the Peña Nieto administration to leave as discreetly as possible and *“without causing chaos, with a little bit of decency and shame.”* He implored them to not even think about committing electoral fraud, because *“the country is not to be played with.”¹⁶⁴* At the time that episode was aired, AMLO's was above the opposition candidates in the polls by almost 20 points.

After AMLO's election, two of **Trujillo**'s shows were cancelled. The right-wing opposition accused the President of censoring him.¹⁶⁵ At the beginning of 2020, Trujillo announced that he would join Carlos Loret de Mola in the newly created LatinUS network, which broadcasts in the United States for the Spanish-speaking audience. Both media

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/politica-felipa-obrador-contratos-pemex/>

¹⁶¹ <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/brozo-y-amlo-del-pinche-presidente-no-te-las-voy-contestar>

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/pinche-presidente-brozo-causa-polemica-en-redes-y-senador-lo-defiende>

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.sinembargo.mx/04-04-2018/3404420>

¹⁶⁵ <https://lasillarota.com/nacion/por-que-sale-del-aire-brozo/339024>

personalities declared that the project would reside in the US since it enraged a certain person, in clear reference to AMLO.¹⁶⁶

December 22nd, 2020: “Va por México” is created

Leaders of the PAN, PRI and PRD announced the creation of the “Va Por México” coalition, who will run joint candidates for the federal and state elections of June 6th, 2021. The coalition was registered on December 23rd before the INE. This effort aimed at reaching a majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies, then in control of MORENA and allies.¹⁶⁷

As it was hinted with previous attempts, “Va por México” was the answer that the political and economic right-wing opposition offered against the electoral bulldozer that the 4T became after the 2018’s election. In November, these three parties (alongside MC who later quit the coalition) accepted an invitation made by businessmen **Claudio X. González Guajardo** and **Gustavo de Hoyos** to unite their agendas through the organization “Si por México.”¹⁶⁸

During an interview with journalist Julio Astillero, Santiago Creel (PAN member of the coalition and former Secretariat of the Interior) acknowledged that **González Guajardo** set up multiple meetings at his house and, alongside **de Hoyos**, established the agenda that the future coalition advocated for.¹⁶⁹

Many members of the opposition celebrated this union:

@JLozanoA: “The worst of @AccionNacional @PRI_Nacional and @PRDMexico was to give in to @PartidoMorenaMx. And our governments were infinitely better than the garbage we now have. Ready for debate and to vote. Are you in? #VaPorMexico”¹⁷⁰

However, certain advertising mistakes made “Va por México” to be soundly criticized (even mocked)¹⁷¹ by the electorate. Besides, it gave substance to AMLO’s claim that there is a plot between the private sector and opposition parties against him.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ <https://twitter.com/brozoxmiswebs/status/1222543967356514304>

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/nacional/pan-pri-y-prd-anuncian-coalicion-va-por-mexico-para-elecciones-de-2021/>

¹⁶⁸ <https://aristeguinoticias.com/3110/mexico/pan-pri-prd-y-mc-aceptan-agenda-de-si-por-mexico/>

¹⁶⁹ <https://julioastillero.com/creel-cuenta-como-nacio-va-por-mexico-claudio-x-puso-la-casa-y-junto-con-de-hoyos-la-agenda/>

¹⁷⁰ <https://twitter.com/JLozanoA/status/1341912531003035648>

¹⁷¹ <https://www.proceso.com.mx/nacional/2020/12/24/critican-la-alianza-va-por-mexico-por-usar-campesino-blanco-en-su-publicidad-255100.html>

¹⁷² https://twitter.com/mario_delgado/status/1335394715240435712

January 25th, 2021: AMLO gets COVID-19

AMLO reported that he tested positive for COVID-19. Through his Twitter account, the 67-year-old president said: *“The symptoms are mild, but I am already undergoing medical treatment.”*¹⁷³ There was a tsunami of best wishes for the President, including people from the opposition (i.e., **Felipe Calderón**,¹⁷⁴ **José Antonio Meade**,¹⁷⁵ **Ricardo Anaya**).¹⁷⁶ However, there were other members of the right-wing opposition who decided to take the news with a different tone:

*@tumbaburross: “I told my 94-year-old grandfather that López Obrador had tested positive for COVID19 and he told me ... That man is a vulgar liar “the donkey was not surly, the sticks did it” and this man has given us many shocks. I agree with my old man. #IDoNotBelieveHim”*¹⁷⁷

*@ClouthierManuel: “President López Obrador tested positive for Covid - 19, it is the only positive he has given as president in these two years”*¹⁷⁸

*@ChumelTorres: “Today at #ElPulsoDeLaRepublica AMLO finally gives a positive result! Is it of doubtful origin? Give me 20 million doses please! Mexico is the best place to handle covid (from the bottom up). Don't be part of the problem, see the Pulse.”*¹⁷⁹

On January 29th, AMLO appeared on video for the first time after his COVID-19 positive result, denying the rumors about various serious health conditions caused by the disease (intubation, embolism, heart attack, among others).¹⁸⁰

March 4th, 2021: AMLO's Energy Reform

AMLO made his “turn of the wheel” in Mexico's energy sector. The reform of the Electricity Industry Law was approved in the Senate. Among other things, the reform favours power generation through the state corporation Federal Electricity Commission (CFE). Up to that point, private companies from Mexico, the United States, Canada, and Europe were the largest providers of electricity that was then auctioned to the government.¹⁸¹

¹⁷³ https://twitter.com/Lópezobrador_/status/1353500519344578560

¹⁷⁴ <https://twitter.com/FelipeCalderón/status/1353501592201400327>

¹⁷⁵ <https://twitter.com/JoséAMEadeK/status/1353503218949615618>

¹⁷⁶ <https://twitter.com/RicardoAnayaC/status/1353508932128530434>

¹⁷⁷ <https://twitter.com/tumbaburross/status/1353559360086167555>

¹⁷⁸ <https://twitter.com/ClouthierManuel/status/1353535665690996736>

¹⁷⁹ <https://twitter.com/ChumelTorres/status/1354851146565705736>

¹⁸⁰ <https://www.jornada.com.mx/notas/2021/01/30/politica/al-reaparecer-en-video-amlo-acalla-rumores-sobre-su-salud/>

¹⁸¹ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/economia-amlo-nueva-ley-industria-electrica/>

AMLO and others have accused so-called “green energy” companies (wind or sun generated) of negotiating leonine and abusive contracts with the government, with the complicity of previous administrations.¹⁸² Moreover, Indigenous people are in constant legal disputes against them regarding their land rights, and have denounced that the companies repeatedly intimidate them to stop their complaints.¹⁸³ Additionally, several former officials are in these companies’ payrolls. Such is the case of former president **Felipe Calderón**, now sitting in the board of Spanish energy company Iberdrola.¹⁸⁴

After the promulgation of the new law, the right-wing opposition accused AMLO of relying on dirty energies and having outdated ideas. Here are some reactions:

@RicardoAnayaC: “Generating electricity by burning fuel oil is like sending telegrams instead of using WhatsApp. AMLO’s problem is not his age, but rather that his ideas are old. We will continue to defend clean energy and the right to a healthy environment. The battle continues in court.”¹⁸⁵

@SergioSarmiento: “There are already two [legal] suspensions. There will be more, because the Electricity Industry Law is unconstitutional”¹⁸⁶

The Fuel Law, the nickname that the opposition gave to this reform, allows CFE to bypass energy produced by private companies in wind, solar and combined cycle plants. Under the previous law, CFE was forced to buy the cheapest energy from private producers and, by giving priority to that electricity, it underused its hydro- and fuel-propelled thermoelectric plants.¹⁸⁷

March 15th, 2021: The impeachment trial against Governor **García Cabeza de Vaca**

The Office of the Special Prosecutor for Organized Crime Investigation (SEIDO) initiated an investigation for alleged operations with illicit resources originated in drug trafficking against the governor of Tamaulipas state, **Francisco Javier García Cabeza de Vaca**. After 10 months of monitoring Cabeza de Vaca, and in collaboration with federal intelligence institutions and the United States government, SEIDO obtained wiretaps provided by the DEA, indicating that the Tamaulipas governor could have benefited from organized crime profits. In addition, the UIF provided evidence against **Cabeza de Vaca** for alleged illicit enrichment, diversion of public resources and tax fraud.

¹⁸² <https://www.forbes.com.mx/economia-amlo-nueva-ley-industria-electrica/>

¹⁸³ Ibid

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/Calderón-estrena-trabajo-se-suma-filial-eu-iberdrola/>

¹⁸⁵ <https://twitter.com/RicardoAnayaC/status/1369650132657045508>

¹⁸⁶ <https://twitter.com/SergioSarmiento/status/1370081024756097029>

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.forbes.com.mx/red-forbes-ley-combustoleo-hecha-para-subsanar-las-ineficiencias-de-cfe-y-pemex/>

The investigation includes the closest family circle of the PAN politician, who has served as mayor, federal and local deputy, senator and official in **Felipe Calderón's** government. He was also involved in the alleged payment of bribes to legislators for the approval of the energy reform in 2013; according to Emilio Lozoya's, former director of PEMEX, testimony.¹⁸⁸

Despite the damning evidence, the right-wing opposition still tried to protect **García Cabeza de Vaca**:

*@GlodeJo07: "Today in La Mañanera, AMLO was very willing to talk about the issue of Cabeza de Vaca's links with drug traffickers ... I wish he had been so willing to clarify the doubts of complaints of rape against Macedonio [Morena's candidate to Guerrero's governorship], but apparently justice does not apply to his compadres."*¹⁸⁹

The governor is facing an impeachment trial which, if found guilty, could strip him of his immunity, making him susceptible to be criminally prosecuted for the investigations against him. **García Cabeza de Vaca** argues his innocence, adding that there is a political prosecution against him.¹⁹⁰

March 25th, 2021: Clara Luz and NXIVM

Clara Luz Flores, candidate to the government of Nuevo León state for the "*Juntos Haremos Historia*" coalition (MORENA, Green Party of Mexico, New Alliance Party), was exposed in a video interviewing the leader of the sexual sect NXIVM, Keith Raniere. Users of social networks recalled when the candidate denied any relationship with said group, ensuring that she only knows and takes some pills with that name every day. The journalist Julio Astillero interviewed her on March 24th, where he asked the candidate about her link with the sect. Flores acknowledged that she took some personal motivation courses with the Monterrey branch of the sect.¹⁹¹

As a result of this exposure and her attempt to sue comedian Marco Polo, Clara Luz lost her advantage at the polls, falling from first to fourth place.¹⁹²

The right-wing opposition celebrated the downfall:

¹⁸⁸<https://aristeguinoticias.com/0803/mexico/estados-unidos-indaga-ligas-de-García-cabeza-de-vaca-con-el-cartel-del-golfo-desde-2004-apuntan-documentos/>

¹⁸⁹ <https://twitter.com/GlodeJo07/status/1364676829680836609>

¹⁹⁰<https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/estados/soy-objeto-de-una-persecucion-politica-ordenada-desde-palacio-nacional-García-cabeza-de-vaca>

¹⁹¹ <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/politica/filtran-video-de-clara-luz-con-lider-de-secta-nxivm>

¹⁹² <https://www.m-x.com.mx/al-dia/entre-marco-polo-y-nxivm-cae-campana-de-clara-luz-a-nuevo-leon>

@ChumelTorres: *“First Macedonio with 5 rape accusations. Now Clara Luz at NXIVM. MORENA, not all candidates have to be criminals, bruh. There is more. Look well.”*¹⁹³

To regain points in the polls, Flores released a video apologizing to the public after denying that she knew Keith Raniere. She argued that is “unfair” that her contending rivals adjudicate Raniere’s crimes to her.¹⁹⁴

April 23rd, 2021: Supreme Court Justice Zaldívar gets a mandate extension.

On February 18th, 2020, AMLO introduced a bill to modify “...*the structure, nature and powers of the organs of administration of justice in Mexico...*” According to the document supporting the bill, these reforms aim at attacking nepotism, weakness of the judicial career, judicial corruption, and obstacles to the access to justice. Moreover, it proposes a new system of jurisprudence, reducing the obligation of five rulings to only one precedent approved by a qualified majority of the SCJN able to be used for legal arguments in court.¹⁹⁵

However, on April 15th, 2021, Senator Raúl Bolaños Cacho-Cué introduced an amendment to a transitional article, extending the mandate of Chief Justice Arturo Zaldívar Lelo de Larrea for two more years.¹⁹⁶ The Judicial Reform was baptized the *Zaldivar Law*, and it created controversy around the otherwise necessary changes to the delivery of justice in the country.

The opposition highlighted an alleged sympathy between AMLO and Zaldívar. They mentioned that contrary to what the president promised during his campaign, this would leave the field open for his re-election in 2024. Here are some reactions:

@julenrementeria: *“I update all of you on how things are in the Senate: We already have 4 unconstitutional actions in the oven: 1.-The electricity industry law 2.-The law of the telephone users registry 3.-The Zaldívar law. 4.-The Hydrocarbons Law.”*¹⁹⁷

@brozoxmiswebs: *“Everyone knows that it is unconstitutional to extend the term of Minister Zaldívar. Senators and congresspeople from Morena have been instructed to vote in favour of this blunder, and since there is no*

¹⁹³ <https://twitter.com/ChumelTorres/status/1374837623605366791>

¹⁹⁴ <https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2021/04/26/cometi-un-error-clara-luz-flores-pidio-disculpas-tras-haber-negado-conocer-al-lider-de-la-secta-nxivm/>

¹⁹⁵ http://www.dplf.org/sites/default/files/reformajudicial_v1.pdf

¹⁹⁶ <https://latinus.us/2021/04/16/senador-tapete-raul-bolanos-que-premio-a-zaldivar-corte/>

¹⁹⁷ <https://twitter.com/julenrementeria/status/1387182359057948673>

*one who disagrees with the president, the mockery will be left to shame and rejoicing.*¹⁹⁸

@PamCerqueira: *“Extending the term of Minister Zaldívar, with the excuse that this serves to implement the reform, would be the same as asking López Obrador to stay longer to complete the transformation. Watch out.”*¹⁹⁹

On April 26th, AMLO stated:

*“I believe that, consciously or unconsciously, because of the anger that the transformation that is taking place in the country produces in them, they support the corruption regime. Because in this case what was approved were laws to reform the Judicial Power and it was considered that these reforms would be carried out as long as the speaker of the Supreme Court [Chief Justice], and the president at the same time, who is the same person, of the Council of the Judiciary, were honourable, upright people.”*²⁰⁰

April 27th, 2021: TEPJF withdraws Salgado Macedonio and Morón’s candidacies.

By a majority of 6 votes in favour and only one against, the Superior Chamber of the TEPJF confirmed the cancellation of the candidacy of Félix Salgado Macedonio to the government of Guerrero, due to the failure to present a pre-campaign expenses report. The Court also ratified the withdrawal of the candidacy of Raúl Morón to the government of Michoacán, for the same reasons. Both Salgado and Morón ran for Morena-led coalition *Juntos Haremos Historia*.

The decision was final and unappealable. The judges considered that the omission was deliberate and willful, and affected the principle of equity in the contest, as well as accountability and transparency. They said that when Salgado presented the pre-campaign expense report to which he was obliged by law, he did so in zeros and after the deadline, thus hindering INE’s work in matters of verification.

Salgado Macedonio’s candidacy has been the most controversial of its type in recent history. Alongside INE’s scrutiny over his campaign, several women accused the candidate of rape.²⁰¹ Moreover, there is evidence that, during his term as mayor of

¹⁹⁸ <https://twitter.com/brozoxmiswebs/status/1384836814389796864>

¹⁹⁹ <https://twitter.com/PamCerqueira/status/1382847848144801796>

²⁰⁰ <https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/nacional/2021/04/26/si-jueces-de-la-corte-votan-contra-ley-zaldivar-en-tonces-son-complices-de-la-corrupcion-amlo/>

²⁰¹ <https://aristeguinoticias.com/0601/aristegui-en-vivo/enterate/hay-fotos-de-violacion-de-felix-salgado-a-mujer-ex-fiscal-enterate/>

Acapulco, he allowed cocaine trafficking by Beltrán Leyva Cartel and famous drug lord “*La Barbie*.”²⁰² After the INE made official that they would strip him of his candidacy, he and Morena’s president Mario Delgado organized a demonstration in front of INE’s building, declaring the institution’s death.²⁰³ During that protest, he threatened Lorenzo Córdova, head councillor of the INE, to lead his sympathizers to *his little black sheet house*.²⁰⁴

The opposition have used Salgado Macedonio’s candidacy to attack AMLO and the 4T:

@ClaudioXGG: *“Women could do more... good for them. They show us the way. But let us not forget that AMLO insisted on making Salgado Macedonio a candidate for Morena.”*²⁰⁵

Equally, people linked to the 4T and many critical citizens did not agree with AMLO’s support to Salgado Macedonio’s candidacy:

@garza_onofre: *“It is paradoxical how morenistas and AMLO fans applauded when the INE did not grant the registration to Mexico Libre [Felipe Calderon’s party] and now when that same body knocks down the candidacy of Salgado Macedonio, they say it’s a sellout. Democrats by convenience, hypocrites by conviction.”*²⁰⁶

@Viri_Rios: *“Salgado Macedonio stays and with it #AMLO shows his weakest side: he does not understand the feminist struggle.”*²⁰⁷

AMLO called the TEPJF’s decision excessive and antidemocratic.²⁰⁸

May 3rd, 2021: The Line 12 tragedy.

On the night of May 3rd, a column collapsed in the Tezonco-Olivos subway stretch, resulting in 26 people dying from the accident.²⁰⁹ Many political analysts immediately predicted that this incident would have a major impact on the results of the June 6th election.

²⁰²<https://www.dw.com/es/la-doble-cara-de-f%C3%A9lix-salgado-macedonio-d%C3%B3cil-con-los-narcos-violento-con-las-mujeres/a-56523455>

²⁰³<https://www.eluniversalqueretaro.mx/nacion/felix-salgado-da-por-muerto-lorenzo-cordova-consejero-presidente-del-ine>

²⁰⁴<https://politico.mx/central-electoral/elecciones-2021/estados/guerrero/salgado-macedonio-amenaza-con-buscar-a-lorenzo-c%C3%B3rdova-hasta-en-su-casa-de-l%C3%A1mina/>

²⁰⁵ <https://twitter.com/ClaudioXGG/status/1365490497905516544>

²⁰⁶ https://twitter.com/garza_onofre/status/1375440204660621314

²⁰⁷ https://twitter.com/Viri_Rios/status/1362063242516975616

²⁰⁸ <https://www.milenio.com/politica/amlo-excesivo-antidemocratico-cancelar-registro-felix-salgado>

²⁰⁹ <https://www.razon.com.mx/ciudad/linea-12-metro-hay-5-personas-desaparecidas-433656>

The Tezonco-Olivos stretch is part of line 12 of Mexico City's subway. Since the beginning of its construction, line 12 has been surrounded by controversy due to the lack of transparency and questionable design decisions taken by the government of Mexico City (*i.e.*, making it an elevated line instead of underground, the fit between the rail design and the cars in use, etc.).²¹⁰

Mexico City has been under left-wing governments (first under the PRD, and now with MORENA) since 1997, so the right-wing used the accident to attack AMLO's government and political allies. The first two persons under scrutiny were Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón (2006-2012 Head of Government and current Foreign Affairs Minister) and Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo (current Mexico City's Head of Government). They have both being mentioned as potential AMLO's successors.

After the accident, the opposition directly blamed the 4T:

"The collapse of Line 12 exhibited the 4T. A president who was not empathetic with the victims. A chancellor who built a falling subway. A head of government who dropped it. #Loret in @latinus_us: <https://youtu.be/g5RWofM5qLM>"

After the accident, PAN's president in Mexico City, Andrés Atayde, as well as Héctor Barrera, Federico Doring, Christian Von Roehrich and Diego Garrido, municipality candidates in Mexico City for the same party; showed up at the area of the tragedy where they gave a press conference. While this was happening, close to the PAN politicians were two desperate women, mother and grandmother of a 13-year-old boy identified as Brandon Giovani Hernández Tapia, who was traveling with his father on the subway and could not be located the night of the tragedy. The politicians assured them that they were going to press criminal charges against the 4T members mentioned above.

May 27th, 2021: Mexico's False Messiah

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador represents a risk to democracy in Mexico, stated *The Economist* magazine.²¹¹ An illustration of AMLO surrounded by military personnel was featured in that issue's cover, published a few days before Mexico's midterm elections.

The scathing article notes that, in a world "plagued by authoritarian populists, the president of Mexico has somehow escaped the spotlight." The magazine partially

²¹⁰<https://www.forbes.com.mx/linea-12-debio-ser-subterranea-pero-por-ahorrar-dinero-se-hizo-tramo-elevado/>

²¹¹ <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/05/27/voters-should-curb-mexicos-power-hungry-president>

attributes this to the fact that it does not have “vices” like those of other leaders of the same style—Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Narendra Modi in India and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil—such as ridiculing the gay community, going against Muslims or calling on their sympathizers to set the Amazon on fire.

The article acknowledges that AMLO “speaks loud and clear for those who have nothing, and is not personally corrupt.” However, the text explicitly invites “voters [to] curb the power-hungry Mexican president.”

The right-wing opposition expressed how important it is for them to have a neat image before the Western powers:

“This is how they see us from the outside: “The president of Mexico pursues ruinous policies through improper means. Our cover in Latin America this week argues that AMLO is a danger to democracy.” Via The Economist @TheEconomist”²¹²

In turn, AMLO replied:

“They put out this silly cover, very rude, of course lying, calling me “the false messiah.” And still, lacking all ethics, they call on Mexicans not to vote for what we can represent.”²¹³

The Foreign Affairs Minister sent an open letter to *The Economist* publishers, stating:

“(…) a few days before the elections in which ‘we Mexicans will freely elect our representatives, this media publishes a couple of articles in which they invite to vote against the president and his party. The opinion and the call are surprising, not because of the ideological position of their milieu, but because of their virulence and argumentative fragility. (…) Today’s cover is the synthesis of exasperation. It is known that the results of the election, as happened in 2018, will not coincide with the ones you want.”²¹⁴

June 6th, 2021: Election Day

After a combative campaign between parties and a violent process that saw 90 candidates assassinated (particularly, at the municipal level), Election Day arrived. The results were as follows:

²¹² <https://twitter.com/DeniseDresserG/status/1397907351961849860>

²¹³ <https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/nacional/2021/05/28/majadera-muy-grosera-y-mentirosa-amlo-respon-de-a-the-economist/>

²¹⁴ <https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/nacional/2021/05/27/este-es-el-texto-integro-de-la-respuesta-de-ebrard-a-the-economist/>

- MORENA and its allies (Labour and the Green Parties) retained the absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies. MORENA attained 198 positions in the Chamber, the Labour Party (PT) 39, and the Greens 43, adding a grand total of 280. The right-wing *Va Por México* coalition obtained 197 seats, while MC won 23.²¹⁵
- Although the party did not obtain the two-thirds qualified majority required for constitutional amendments, the AMLO government has not been keen on constitutional reforms since he has only sent one such initiative in his first three years of government.²¹⁶
- Moreover, MORENA won 11 governorships: Baja California (Marina del Pilar), Baja California Sur (Víctor Manuel Castro), Campeche (Layda Sansores), Colima (Indira Vizcaíno), Guerrero (Evelyn Salgado), Michoacán (Alfredo Ramírez Bedolla), Nayarit (Miguel Ángel Navarro), Sinaloa (Rubén Rocha Moya), Sonora (Alfonso Durazo Montaña), Tlaxcala (Lorena Cuéllar), and Zacatecas (David Monreal). The opposition only won in four states. *Va por México* coalition won in Chihuahua (María Eugenia Campos) and Querétaro (Mauricio Kuri). The PVEM-PT coalition won in San Luis Potosí (Ricardo Gallardo), who decided not to run with MORENA in this state. Finally, MC won Nuevo León (Samuel García).²¹⁷
- At the municipal level, MORENA won 240 mayorships by itself, and 67 in alliance with the PT.²¹⁸ At this level, the big surprise occurred in Mexico City, where *Va Por México* won nine municipalities against seven for AMLO's party.²¹⁹ Mexico City is MORENA's cradle and, since 2000, the citizens voted for the left (first with the PRD and then for MORENA). Before this election, the opposition only governed in four municipalities of Mexico City.²²⁰
- Mexico City's congress yielded a technical tie between MORENA and the *Va por México* coalition, both with 31 elected members. It will be up to the four legislators from other parties (PVEM with 2, PT and MC only with 1 each) to decide the votes in the legislative plenary sessions.²²¹ However, from the 30 state congresses in dispute, MORENA attained majority in 18 of them. If we add

²¹⁵<https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2021/06/08/el-antes-y-despues-de-la-camara-de-diputados-a-si-se-ve-en-realidad-el-golpe-a-morena/>

²¹⁶ http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/ref/cpeum_crono.htm

²¹⁷<https://www.milenio.com/politica/elecciones-2021/quienes-ganaron-las-elecciones-a-gobernador-en-mexico-2021>

²¹⁸<https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/politica/Morena-PRI-y-PAN-lideran-en-los-ayuntamientos-20210609-0017.html>

²¹⁹<https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/elecciones-2021/2021/06/07/el-mapa-de-cdmx-dividido-en-dos-tras-elas-eciones-del-6-de-junio/>

²²⁰ <https://www.milenio.com/uploads/media/2021/03/20/ano-capitalinos-elegiran-alcaldes-demarcacion.jpg>

²²¹<https://politica.expansion.mx/cdmx/2021/06/16/morena-y-alianza-pan-prd-pri-empataran-en-proxima-legislatura-del-congreso-cdmx>

Quintana Roo, state in which no elections were conducted, MORENA now has 19 local congresses under its control.²²²

Reactions from the right-wing opposition were mixed. Whereas **Marko Cortés** celebrated that MORENA lost its qualified majority (which in fact did not really have before the elections),²²³ Gustavo Madero, PAN senator, affirmed that the PAN-PRI-PRD bloc is light years away from being a competitive opposition that wins and convinces because it lacks a common project.²²⁴ The two masterminds behind *Va por México*, **Claudio X. González Guajardo** and **Gustavo de Hoyos**, showed the same ambiguity. Whereas the first character mocked MORENA for “losing” Mexico City,²²⁵ the latter acknowledged the coalition’s shortcomings and announced that he is looking forward to the 2022’s vote seeking to revoke the presidential mandate.²²⁶ Moreover, replicating the *Va por México* strategy, Mexico City will have the *Va por CDMX*’s Union of Mayors, with the explicit objective of sharing best practices and negotiating budgets with Mexico City’s congress.²²⁷

Elected deputies will take office on **September 1st, 2021**.

June 15th, 2021: AMLO announces electoral reform.

The President announced that he will propose to Congress three reforms, one of them constitutional, in electoral matters to democratize the elections, eliminate PR multi-member seats, reduce costs and renew the current advisers of the INE.

The opposition attributed this reform to the results in Mexico City’s elections:

*“I want to disappear the INE to control the elections and thus make sure that the aspirational and selfish middle class do not win me again in the CDMX” #AsiHabloPejetustra*²²⁸

*“López assumes himself as a ‘lame duck’ and only thinks about the presidential succession. Also, [he wants] to finish militarizing the country, to destroy clean energies, to reconstitute monopolies in hydrocarbons and electricity, and to dismantle the INE ...”*²²⁹

²²² <https://politica.expansion.mx/estados/2021/06/09/morena-y-aliados-lideraran-en-19-congresos-locales>

²²³ https://ntrguadalajara.com/post.php?id_notas=167318

²²⁴ <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/va-por-mexico-anos-luz-de-ser-oposicion-competitiva-gustavo-madero>

²²⁵ <https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2021/06/07/claudio-x-gonzalez-se-mofo-de-morena-por-nuevo-panorama-electoral-mexico-no-es-venezuela/>

²²⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RMmrEaW2-w>

²²⁷ <https://www.milenio.com/politica/elecciones-2021/alcaldes-alianza-cdmx-crean-union-alcaldias>

²²⁸ <https://twitter.com/ferbelaunzaran/status/1405138671150551048>

²²⁹ https://twitter.com/g_quadri/status/1405189321540440064

Annex 2: Political actors in the right-wing opposition to the 4T

Aguilar Camín, Héctor: Journalist, historian, and writer, he was a fellow of the Guggenheim Foundation. He was a researcher at the National Institute of Anthropology and History and a contributor to the newspapers *La Jornada*, *Unomásuno* and *La Cultura*. He has directed *Nexos* magazine and *Cal y Arena* publishing house. He is the author of historical studies, novels, and essays on cultural and historical topics. He received the National Prize for Cultural Journalism and was awarded the Medal of Merit by the government of his native state for his journalistic and literary career.²³⁰

Alemán, Ricardo: A decorated journalist that won the National Journalism Award in 2005. In May 2018, he used Twitter to call on AMLO's sympathizers to kill the politician, as it happened with celebrities like Selena Quintanilla or John Lennon, who were assassinated by one of their fans.²³¹ Subsequently, Televisa (Mexico's biggest media company) fired him.²³² Alemán has remained one of AMLO's most bitter critics.

Álvarez, Gloria: Guatemalan writer and public speaker, she is a famous libertarian, frequently cited in social media by non-academic users. She graduated from Universidad Francisco Marroquín, Guatemala, a bastion of the right in Latin America.

Álvarez is the author of the book *Cómo hablar con un izquierdista. Por qué, en lugar de hacerla desaparecer, la socialdemocracia incrementa la pobreza* (How to speak to a lefty. Why social-democracy increases poverty instead of making it disappear; Mexico City: Paidós/Ariel, 2017) and coauthor of *El engaño populista: por qué se arruinan nuestros países y cómo rescatarlos* (The populist deceit: why are countries go bankrupt and how to rescue them; Mexico City: Paidós/Ariel, 2016)

Gloria Álvarez conducts the radio program *Viernes de Gloria*, broadcast in Libertópolis Radio (<http://www.libertopolis.com/>), and the TV program *HDP*, broadcast by Azteca Guatemala (<https://azteca.com.gt/>). She was the main speaker at the First Ibero American Youth Parliament (Zaragoza, Spain, 2014); organized by the right-wing international network *Iberoamérica Líder* (<http://www.iberoamericalider.org/>). Her videos "The Socialism Virus in Latin America" and "The antidote to corruption: equality before the law" reached 2.5 million reproductions by mid-year 2021.²³³²³⁴ Currently, she works for Mexico's second biggest television network, TV Azteca.²³⁵ Days after the 2018's presidential campaign, Alvarez tweeted:

²³⁰ <https://www.catalonia.cl/autores/hector-aguilar-camin/>

²³¹ <https://lasillarota.com/ricardo-aleman-amlo-redes-sociales-chairros-ahi-les-hablan/220810>

²³² <https://sipse.com/mexico/televisa-despide-ricardo-aleman-twitter-ofensivo-muerte-amlo-indignacion-redes-sociales-mexico-295174.html>

²³³ <https://www.facebook.com/libertarioantiprogresismo/videos/471178157092402>

²³⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/100044548621350/videos/779474209128406>

²³⁵ <https://ciudaddeideas.com/ponentes/gloria-alvarez/>

“That the PRI or PAN have been disastrous does not make #Morena or @lopezobrador_ a paragon of virtues. The punishment vote can end up punishing you.”²³⁶

Anaya, Ricardo: PAN’s presidential candidate in 2018. Lawyer and politician, he had a long history as a public servant before focusing on a political career, attaining a seat in the Local Congress of the State of Querétaro, nowadays one of the last PAN strongholds. In 2012, Anaya was elected to the federal congress through the plurinominal system, achieving rapid success that took him all the way to the presidency of the Directive Board of the Chamber of Deputies. In 2015, he was elected president of the PAN, defeating future governor of Chihuahua, Javier Corral.²³⁷ His persona attracted many sympathizers for his cause, people that nicknamed him “Wonder Boy.”

Anaya’s failed candidacy in 2018 was a setback to his political career. Ironically, **Margarita Zavala** was Anaya’s main rival during the entire campaign, accusing him of sabotaging her opportunity at becoming PAN’s nominee for the presidency. For that reason Zavala cancelled her membership to the PAN.²³⁸

Aureoles Conejo, Silvano: Trained as an agricultural engineer, he is nonetheless a seasoned politician, for he was a founding member of the PRD in 1989, a federal deputy and a member of the Senate. On June 7, 2015, Silvano Aureoles Conejo was elected governor of Michoacán under the PRD banner, so his administration ends in 2021. In a video that went viral on social networks, Aureoles Conejo is observed getting out of an army vehicle and going to a man who was carrying two signs with slogans against the governor and the insecurity that exists in the municipality. Aureoles faces him and pushes him with both hands. Then someone from Aureoles’ security team takes away the banners.²³⁹ Aureoles was also identified as one of the sponsors of the LatinUS binational media network in 2020 (see **Loret de Mola**)

Brujas del Mar (“Sea Witches”), a feminist collective from Veracruz, were the precursors for the International Women’s Day march of March 9th. According to their spokeswoman, Arussi Unda, they took their name after a creature that was “persecuted, wounded and even killed”, simply because she was a woman or because she carried out actions that not everyone understood. AMLO’s sympathizers have disclosed Unda’s photos with prominent PAN figures such as **Felipe Calderón** and discovered that one of

²³⁶ <https://twitter.com/GloriaAlvarez85/status/1012066360548085761>

²³⁷ <https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/politica/Quien-es-Ricardo-Anaya-Cortes-20180701-0005.html>

²³⁸ <https://regeneracion.mx/margarita-zavala-acusa-a-anaya-de-convertir-al-pan-en-una-copia-barata-del-pri/>

²³⁹ <https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2021/04/14/quien-es-silvano-aureoles-el-cuestionado-gobernador-de-michoacan-que-empujo-a-un-hombre-que-se-manifestaba-en-su-contra/>

the entities financing the group was the business organization COPARMEX.²⁴⁰ Moreover, Unda was involved in a case of digital harassment of trans activists Eme Flores²⁴¹ and Laurel Miranda.²⁴² This has discredited the collective in the eyes of many left-wing associates and the public in general.

Calderón, Felipe: Former president of Mexico and **Margarita Zavala's** husband, defeated AMLO in the 2006's presidential elections, a hugely contested event that AMLO branded as a fraud. The main arguments presented to contest Calderón's election were the presidential intervention on Calderón's support by then-president of Mexico, **Vicente Fox**,²⁴³ and the hiring of the software company Hildebrando to tally the final election data. The company was owned by Calderón's brother-in-law, Diego Hildebrando Zavala.²⁴⁴ After the publication of the results, AMLO summoned his sympathizers to a giant protest, the biggest in the country's history.²⁴⁵ This sent Mexico into a political turmoil that put into question Calderón's legitimacy as a president, leading him to take the Mexican army to the streets.

Officially, the federal government announced an operation against organized crime in the state of Michoacán, where in 2006 nearly 500 murders had been recorded among members of drug cartels.²⁴⁶ However, several authors and journalists questioned this action, branding it as a political move to restore Calderón's image as an iron-fist against criminals.²⁴⁷ His war against

During 2018's presidential campaign, Calderón supported his wife's attempt at the presidency by attacking AMLO in any possible way. Calderón accused AMLO of the following:

- Ignorance regarding environmental²⁴⁸⁻²⁴⁹⁻ and security²⁵⁰ issues;
- Protecting Nestora Salgado,²⁵¹ an activist who spent 2 years and 7 months in jail, accused of robbery, illegal deprivation of liberty and aggravated kidnapping. She was acquitted of all these crimes and was released on March 18, 2016;²⁵²
- Censoring the documentary "*Populismo en América Latina*", which was never officially released but leaked during electoral times. The producer of the

²⁴⁰<https://sinlineamx.com/descubren-vinculos-de-vocera-del-colectivo-brujas-del-mar-con-felipe-Calderón-es-antiamlo/>

²⁴¹ <https://twitter.com/redlgbtcig/status/1237445982348066817/photo/1>

²⁴² <https://twitter.com/laurelyeye/status/1360644193073451010>

²⁴³ https://elpais.com/internacional/2006/09/05/actualidad/1157407201_850215.html

²⁴⁴ <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2006/06/20/index.php?section=politica&article=009n2pol>

²⁴⁵ http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1607-050X2007000200013

²⁴⁶ <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2006/12/12/index.php?section=politica&article=014n1pol>

²⁴⁷ <https://www.proceso.com.mx/reportajes/2012/10/17/la-guerra-antinarco-el-gran-fracaso-de-Calderón-109716.html>

²⁴⁸ <https://twitter.com/FelipeCalderón/status/1012367954527293446>

²⁴⁹ <https://twitter.com/FelipeCalderón/status/1006746267962052610>

²⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/FelipeCalderón/status/988226760901906432>

²⁵¹ <https://twitter.com/FelipeCalderón/status/999461168325505024>

²⁵² <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/elecciones-2018/y-todo-esto-quien-es-nestora-salgado>

project accused AMLO of censorship, even though the now President was just a candidate when the authorities ordered the documentary's publicity to be removed.²⁵³⁻²⁵⁴

After AMLO's election in 2018, Calderón has remained as one of his main vocal critics.

Cortés, Marko: Accountant and politician, has been an electoral delegate of PAN's Executive National Council, federal deputy, Senator for Michoacán, pre-candidate for governor, candidate for mayor of Morelia, Coordinator of the Chamber of Deputies in 2017-2018. In 2018, he was elected president of the PAN.²⁵⁵ Throughout the entirety of AMLO's administration, he has been the voice of the party opposition, and has been a crucial connection for the private sector to participate in support of party opposition. While he has pointed out that AMLO is a danger to Mexico, Cortés' critiques are usually not as incisive as the ones coming from other right-wing characters.

de Hoyos, Gustavo: Lawyer and businessman, he was elected as business association COPARMEX president in 2016, and re-elected in 2018, 2019 and 2020. Under his leadership, COPARMEX has promoted initiatives with an emphasis on citizen participation, public integrity, government efficiency (#NoMasDerroches), and democratic strengthening. He has been an advisor for several government dependencies.²⁵⁶ He created (among other citizen initiatives) the *Ley 3 de 3*, which demands that all members of Congress and Government officials, including the President himself, must disclose their taxes, assets, and possible conflicts of interest.²⁵⁷ He is behind two initiatives (one citizen and other partisan) that have engaged in frontal disagreements (legal and political) against AMLO's administration: #NoMasDerroches and the *Va por Mexico* coalition.

Despite his eagerness in anti-corruption initiatives, de Hoyos appeared in the network of corruption that surrounds governor of Baja California, Jaime Bonilla, where former members of the cabinet have requested bribes from businessmen in exchange for future public contracts. De Hoyos is linked to the company Integradora de Productos Agropecuarios Cachanillas, S. de RL de CV, which the State Anti-Corruption System (SEA) has requested to be investigated; because its owner Humberto Valadez García, "El Huevero", would have delivered 20 million pesos to Bonilla's bureaucrats.²⁵⁸

²⁵³ <https://twitter.com/FelipeCalderón/status/989505172475793409>

²⁵⁴ <https://politica.expansion.mx/mexico/2019/07/06/multa-documental-populismo-en-america-latina-amlo>

²⁵⁵ <https://www.pan.org.mx/presidente>

²⁵⁶ <https://foroforbes.com/2020/speaker/gustavo-de-hoyos/>

²⁵⁷ <http://ley3de3.mx/es/what-is-the-citizens-initiative-ley3de3-3-out-of-3-2/>

²⁵⁸ <https://www.proceso.com.mx/nacional/estados/2019/12/19/ligan-gustavo-de-hoyos-walther-con-empres-a-vinculada-red-de-corrupcion-en-bc-236148.html>

García Cabeza de Vaca, Francisco Javier: Current governor of Tamaulipas. A former senator, Cabeza de Vaca was one of the characters mentioned by Emilio Lozoya as bribe recipients during the *Reforma Energética* legislative process.

He joined the PAN in 1999. He became the federal deputy for District 2, located in Reynosa, Tamaulipas. With this, he was the first opposition legislator in that region; he held office from 2000 to 2003. In 2011, **Calderón** assigned him as the Director General of the Commission for the Regularization of Land Tenure. He is part of the GOAN and the Federalist Alliance.²⁵⁹

González Guajardo, Claudio X.: Founder of the non-governmental organization *Mexicanos Contra la Corrupción y la Impunidad* (Mexicans against Corruption and Impunity – MCCI), president of the Mexican Business Council (CMN) and son of Kimberly-Clark’s Mexican subsidiary CEO, Claudio X. González Laporte. Previously, González Guajardo indirectly participated in the public scene through the NGO *Mexicanos Primero* (Mexicans First), advocating for educational constitutional reform during the administration of Enrique Peña Nieto.²⁶⁰ During the 2018 presidential campaign, branded the then-candidate AMLO as a slanderer; several CMN members (including González Guajardo) put pressure on José Antonio Meade, the then-second runner-up of the polls, to decline in favour of Ricardo Anaya, first runner-up, in order to ensure AMLO’s defeat. Meade’s own spokesman, **Javier Lozano**, acknowledged the pressure coming from Mexican elites to form an anti-AMLO front.²⁶¹ Alongside his public callouts on AMLO, González Guajardo is a common legal rival for the President’s constitutional and legislative reforms. The most famous of them was the constitutional challenge that suspended the construction of the Santa Lucía Airport, one of AMLO’s major public works.²⁶² Each constitutional challenge is assessed individually, although the neoliberal legalist language is a *sine qua non* characteristic in most of legal cases, conforming the uniformity of the arguments presented by the right-wing opposition against any legislation presented by the current administration.

Fernández de Cevallos, Diego: Lawyer and politician, he was elected federal deputy in 1991, being appointed coordinator of the PAN caucus. The nickname by which he is popularly known, “Chief Diego”, dates from this time. He ran for president in 1994, being defeated by PRI’s candidate, Ernesto Zedillo. In 2000 he was elected Senator, he served as coordinator of PAN Senators. He served as President of the Senate for two terms, from 2001 to 2002 and from 2004 to 2005.²⁶³ Longtime AMLO rival, he recently

²⁵⁹ <https://www.elfinanciero.com.mx/nacional/perfil-quien-es-francisco-garcia-cabeza-de-vaca/>

²⁶⁰ <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/quien-es-claudio-x-gonzalez-quien-amlo-ve-como-adversario>

²⁶¹ https://elpais.com/internacional/2018/05/03/mexico/1525377257_396324.html

²⁶² <https://contralacorrupcion.mx/suspension-construccion-de-santa-lucia/>

²⁶³ <https://www.excelsior.com.mx/topico/diego-fernandez-de-cevallos>

declared that he “despises AMLO due to the damage that he has done to Mexico” and ended up calling him a little ruffian.²⁶⁴

Fox Quezada, Vicente: Former governor of Guanajuato, he was elected Mexico’s president in 2000 under PAN’s banner, defeating the PRI, the party that had maintained its hegemony over the presidential office for over 70 years. However, Fox’s administration failed to deliver on his promises of a democratic transition, and he resumed the neoliberal policies that the PRI had been implementing since the late 80s (particularly, during the administration of Carlos Salinas de Gortari).²⁶⁵ This can be seen in his constant failed attempts to impose 15 percent value-added taxes on food and medicine.²⁶⁶ Moreover, his political views aligned perfectly with the right-wing president of the United States, George W. Bush,²⁶⁷ getting him into a strong diplomatic disagreement with the then-Cuban president, Fidel Castro.²⁶⁸

During his administration, Fox frequently clashed with AMLO, then Head of Government of the Federal District (Mexico City mayor). The biggest confrontation between them directly influenced the results of the presidential election of 2006. Fox instructed the Attorney General of the Republic (nowadays, the FGR) to press charges against AMLO, which started an impeachment trial before the Chamber of Deputies. This process was originated by a landowner who sued the Federal District’s government on the grounds of improper expropriation of a patch of land to build an access road for a private hospital.²⁶⁹

During the 2018 election, Fox sided with PRI candidate José Antonio Meade. Fox constantly showed his support to the candidate, stating in English that “*in moments of uncertainty, [Mexico] need[s] someone who is able to confront it with certainty*”, Meade being that person. Moreover, he added that “*we do not need in Mexico, as in other Latin American countries, populism and demagoguery*”²⁷⁰ in clear reference to AMLO. As the reader may recall, the *Populismo en America Latina* documentary’s publicity included this concept and explicitly highlighted AMLO as the Mexican example for that.

Krauze, Enrique: A recognized and multi-award-winning historian and writer, Krauze is currently the director of *Letras Libres* magazine and Editorial Clio.²⁷¹ Constant critic of AMLO, in 2019 the now-Secretariat of Economy, Tatiana Clouthier, pointed at Krauze as

²⁶⁴<https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2021/03/12/simplemente-lo-desprecio-diego-fernandez-de-cevallos-y-su-opinion-sobre-López-obrador/>

²⁶⁵ <https://sci-hub.st/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-2456.2005.tb00331.x>

²⁶⁶<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-vicente-foxs-rocky-first-year-president-mexico-2001dec13-story.html>

²⁶⁷<https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/02/AR2006030202221.html?noredirect=on>

²⁶⁸ <https://www.worldpress.org/Americas/518.cfm>

²⁶⁹ <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2014/06/23/capital/030n2cap>

²⁷⁰ <https://polemon.mx/vicente-fox-elogia-a-meade-se-lanza-contra-amlo/>

²⁷¹ <https://www.milenio.com/cultura/biografia-enrique-krauze-historiador-critica-amlo>

one of the main creators of digital campaigns to insult AMLO during the 2018 presidential campaign.²⁷²

Loret de Mola, Carlos: Mexican journalist born in Mérida, who over the years became one of the communicators who set the agenda in the country's public affairs. He is the grandson of former governor of Yucatán, Carlos Loret de Mola Mediz. He was the host of the morning news show "*Primero Noticias*" for 12 years, broadcast by Televisa, the biggest TV consortium in Mexico. The journalist and the corporation parted ways in 2019.²⁷³

Loret de Mola has either orchestrated or participated in many journalistic setups, which severely harmed his reputation in front of the audience. The staged "arrest" of French citizen Florence Cassez and her partner Israel Vallarta in 2005, alleged members of the kidnapping gang "Los Zodiaco", has been the most complicated moment in the journalist's career as that earned him the nickname of "*Lord Montajes*" (Mister Setup) in social media. On December 9, 2005, in its newscast the famous operation was broadcast "live" where the elements of the now-extinct Federal Investigation Agency (AFI), led then by now-imprisoned Genaro García Luna, accessed the address where Vallarta and Cassez were already detained. These irregularities were evidenced years later. In January 2013, when the Frenchwoman was released for "violations of due process," Loret de Mola acknowledged that her arrest was a setup, but he added that he did not realize it at the time.²⁷⁴ Similarly, several journalists have highlighted that the kidnapping of famous coach Rubén Omar Romano was staged by García Luna to divert public attention from the impeachment trial against AMLO.²⁷⁵

Lozano, Gilberto: Former director of FEMSA, one of the most important private conglomerates in Mexico, he has been an eclectic professional, having experience in business, politics, and soccer. Vicente Fox and his Minister of the Interior, Santiago Creel, offered the former manager to serve as Creel's Chief of Staff. He remained in office for three months, resigning "irrevocably upon seeing the lack of will for a forceful transformation of Mexico." In 2009, he founded the National Citizen Congress, which, according to its declaration of principles, seeks to "promote the construction of citizenship as a fundamental solution to the social, political and economic problems of Mexico."

His opposition to AMLO is direct and scathing, as shown in founding FRENAAA and issuing unvarnished statements, such as describing Claudia Sheinbaum, Mexico City

²⁷²<https://www.milenio.com/politica/estado-no-perseguira-a-nadie-pero-no-protegera-a-escritores-amlo-so-bre-krauze>

²⁷³<https://heraldodemexico.com.mx/tendencias/2019/8/22/quien-es-carlos-loret-de-mola-por-que-se-va-de-televisa-113010.html>

²⁷⁴<https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2020/09/04/montajes-romances-extramaritales-malos-tratos-y-amlo-los-escandalos-de-carlos-loret-de-mola/>

²⁷⁵<https://futbol.radioformula.com.mx/fuera-de-juego/ruben-romano-secuestro-montaje-genaro-garcia-luna-cruz-azul-2019/>

Head of Government and one of AMLO's closest allies, as "Soviet lady." His discourse has become more and more aggressive against people in the public administration, inviting his followers to lynch workers of the Federal Electricity Commission if they are not "client-oriented",²⁷⁶ and to arm themselves.²⁷⁷ He believes that there is a congregation (a cartel) of international communists who support AMLO and aim to implement the directives of the Sao Paulo Forum, accusing foreign sympathizers who are close to the president of conspiring against Mexico.²⁷⁸

Lozano, Javier: Former PAN senator and Secretary of Labour, Lozano has changed parties frequently, which has earned him the reputation of traitor among politicians and political analysts alike. While at the front of the Labour Secretariat, Lozano engaged in constant disputes with several unions.²⁷⁹ During the 2018 presidential campaign, he worked as PRI candidate Meade's spokesman. After AMLO's victory, Lozano remained a wrathful critic of the 4T, constantly resorting to personal insults and disqualifications. Here is a recent tweet of his in which he even managed to insult President of Argentina Alberto Fernández:

*"You need to be very, very mediocre, ignorant and envious to celebrate a compliment like the one made today by the inept President of Argentina @alferdez to useless @lopezobrador_. Oh, and [they both have] the same annoying fucking smirk. Tit for tat."*²⁸⁰

Madrazo Pintado, Roberto: Eternal rival of AMLO. His confrontation dates back more than 30 years, when Madrazo sought to be governor of Tabasco in 1988, a position that he won in 1994 after an election full of irregularities. Madrazo Pintado, currently 68 years old (July 30, 1952), was born into one of the most prominent political families in the state of Tabasco.

The rivalry between the two Tabasco politicians originated when AMLO ran for governor in 1988. The "triumph" was validated by Roberto Madrazo from his position as local PRI leader. The rivalry reached its peak when both ran for the governorship of Tabasco in 1994, an election that was once again plagued with irregularities and that ended with Madrazo's alleged victory. AMLO demanded the annulment of the elections. He called for civil resistance and led the so-called Exodus for Democracy, an 830 km march to Mexico City where AMLO presented more than 250,000 original accounting documents demonstrating that spending in Madrazo's campaign had been 40 times higher than the legal limit.

²⁷⁶ <https://regeneracion.mx/gilberto-lozano-convoca-a-linchar-a-los-trabajadores-de-la-cfe/>

²⁷⁷ https://youtu.be/K7DgdeF_cEA?t=2423

²⁷⁸ https://youtu.be/K7DgdeF_cEA?t=2068

²⁷⁹ <https://www.proceso.com.mx/reportajes/2018/1/16/javier-lozano-un-estratega-de-la-traicion-198257.htm>

²⁸⁰ <https://twitter.com/JLozanoA/status/1364348901260599298>

After his tenure as Tabasco governor, Madrazo was elected national leader of the PRI. He was barely two years into this position when he was involved in a scandal: in September 2002, he was briefly detained by agents of the United States Customs Service at the Fort Lauderdale airport, after the plane in which he was traveling, a Lear Jet 31A from Mexico, was confiscated. The aircraft was detained because “*it was acquired by a group of Mexican businessmen with money from embezzlement and fraud*”. Eventually Madrazo, along with the pilot and the copilot, were released. Madrazo was close to president Vicente Fox. In 2006, Madrazo warned Fox that he had to prevent “*the madman*” AMLO to get elected in 2006, since otherwise he would put them all in jail.²⁸¹

Meade Kuribreña, José Antonio: A man of many bureaucratic battles, he was head of many federal secretariats throughout his career. He was in charge of the Energy and Finance Secretariats during Calderón's administration, and he was the top official of the Foreign Affairs, Social Development and Finance and Public Credit Secretariats, under AMLO's predecessor, Enrique Peña Nieto. Meade was the PRI's first ever candidate who was not formally a member of the party.²⁸²

General Prosecutor of the Republic (FGR) pressed charges against Meade due to his alleged participation in the *Estafa Maestra* fraud, causing a patrimonial damage for more than five billion pesos. However, in September 2019, a judge dismissed charges against the former presidential candidate.

Robles Berlanga, Rosario: Rural Development Economist, she was a founding PRD member in 1989, in 1994 she was elected federal deputy. In the Chamber of Deputies she chaired the Social Development commission. From there, she was appointed Secretary General of the Government of the Federal District, in 1997. When elected Mexico City's Head of Government Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas ran for president, in September 1999 the Legislative Assembly of the Federal District (ALDF) appointed Robles interim Head of Government, a position that ended in 2000.

In 2004, she resigned her membership in the PRD, after being splattered in a bribery scandal involving official René Bejarano and the Argentine businessman Carlos Ahumada, with whom she had a romantic relationship.

She returned to the national political scene in September 2012. President-elect Enrique Peña Nieto introduced his transition team, where Rosario Robles Berlanga unexpectedly appeared as Vice Coordinator of International Affairs. Subsequently, in December 2012 she was appointed Secretary of Social Development.

From that position she was involved in the infamous *Estafa Maestra* fraud, a scheme that funneled up to \$5,073 million pesos (around US\$263 million) of public funds to

²⁸¹<https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2021/03/30/roberto-madrazo-y-López-obrador-la-disputa-historica-por-el-poder-de-mexico/>

²⁸² https://elpais.com/internacional/2017/11/27/mexico/1511795397_970032.html

PRI's campaigns in 2013 and 2014²⁸³. She was arrested in August 2019, and is still serving time in prison.

Rosas, Luis Alberto: A.K.A. *@tumbaburrosss*, is an anonymous influencer and bot-farms administrator that committed to attacking the 4T on Twitter and other social media. He is close to the Calderón family²⁸⁴ and to several other PAN politicians.²⁸⁵ His identity was revealed in 2016 when Felipe Calderón and the late Rafael Moreno Valle clashed for the PAN presidency, where *@tumbaburrosss* had a role as a critic of the Moreno Valle administration in the state of Puebla.²⁸⁶

Rosas has an abrasive stance while confronting opposition figures. In an attempt to generate a reaction from the congressman Gerardo Fernández Noroña (one of AMLO's biggest defenders and famous for his unorthodox outbursts during parliamentary sessions), Rosas wanted to put a cap on him with the tumbaburross logo.²⁸⁷

Téllez, Lilly: Controversial senator, journalist and former television host. Lilly Téllez entered the world of politics with MORENA in 2018. Initially, Tellez became MORENA's coordinator in Sonora state, and later became a senator. However, after challenging the party's stance on abortion and criticizing Evo Morales asyllum in Mexico, MORENA asked for her removal as senator, but the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judicial Power (TEPJF) determined that Téllez should remain on the bench. After a series of conflicts with her fellow party members, especially on the issue of abortion, Lilly Téllez left MORENA to join the PAN ranks. Having being elected in the coattails of the president, she has ironically become a sporadic yet constant critic of AMLO and his policies.

Zavala, Margarita: Felipe Calderón's wife, she has held office in both local and federal legislatures, all of them as a member of the PAN. As a person with outspoken catholic values, she has been an active voice against abortion in Mexico, affirming that the legal interruption of pregnancy *"is the rule of the strongest over the weak, it is to deny the future, it is to remove challenges from the State and society."*²⁸⁸ Her quest against it (as a Mexico City's Legislative Assembly Member) failed after the Criminal Code of the metropolis was modified to decriminalize abortion up to 12 weeks of gestation; legal criteria which later were constitutionally ratified by the National Supreme Court of Justice (SCJN).

²⁸³ <https://www.milenio.com/politica/rosario-robles-quien-es-y-de-esto-se-la-acusa-la-fgr>

²⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/ZuritaCarpio/status/1191393946360066049>

²⁸⁵ <https://twitter.com/julenremereria/status/1191506402377945090>

²⁸⁶ <https://sinlineamx.com/redes-destapan-identidad-del-influencer-de-felipe-Calderón-llamado-tumbaburross/>

²⁸⁷ https://twitter.com/martin_nolasco/status/1191434873753526272

²⁸⁸ <https://www.altonivel.com.mx/elecciones-2018/candidatos/perfil-quien-es-margarita-zavala/>

Leftist groups perceive Zavala as an anti-rights voice, denying the legal validity of same-sex marriages by stating that *“marriages are to be formed by a man and a woman. The other stuff has to be revised.”* It is worth noting that, during that statement, she refused to take a picture with a lesbian couple and their adopted child.²⁸⁹

She was PAN’s presidential pre-candidate in 2018. She quit the presidential campaign after her disastrous performance in the first presidential debate, although her name did appear in the electoral ticket.²⁹⁰ She resigned the PAN over that blunder, but came back to the party to run as a candidate for deputy in the 2021 mid-term elections.

²⁸⁹ <https://www.sinembargo.mx/16-11-2017/3352448>

²⁹⁰ https://elpais.com/internacional/2018/05/16/mexico/1526493957_472938.html