

Beyond the Water's Edge: Cleavage Theory and Foreign Policy in Latin American Democracies

Cleavage Theory and the Foreign Policy Preferences of Mexican and Colombian Parties

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1 Introduction

Over the past half-century, cleavage theory has served as a fundamental tool to study representative democracies through the relationship between societal fractures and domestic politics. Cleavages, intended as social fractures between groups, play an identitarian role and shape the political arena (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Colomer & Puglisi, 2005). After being employed in Western democracies to study party systems and voting behaviour, cleavage theory has seen a decline in descriptive power due to the rising of postmaterialistic values in Western societies (Inglehart, 1977, 1984; Arzheimer, Evans & Lewis-Beck, 2017; Kriesi, 1998). Meanwhile, this analytical lens is becoming increasingly valuable in non-western contexts. Societal fractures, previously contained in or obscured by corporatist, semi-authoritarian governments have been allowed to emerge only recently in the public discourse, during the period following the third democratization wave, which dismantled many of the institutional mechanisms that had suppressed open political contestation.

This is evident in regions such as Eastern Europe, South East Asia and Latin America. In Latin American democracies social cleavages play an increasingly relevant role in structuring political discourse and party positioning (Barrera et al., 2021; Martínez-Gallardo et al., 2022). I argue that in the Latin American context social cleavages shape the structure not only of domestic politics but of foreign policy as well. Specifically, I hypothesize that the foreign policy of two of Latin America major democracies, Colombia and Mexico, will reflect the respective social cleavages, showing that foreign policy reflects social cleavages through party positions. Through a comparative analysis of how Colombian and Mexican parties position themselves regarding foreign policy issues, this study examines whether and how social cleavages will manifest coherently in their foreign policy preferences. In doing so, this research expands cleavage theory on foreign policy, while disproving the traditional idea of Latin American democracies' foreign policy as consequence of extremely personalistic leaders, i.e. *caudillismo*, rather than domestic, structural reasons. ¹

¹Caudillismo refers to a political phenomenon prominent in 19th- and early 20th-century Latin America,

The research builds on the seminal work of Lipset and Rokkan, Lijphart, and more recently Colomer & Puglisi, on the role of social cleavages in the political arena. The literature points to the fact that social cleavages do not have a causal relationship with policymaking. Nonetheless, they are present in the public discourse, shaping it and structuring the public arena around certain themes and divisions. These divisions are not static and have been observed to be shifting, especially in industrialized Western democracies, from a materialistic, focused on economic and physical security issues, to a postmaterialistic dimension, emerging in more affluent societies and emphasizing self-expression, environmentalism, gender equality, and cultural values, often dividing along generational or educational lines. Outside the Western world, however, the structure of the shift has been different. Nations that have been affected by the third wave of democratisation present a more hybrid political structure: materialistic friction, previously hidden by authoritarian regimes, intersects with postmaterialistic divisions to shape the political arena. A region in which this hybrid dimension is especially visible is Latin America (LATAM), where, after the democratisation of a large part of the region in the aftermath of authoritarian rule, traditional social fractures have re-emerged, intersecting with a new value-based axis revolving around security concerns, authoritarian movements, and a strong civil society.

The aim of this research is to examine whether the internal divisions shaping the political arena will be visible in the political sphere historically considered the more insulated from the turmoil of daily political activity. The infamous saying “*politics stops at the water’s edge*,” has been challenged on theoretical grounds in recent years, especially by the work of Robert Putnam and Andrew Moravcsik. This research expands on the relation between foreign policy and societal structures, mediated by party politics, in the context of newly democratized countries: Colombia and Mexico.

I employed a mixed-method comparative analysis with a quantitative core and interpretative

characterized by the dominance of strongmen—called *caudillos*—who wielded power through a mix of military force, charismatic authority, and personal networks. These leaders often filled the vacuum left by weak or collapsing state institutions after independence, presenting themselves as defenders of order, tradition, or the people. Caudillismo has played a foundational role in shaping political identity and state formation in many Hispanic American countries. (Sánchez Román, 2015).

contextualization to examine how social cleavages are reflected in the foreign policy preferences of political parties in Mexico and Colombia. The empirical base of the research builds on three main datasets: the Latinobarómetro 2018, Political Representation and Party Position Survey (PREPPS), and Chapel Hill Expert Survey – Latin America extension (CHES LATAM) (Latinobarómetro Corporation, 2018; Wiesehomeier et al., 2019; Martínez-Gallardo, 2021). The first is an annual public opinion survey, while the second and the third are expert-coded datasets assessing political parties' positions on political and socioeconomic dimensions. An exploratory analysis through cross-tabulations of preferences at the individual level, through the Latinobarómetro, is used to map the distribution of party preferences across key societal divisions, such as urbanization, class, and ethnicity, revealing underlying patterns in party and party-family support. At the party level, linear regression models are used to understand the relationship between parties' ideological positions on the traditional Left-Right dimension and the GAL-TAN (Green/Alternative/Libertarian vs. Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalist) axis, and their stances on bilateral cooperation with the United States, China, and the European Union.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Cleavage Theory

To provide a brief introduction, social cleavages can be understood as “an expression of underlying social conflicts” (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Colomer & Puglisi, 2005).² These conflicts represent the main societal fractures caused by different socio-economic revolutions that have taken place over centuries, creating a stratified, group-divided society. Such groups, born through collective identification and in–out group dynamics, share an identitarian function and go beyond occupational or extemporaneous self-identification (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967).

²Lipset and Rokkan (1967) identified 4 key cleavages shaping party systems: Centre/Periphery, Church/State, Urban/Rural, and Owners/Workers

Cleavages are, however, not the origin of policy-making but rather the scaffolding on which parties can shape their policy platforms. They provide the arena in which political debate is framed, determining which issues become politicized and how (Lijphart, 1984; Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Colomer & Puglisi, 2005). As Lijphart (1984) noted, social cleavages provide the range of the policy debate, rather than the policy debate itself. Which and how many cleavages—or “issues,” as he names them—are present in the public debate correlates with the number of parties and with how parties interact regarding policy platforms; i.e., which positions parties are likely to take in contrast with others (Lijphart, 1984).

Nonetheless, this research focuses on a specific region, Latin America. One of the reasons is that cleavages appear more visible and thus serve as a better analytical tool outside most well established Western Democracies. An increasing body of studies has shown that over the past three decades traditional political cleavages have become less and less relevant in Western democracies (Franklin, 1992; Best, 2011). One possible explanation is the emergence of postmaterialist values in advanced industrial societies, which have been replacing traditional cleavages (Inglehart, 1977, 1984; Arzheimer, Evans, & Lewis-Beck, 2017). These new social divisions are not classical cleavages—i.e., they are not structural divisions among groups—but are instead based on individual and personal values (Arzheimer et al., 2017; Kriesi, 1998). One of the most structured value-based divisions follows the fracture between libertarian and authoritarian values (Inglehart & Flanagan, 1987; Arzheimer et al., 2017). It refers to a non-economic dimension polarizing parties and citizens on ‘cultural liberalism, traditional values, personal freedoms and rights, the national community and ethnic, religious, and other minorities’ (Arzheimer et al., 2017). While it has been conceptualized in various manners (Bornschiefer 2010; Kitschelt 1994, 1995; Knutsen and Kumlin 2005; Stubager 2009), this research will utilize the most common conceptualization: GAL–TAN, firstly developed by Hooghe et al. (2002).

This shift explains why cleavage theory has seen a decline in descriptive power in advanced democracies, where value-based divisions have partially replaced more structural group conflicts. Meanwhile, outside Western democracies, both traditional, materialistic cleavages, such as class

and religion, and the newer value-based divisions continue to play a role in political competition and party positioning. In Southeast Asia, religious affiliation retains an explanatory role in policy, specifically along Hindu–Muslim lines (Nelson, 2021). Likewise, analyses of the South China Sea region in South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong have shown that, on one hand, traditional center–periphery divisions remain a basis for public discourse—especially in Korea—while new cleavages based on identity and the degree of belonging to the “Sino-sphere” continue to shape foreign policy in Taiwan and Hong Kong (Durrer de la Sota & Gethin, 2021; Kim, Choi, & Cho, 2008). Similarly, Rohrschneider & Whitefield have argued that post-Soviet Eastern European party systems are structured around both materialistic cleavages, specifically on welfare state size and market vs. state-run economy, and postmaterialistic fractures, such as minority protection, democracy and institutional reform, and social rights (2009).

Nonetheless, Rohrschneider & Whitefield highlight how postmaterialistic divisions reflect practical concerns about democratic consolidation rather than participatory or libertarian ideals (2009). Furthermore, they noted how postmaterialistic divisions, while being present, are characterised by a lower degree of structurality. In other words, they vary greatly, especially in salience, depending on the national context, while materialistic cleavages seem to be shared structurally among most of the party systems considered. This proves that (i) against previously held beliefs, recently democratised countries do have structured party systems and (ii) both postmaterialistic and materialistic cleavages do play a role in these recently democratised nations, although materialistic cleavages remain more structured (Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2009).

2.2 Latin America, Democratization, Cleavages and Party System

Latin America is a region where such dynamics are especially visible. After decades of semi-authoritarian government, during the third wave of democratisation, various countries experienced democratic openings that revealed underlying frictions previously obscured by those regimes policies (Martinez, 2009). Social cleavages that were previously incorporated into or excluded from political discourse by authoritarian regimes or institutional constraints—such as

in the Colombian case—were suddenly able to manifest in the public arena (Barrera et.al, 2021). Examples include the the peaceful transfer of power from the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) to the PAN (Partido Acción Nacional) in Mexico’s 2000 elections and the promulgation of the 1991 Constitution in Colombia (Barrera et al., 2021; Martínez, 2016).

As Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2009) noted regarding post-communist countries, large-scale restructuring and the opening of political space do not necessarily result in chaos with respect to issue positions. Rather, party systems affected by the third wave of democratization seem relatively structured and show signs of democratic responsiveness through structural issue engagement. Similarly, Martínez-Gallardo et al. (2022) pointed out that the region demonstrates a high level of “*structurality*.” Unlike Western democracies, however, both economic and socio-cultural positions in Latin America tend to overlap along a single dimension (Martínez-Gallardo et al., 2022). An example of this overlap on a single cleavage is found in Colombia. As will be explored more in depth later, Colombian politics remain deeply polarized along the line of Uribism and Anti-Uribism, or Petrism. Uribism refers to the right-wing ideology firstly developed by former President Álvaro Uribe, focusing on security, neoliberal reform and a hard stance on Guerrilla groups, what is regionally referred to as *mano dura* (iron-fist approach). Meanwhile Petrism represent the left-wing progressive political approach initiated by Gustavo Petro emphasizing social justice, redistribution and dialogue based strategy towards Guerrilla groups, the *mano blanda* (soft-hand approach).³ This fracture encapsulates socio-cultural elements, exemplified in the GAL/TAN dimension, with economic elements, represented by the traditional economic left/right, which include vectors such as the state’s role in markets or redistribution of wealth. This challenges previously held assumptions about Latin American politics: namely, personalization and volatility (Roberts & Wibbels, 1999; Kitschelt et al., 2010).

³A large part of the security discourse in Latin America revolves around the *mano dura* and *mano blanda* debates, i.e. security achieved through force or negotiation. Mexico positioned itself on the *mano blanda* side since the security policy of distension initiated by former MORENA president Andrés Manuel López Obrador named ‘*abrazos no balazos*’ (Hugs, not bullets), which put an end to the *Guerra a los Cárteles* (war on the cartels) initiated by his predecessor Felipe Calderón Hinojosa in 2006. On the other hand, countries like El Salvador have long established a tradition of *mano dura* approach. The current security plan in El Salvador, *Plan Control Territorial* against armed groups MS-13 and Barrio 18 resulted in the incarceration of over 80.000 people, around 3% of the male population. (Central Reserve Bank of El Salvador, 2024)

Notably, it disproves the notion that excessive personalization of politics by charismatic leaders lessens the structural nature of the political arena or its foreign policy. While there is no shortage of personalization nor a lack of *caudillos* in regional politics, the presence of charismatic, populist leaders does not alter the fundamental structure of foreign or domestic politics (Chryssogelos, 2021; Coticchia & Vignoli, 2020). Furthermore, as argued by Wehner and Thies (2021), the extreme personalization of politics by populist leaders doesn't determine foreign policy, but rather foreign policy is refracted through the lenses of domestic dominant ideologies. In the case of Wehner and Thies's article, neoliberalism related to Menem and socialism for Chávez.

What this entails is that foreign policy in the Southern Cone is neither insulated from domestic policy nor distorted by personalistic leaders, but rather the expression of the same foundations, the social cleavages, that structure domestic policy. As such, the study of how societal fractures are expressed through party systems into foreign policy can open new spaces to understand how foreign policy differs between recently democratised areas, in which materialistic values play a major role, and well-established democracies, where instead materialistic cleavages are increasingly less relevant and are being replaced by postmaterialistic values.

The objective of the research is to study how these are reflected in the foreign policy of Colombia and Mexico. The idea behind this is that if social cleavages are represented in the political discourse at the domestic level, they will manifest as well in the foreign policy of the nation under consideration. Indeed, for much of the last century, the main political consensus was that, as American Senator Arthur Vandenberg declared in his famous speech, "politics stops at the water's edge" (1947): domestic politics shouldn't affect foreign policy. However, this realist perspective has been largely challenged for its treatment of the state as a "black box." Two of the **earlier** theorists, from a liberal perspective, who have challenged this discourse are Robert Putnam—regarding international agreements—and Andrew Moravcsik (1997).

Putnam argues that international negotiations occur simultaneously at two levels—national and international. Leaders must craft agreements that are acceptable to other countries and, most

importantly, to their own constituents (Putnam, 1988). In other words, what can be achieved at the international level is constrained by public opinion, interest groups, and domestic factors that shape the framework within which leaders can maneuver. Similarly, Moravcsik (1997) contends that international outcomes result from domestic groups competing for influence and thereby shaping preferences regarding the outcome itself; leaders and governments must represent and balance the interests of these different groups. Both authors coincide on the idea that domestic politics shape foreign policy: Moravcsik focuses on how preferences are shaped, while Putnam emphasizes how options are constrained.

This research focuses on foreign policy to bridge the gap between the traditional perspective on social cleavages, which, as mentioned, understands social divisions as the structure of party politics, and the modern understanding of foreign policy as integrated into the larger political arena.

Moving to the case study and starting with Colombia, in the Andean country political cleavages have historically centered on two main dimensions: the Liberal–Conservative conflict and the response to the prolonged internal violence that has characterized a large part of the country, exemplified by the war against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) from the 1980s to the present.⁴ These cleavages have undergone significant changes since the promulgation of the 1991 Constitution, which ended the exclusionary two-party system and facilitated the rise of new political actors. The contemporary Colombian political arena is structured around multiple, intersecting cleavages. The most salient are class, security, and regional divisions (Barrera et al., 2021; Martínez, 2016; Basset, 2023).

Currently, the main fracture in Colombia is between *Uribismo* and *Anti-Uribismo*—or *Petrismo*. This cleavage reflects differences regarding security, the state’s role in society, and relations with armed groups (Barrera et al., 2021). *Uribismo*, named after former President Álvaro Uribe, represents a hard-line, conservative, security-focused position (Kajsiu, 2020). It

⁴The FARC are a rural guerrilla insurgency with Marxist origins, engaged in armed struggle against the Colombian state. Its operations have been heavily funded through domestic involvement in the drug trade and other criminal activities, they maintain a strong political identity (Saab & Taylor, 2009)

largely reflects the outlook of rural, low-income strata of the population who deal directly with violence from guerrilla groups and perceive a strong state response (“*mano dura*”) as necessary. Uribismo is mainly represented by the Centro Democrático (CD) and the Partido Conservador (PC) (Barrera et al., 2021; Basset, 2023). By contrast, Anti-Uribismo—found in groups such as the Pacto Histórico (PH), Alianza Verde (AV), and Polo Democrático (PD)—represents the interests of a more urban, higher-educated middle class, prioritizing peacebuilding, institutional negotiations, and social reform (Barrera et al., 2021; Basset, 2023).

This division clearly appears in the foreign policy preferences of various parties. Administrations associated with Uribismo tend to align with U.S. foreign policy and military intervention, emphasizing military cooperation, anti-narcotics initiatives, and security alliances (Pizarro Leongómez, 2003, Kajsui, 2020, Ronderos, 2024). An example is Plan Colombia and the subsequent agreements that aligned Colombia’s international position with the U.S. security agenda against illegal drug trade.⁵ Anti-Uribismo, by contrast, supports regional autonomy, multilateralism, and strong commitments to human rights initiatives (Kajsui, 2020, Niño & Castillo, 2022, Ronderos, 2024).

Moreover, Colombia has experienced a re-stratification of voter positions along class lines, which overlaps with the Uribismo–Anti-Uribismo cleavage. As Basset (2023) shows, socio-economic stratification increasingly determines party support, contradicting Best (2011) and Franklin (1992) regarding the general decline of traditional social cleavages. This division likely manifests in parties’ foreign policy preferences: while urban, middle-class-based Anti-Uribista parties tend to favor multilateral international cooperation and show lower rates of support for U.S. policies, rural, low-income Uribista parties—representing areas that directly confront violence and have been most affected by U.S. intervention—are likely to be more inclined toward a pro-U.S. stance.

Moving towards Mexico, for most of the 20th century, Mexican politics has been largely

⁵Plan Colombia was a partnership initiated between president Bill Clinton and president Andrés Pastrana, and continued under their successor George W. Bush and Álvaro Uribe aimed at contrasting drug trafficking and insurgent violence in Colombia. It included military aid, counter-narcotic effort and institutional strengthening. It significantly weakened paramilitary groups such as the FARC

monopolized by the PRI, heir of the revolutionary groups that led the overthrowing of the long-standing dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, a period usually known as the *Porfiriato*. The PRI governed through an authoritarian-corporatist approach, described colourfully by Chappell Lawson as ‘gigantic, pork-barreling political machine’ (2000). It incorporated large parts of the labor, peasant, and business sectors, co-opted adversaries and used staged, uncompetitive elections for legitimization purposes (2000; Magaloni, 2006). The PRI maintained such a degree of control over every aspect of electoral life that the Peruvian writer Mario Varga Llosa famously used to define it as *la dictadura perfecta*, the perfect dictatorship. Its critical juncture arrived in the 2000 election, when Vicente Fox of the more conservative PAN broke the 71-year-long dominance of the PRI over the presidency, opening a period of genuine electoral competition in a relatively stable multiparty system (Flores-Macías, in press).

Tripartitism dominated, with PRI, PAN, and the more left-leaning Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD), dominating until the rise of Movimiento Regeneración Nacional (MORENA) in 2014. Led by the charismatic Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), MORENA appealed to an electorate disaffected and disillusioned with established parties, capitalizing on a decade of large scandals and the aftermath of the security policy of the PAN president Felipe Calderón, the *guerra a los narcos*. Led by AMLO, MORENA entered the political arena in 2015, winning 8.4% of the national vote and sweeping the 2018 elections, winning an outright majority with their coalition and the presidency for AMLO (Espinoza Toledo & Navarrete Vela, 2016). Although Mexico’s cleavage structure is less volatile than Colombia’s, its democratization has made latent divisions—such as class and ethnicity—more visible. On the other side, however, the rise of MORENA as a dominant catch-all party has dampened partisan fragmentation and moved political debate towards the center.

The main fracture in Mexican politics at the moment appears to be the division between the anti-establishment, nationalist-focused party MORENA, and its coalition with PRD and PES, and what are considered the establishment, traditionally liberal parties including PAN and PRI (Hernández, Menchaca, & Moya, 2021). The export-oriented, wealthier north remains

strong PAN territory; the more unequal south-southwest, with larger Indigenous populations, provides MORENA's mass base, complemented by urban middle-class voters disillusioned with corruption, while PRI appeal to older nostalgic rural voters especially in the south (Moreno & Méndez, 2017). This shift is visible as well in the respective foreign policy positions: on one hand, MORENA takes an anti-neoliberal stance, looking towards regional cooperation over bilateral agreements with Washington, preferring a multilateral diplomatic strategy focused on Latin American relations (Alejo & Villanueva Ulfgard, 2019; (Franzoni & Sposito, 2024). Meanwhile, PAN and PRI position themselves in defense of the liberal economic relationship and traditional security cooperation with their northern neighbor, exemplified by the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)(1992).

3 Research Design, Data and Method

To investigate the central research question of this study: *how social cleavages in Mexico and Colombia are reflected in foreign policy preferences*, the study adopts a two-stage comparative design: first, a descriptive quantitative study of voting preferences; and second, an analysis of foreign policy positioning through cross-sectional party-level data. The former aims to pinpoint how social divisions shape the domestic political arena; the latter seeks to understand how these translate into the foreign policy sphere.

This study is a comparative analysis of Mexican and Colombian parties. The cases were selected based on the fact that both countries are recently democratized, relatively stable democracies where, as previously discussed, materialistic and post-materialistic cleavages play a strong role in shaping public discourse and the political landscape.⁶ Both are presidential representative democracies, highly decentralized, with well-established multiparty systems. At the societal level, both nations share a predominantly Catholic Mestizo population, a growing middle class, and a strong civil society. Additionally, both are marked by internal violence: highly violent

⁶According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, which publishes the Democracy Index annually, Colombia is classified as a flawed democracy, while Mexico is classified as a hybrid regime (2025)

criminal groups, commonly known as *narcos* (drug cartels), in Mexico, and politically active guerrilla groups such as the FARC in Colombia. These conditions foster a securitized public discourse in both countries.

Another reason for case selection is the increasing availability of party-level and public opinion data. A large body of work has emerged in recent years, gathering both individual-level and expert-coded data to help close the gap in the relatively underexplored Latin American region. Two examples are the CHES-LATAM 2018 and the PREPPS 2018, especially focused on "*measuring policy positioning and democratic linkage mechanisms in Latin American presidential systems.*" (Wieschomeier et al., 2019). Both are used in this research. This growing dataset enables detailed analysis of the relationship between social cleavages and policy-making in ways that were previously not possible. As mentioned above, the research is divided into two stages: a first descriptive stage based on Latinobarómetro, and a second analytical stage based on a combination of CHES-LATAM and PREPPS.

Regarding the first stage, the Latinobarómetro is a cross-national public opinion survey covering all Spanish-speaking countries and modeled on the Eurobarometer, with questions adapted to the region's specific context (Martínez-Gallardo et al., 2018). It includes socio-demographic variables, political preferences, attitudes toward democracy, and party affiliation. This research uses the 2018 iteration of Latinobarómetro for two reasons: it aligns with the CHES and PREPPS datasets used in this study, and it is the last iteration to coincide with general election periods in both Mexico (*Elecciones Federales*) and Colombia (*Elecciones al Congreso*), both held in 2018. The variables used to identify party preferences are P50STGBS.A (party choice in a hypothetical snap election) and FAMPART (party family affiliation in a snap election). The variables used to proxy social cleavages include:

- Size of the administrative unit of residence,
- Subjective social class,
- Religion,

- Ethnicity,
- Education.

In the first exploratory section, variables were left as-is. In the second section, some were recoded to allow for clearer visualization of the relationship between group categories and party preferences. The party families are Centrist, Christian Democrat, Liberal, Radical Left, and Social Democrat. Some parties, such as SOMOS, were recoded due to lacking an initial family assignment. These were classified based on proximity on the GAL-TAN and Left-Right spectrums. In other cases—like MORENA—to avoid oversimplifications such as “Nationalist” family labels, parties were grouped with the closest match on these ideological dimensions (See Appendix D, Table 34).

The variable regarding the size of administrative unit was collapsed into a binary urban/rural variable, with the threshold set at 100,000 residents, following the *Standard Urbanization Classification* (Dijkstra et al., 2021). For simplicity, Ethnicity was collapsed into three main groups—White, Indigenous, and Mestizo—which together represent over 90% of the population. Subjective social class was collapsed into two categories: “Higher” (including middle, upper-middle, and upper classes) and “Lower” (lower-middle and lower classes), to reduce the classification noise introduced by the small size of the upper and upper-middle groups.

Meanwhile, the analytical stage is based on the CHES-LATAM and PREPPS datasets, which were merged into a single dataset. The CHES-LATAM is an expert survey capturing party positions on ideological dimensions as well as issue salience, with assessments provided by regional political science experts. The PREPPS is also an expert-coded survey, but it places greater emphasis on democratic linkage mechanisms, citizen engagement, and, crucially, foreign policy (Wiesehomeier et al., 2019; Martínez-Gallardo et al., 2021).

Merging the two datasets allowed us to leverage their complementary strengths. CHES-LATAM provides more detailed variables on economic ideology and issue salience—our independent variables—while PREPPS offers more nuanced data on foreign policy positions, which

serve as our dependent variables (Wiesehomeier et al., 2019; Martínez-Gallardo et al., 2021).

The key variables extracted from PREPPS were:

- Relationship with the U.S.
- Relationship with China
- Relationship with the EU

These were reverse-coded and rescaled from a 1–20 to a 0–10 scale for comparability with the CHES-LATAM standard. To ensure this comparability, all PREPPS variables that overlapped with CHES-LATAM (e.g., positions on redistribution, deregulation, crime, and Left–Right ideology) were normalized to CHES-LATAM standard as well. A correlation analysis was then conducted between overlapping variables in the two datasets. In 6 out of 9 cases, the Pearson’s r value exceeded 0.9; in two more, it exceeded 0.8; and only one variable fell below 0.5 (Appendix C, Table 32)⁷. These results confirm that the datasets are sufficiently comparable and can be reliably merged. The resulting sample includes parties representing 100% of the Mexican *Cámara de Diputados* and 91% of Colombian *Cámara de Representantes de Colombia* (Misión de Observación Electoral [MOE], 2018; Prud’homme, 2020) (Appendix D, Table 34).

The aim of this analytical stage is to assess the strength of the relationship between parties’ ideological positions (Left–Right and GAL–TAN) and their stances on relations with the U.S., China, and the EU. Simple linear models were used to estimate these relationships. R^2 values indicate the strength of the association overall and separately for Colombian and Mexican parties. Differences in party composition were already established in the earlier cross-tabulation and visualization section, and these are expected to manifest in their foreign policy positions.

⁷Party position on Tax-Spending is the only one scoring below 0.5 (0.484). In both dataset the question referred to party position on lowering taxes but cutting public programs (0), or promoting public programs increasing taxes (10). Meanwhile the highest correlation was found on party position on religion (0.984), referring to the support of religious principle in politics. The low correlation in the Tax-Spending variable may be explained by parties strategic ambivalence on the theme for electoral gains, such as promising simultaneously higher spending and lower taxes, leading to lower inter-dataset agreement

4 Analysis and Interpretation

Beginning with some demographic information, Mexico and Colombia represent the two most populous Spanish-speaking nations in the world. The first stands out with over 132 million people, while the latter follows with over 52 million (World Bank, 2024). Colombia population is diverse and composed mostly of Mestizos (48.2%), White (23.0%), and Indigenous (10.2%) (Appendix B, Table 19). Regarding city of residence, the data show that almost a third of the interviewed adults (32.1%) reside in the Andean region, including the Bogotá Metropolitan Area—11% and 10% respectively in cities with more than 100,000 people and between 50,000 and 100,000 people—and almost a third (28.4%) in cities with fewer than 5,000 people (Appendix B, Table 20). Regarding religious affiliation, most of the population is part of the Catholic Church, representing 68.9% of the interviewed adults. The second most followed religion is the Evangelical Church, slightly above 15% (Appendix B, Table 21). Most of the population (31.9%) considers itself to be in the lower-middle class, followed closely by the middle class (28.6%) and lower class (22.9%) (Appendix B, Table 23). Regarding education, the largest segment is composed of adults who have completed secondary education (over 30%), followed by adults who have concluded primary education (20.4%) and tertiary education, following closely at 19.6% (Appendix B, Table 22).

The Mexican demographic is similar to Colombia, with the difference of a smaller White population and a larger Indigenous and Mestizo percentage. Almost half of the population (49.8%) is composed of Mestizos, followed by Indigenous (15.4%) and White (7.3%) (Appendix B, Table 24). Regarding urbanization and centralization around the capital—differently from Colombia—the percentage of people declaring to reside in the capital, Ciudad de México, is around 7.5%. The population is more evenly spread around other large urban centers, such as Guadalajara, Puebla, and Ciudad Juárez. These urban centers, larger than 100,000, account for over half of the total population (53%). Another relevant difference from the Colombian case is the low percentage of people residing in small urban centers (smaller than 5,000); in this case,

only 3.3% of Mexican citizens declare to reside in such centers (Appendix B, Table 25). On the education side, one-third of the population self-identifies as middle class and lower-middle class respectively, while 25.7% identify as lower class—higher than the OECD average but comparatively less than Colombia's. Notably, only 0.8% and 4.3% of the interviewed pool self-identify as upper and upper-middle class respectively, compared to Colombia's 2.8% and 8% (Appendix B, Table 28). Lastly, regarding religious beliefs, Mexico is a predominantly Catholic nation, with over 70% of respondents being part of the Catholic Church (Appendix B, Table 26).

4.1 Parties and Electoral Base

In the next section, the focus will be on how, in both cases, cleavages seem to affect party politics on a domestic level—specifically, the relationship between social groups and party preferences as indicated by the question: which party would you vote for if there was a snap election today. The methodology is based on cross-tables between party preferences at the time of the interview and variables reflecting specific cleavages.⁸

To start with the Mexican case, region, level of urbanization, and ethnicity maintain the strongest statistical value in explaining party preferences. Regarding regionality, the most relevant political party across the nation is MORENA. It maintains over 50% preference in most of the considered regions, especially high in the center (60%), southwest (65%), and northwest (64%) (Appendix D). Outside these areas, while maintaining the lead, it is closely followed by the PRI in the central states—historically a stronghold for the right-leaning party—and the PAN in the north and northwest (Appendix D).

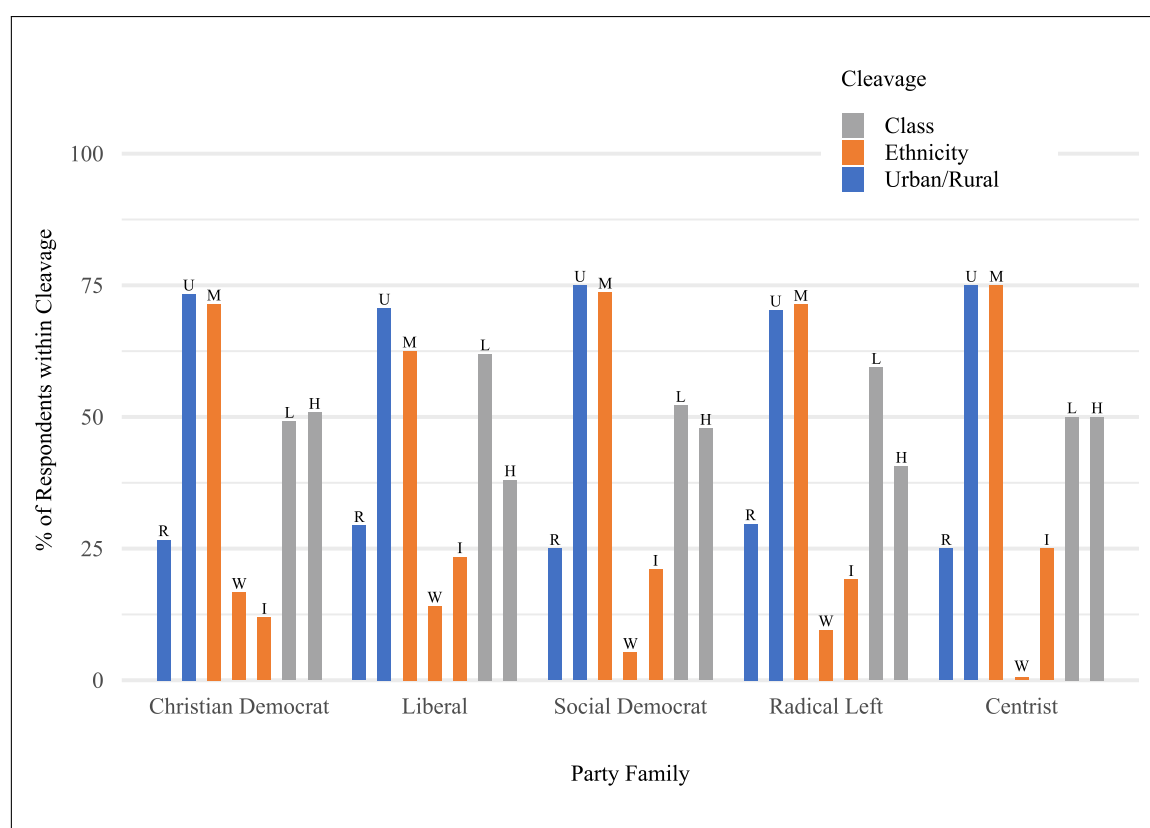
Regarding subjective social class, as shown in Figure 1, MORENA scores high across all strata. It maintains a preference of over 30% among the upper-middle/upper class (coinciding with the PAN), and a large share, almost 50%, among the middle-low/middle class. The lower

⁸While this methodology is useful to establish basic relations, it can go only as far, identifying basic patterns. It doesn't account for phenomena such as strategic or useful voting and other fundamental dynamics in voting behavior.

strata remain traditionally linked to the PRI. On an ethnic basis, the electorate remains relatively homogeneous. MORENA maintains the highest support from traditionally marginalized groups such as Indigenous and Mulattos. This reflects the mentioned support—over 60%—the party enjoys in southern states like Chiapas and Yucatán, where there is a higher proportion of Indigenous voters (Appendix D). Meanwhile, the PRI seems to maintain a base in the White and Indigenous vote, especially in the central areas and in the north.

Figure 1

Sources of Party Support by Cleavages and Party Family in Mexico



Note. The bar chart displays the percentage of party supporters associated with each cleavage dimension—class (orange), ethnicity (gray), and rural/urban (blue)—across five party families in Mexico, based on PREPPS and CHES-LATAM data. Values indicate the proportion of respondents within each cleavage category that identify with the respective party family. Data: Latinobarómetro (2018).

Meanwhile, in the Colombian case, the political field appears more varied and open. On the rural/urban division, the Liberal Party demonstrates strong links with relatively rural areas,

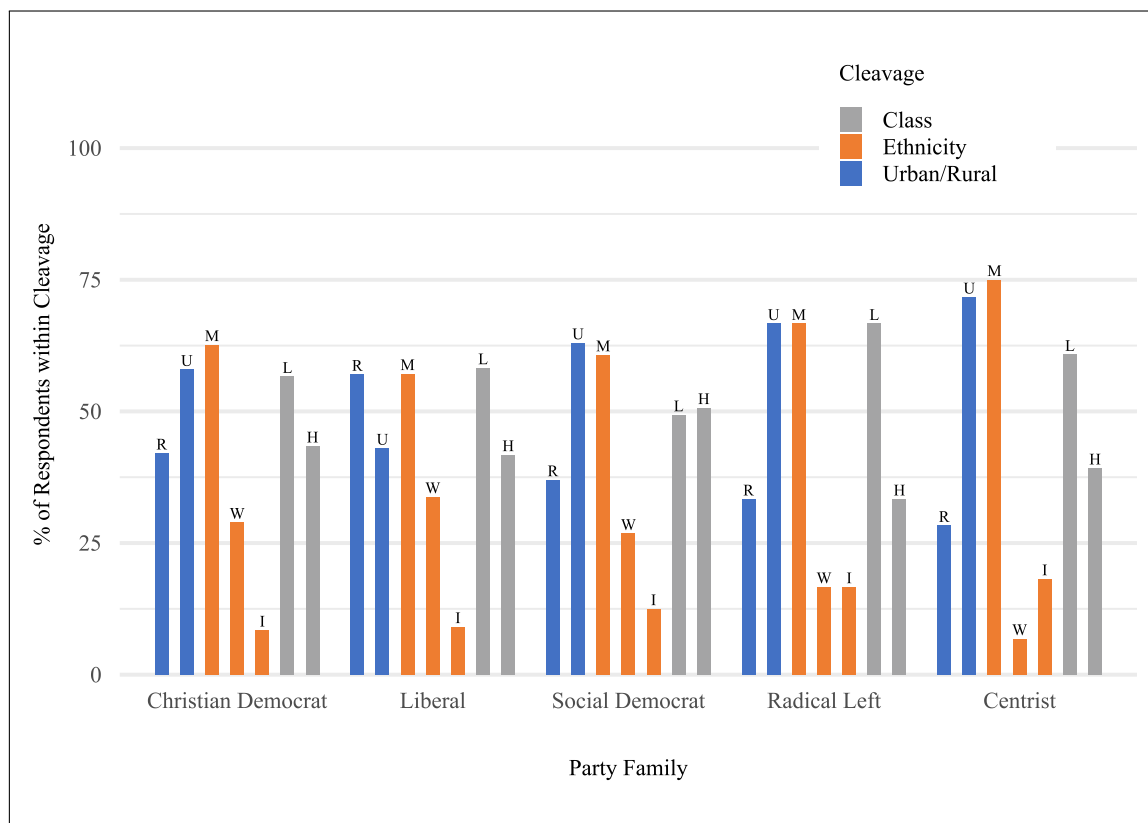
with over 60% of its vote coming from towns with or fewer inhabitants (Figure 2). Similarly, and interestingly, Alianza Verde—a Green radical party—is also strong in relatively urban constituencies. Unlike the Mexican PVEM, the Green party in Colombia is rooted in large urban centers, drawing support from the educated, high-income White population in cities such as Bogotá and Medellín.

Other relevant parties, such as the Partido Conservador and SOMOS, remain more evenly distributed, with the latter maintaining a strong presence in mid-sized cities. The results, as indicated in Figure 2, show that the size of a city is a strong indicator of the structure of the preferences. Large urban centers reflect more strongly high-income, highly educated segments of the population, overrepresented among the strongly progressive parties such as Alianza Verde and Centro Democrático (Appendix D, Table 34). In mid-sized cities, the centrist PLC maintains a comfortable majority of votes, appealing to middle-income, less progressive segments of the population. Meanwhile, in small towns, the voting spread seems more dispersed, which may reflect a larger presence of Indigenous and Mestizo voters in these areas.

The PC and SOMOS represent not only more spatially varied electorates but also class- and ethnicity-based constituencies. The PC electorate is composed of almost 40% lower-class voters, while SOMOS—strong in small and medium-sized towns—is the top choice across the upper-middle, middle, middle-low, and lower classes, each ranging from 10% to 15% (Figure 2).

Figure 1

Sources of Party Support by Cleavages and Party Family in Colombia



Note. The bar chart displays the percentage of party supporters associated with each cleavage dimension—class (orange), ethnicity (gray), and rural/urban (blue)—across five party families in Colombia, based on PREPPS and CHES-LATAM data. Values indicate the proportion of respondents within each cleavage category that identify with the respective party family. Data: Latinobarómetro (2018).

4.2 Foreign Policy

Moving onto the last section, the analysis considers how Colombian and Mexican parties position themselves in regard to foreign policy based on the Left-Right spectrum and the GAL-TAN spectrum. For transparency, the dependent variable (support for bilateral relations) is measured on a 0 = "no support" to 10 = "maximum support" scale, the total number party in the pooled sample is 17, respectively 9 Colombian parties and 8 Mexican parties.

To start with the relation with the United States, Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between

party ideological positioning and support for U.S. relations among Colombian and Mexican political parties. The first graph captures the relationship from a traditional Left-Right ideological dimension, while the second focuses on the GAL-TAN spectrum. Regarding the first, the graph shows a strong positive relationship: $R^2 = 0.748$ (i.e., 74.8 % of the variance in U.S. support is explained by Left-Right position), with a Pearson's $r = 0.865$ (See Appendix A, Table 1; Appendix C, Table 29).

The trend is clear: more right-leaning parties show higher support for relations with the United States. For Colombian parties the fit is exceptionally high ($R^2 = 0.917$, slope $B = 0.932$), corresponding to $r = 0.960$ (Appendix A, Table 7; Appendix C, Table 30). Such a level of polarization seems to reflect internal security discourse, with conservative urban parties, the PCC and especially the security-focused CD, scoring the highest. This appears to confirm the existence of the aforementioned Uribist/Anti-Uribist division in Colombian politics, with Uribist, security-focused, *Mano dura* parties scoring extremely high, and dialogue-focused anti-Uribist ones such as the PDA or the DEC scoring remarkably low.

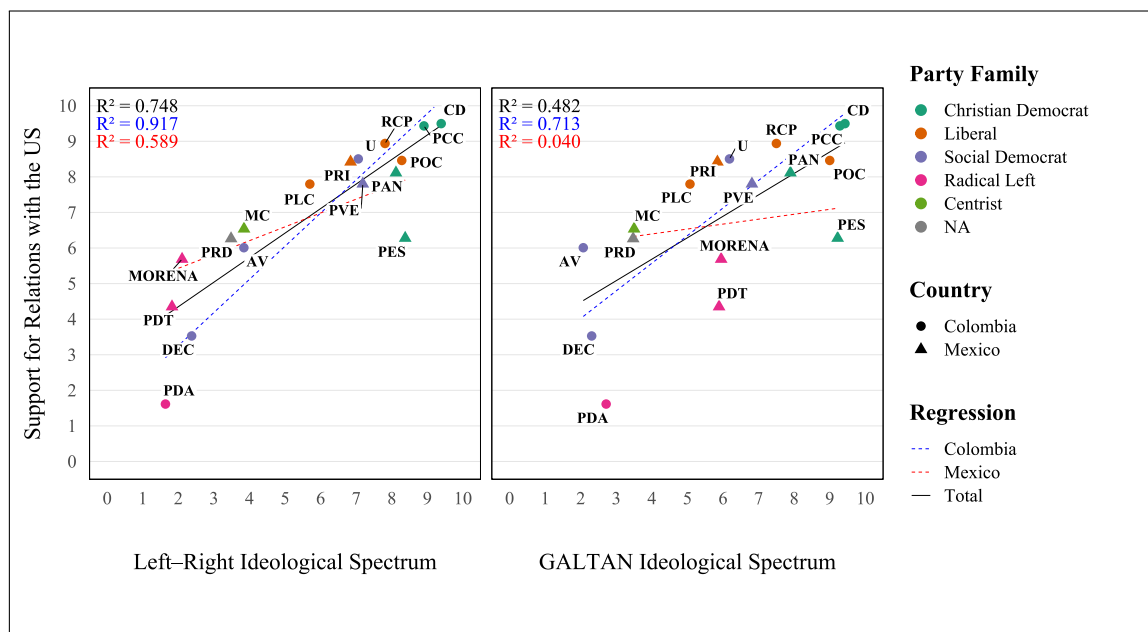
In the Mexican case, the relationship appears to be smaller in both the Left-Right and GAL-TAN spectra. On the LR spectrum, $R^2 = 0.589$, $r = 0.77$, and the regression slope is $B = 0.389$ ($p = .026$)—lower than the Colombian one, but still significant (Appendix A, Table 13; Appendix C, Table 31). The least supportive of U.S. relations are the leftist MORENA and PT, while the Christian Democrats (PAN) and the Liberal PRI score significantly higher. The high score of PRI may be affected by the relatively lower-class voters from their strongholds in the border states with the U.S. (Figure 6), which may influence the overall perception due to a higher degree of interaction with the United States through remesas (remittances), cross-border workers, and Mexicans employed in maquiladoras—factories where goods are assembled or manufactured using imported materials and then exported back to the U.S.

Moving to the GAL-TAN spectrum, the overall association is lower but still meaningful, with $R^2 = 0.482$, slope $B = 0.603$, and $r = 0.694$ (Appendix A, Table 2; Appendix C, Table, 29). This value, however, hides differences between Mexican and Colombian parties on this front

as well. Mexican parties show a non-significant fit ($R^2 = 0.040$, slope $B = 0.138$, $r = 0.20$, $p = .636$) (Appendix A, Table 13; Appendix C, Table 30), indicating that post-materialist values have almost no relationship with foreign policy toward the U.S. Meanwhile, Colombian parties present a strong association ($R^2 = 0.713$, slope $B = 0.776$, $r = 0.84$, $p = .004$) (Appendix A, Table 8; Appendix C, Table 30).

This difference may be explained by structural differences in the U.S. relationship with Colombia and Mexico. Mexican parties—given Mexico’s fundamental economic ties with the United States—have a strong, structured position on U.S. relations on the economic side, but not so much on the cultural-value side. Colombian parties instead present structured positions on both the traditional economic side (with the U.S. being one of Bogotá’s main economic partners) and the more value-based side, likely linked to the history of U.S. military intervention in Colombia during the height of the war on drugs. As such, U.S. intervention may have created the conditions for a more structured positioning of Colombian parties, which have seemingly moved toward, on one hand, a strongly pro-U.S., Uribist, and security-based stance (PCC and CD), and on the other, a more critical view of U.S. intervention, represented by dialogue-focused anti-Uribist parties such as PDA and AV.

Furthermore, in both the GAL-TAN and LR spectra, internal differences between Mexican and Colombian parties seem to partially reflect the different voting bases of the parties, confirming the initial hypothesis at least partially. Taking the Radical Left parties: on one hand, the Mexican MORENA, characterized by a higher percentage of higher-class electorate (tab), seems to maintain a more positive attitude toward U.S. relations, confirming the literature according to which higher income generally correlates with a more pro-U.S. stance in Latin America. On the other hand, its Colombian counterparts—PDA and PDT—which are characterized by a higher percentage of lower-class electorate and a generally high percentage of indigenous voters (Figure 1; Figure 2), present a more critical stance toward U.S. relations, possibly reflecting lower-income voters more heavily affected by U.S. foreign policy in the region.

Figure 3*Support for Relations with the US Across Ideological Spectrums in Mexico and Colombia*

Note: Scatterplots show the relationship between party ideological positioning and support for relations with the United States. Black = total sample; Blue = Colombia; Red = Mexico. Data: CHES-LATAM (2020) & PREPPS (2019)

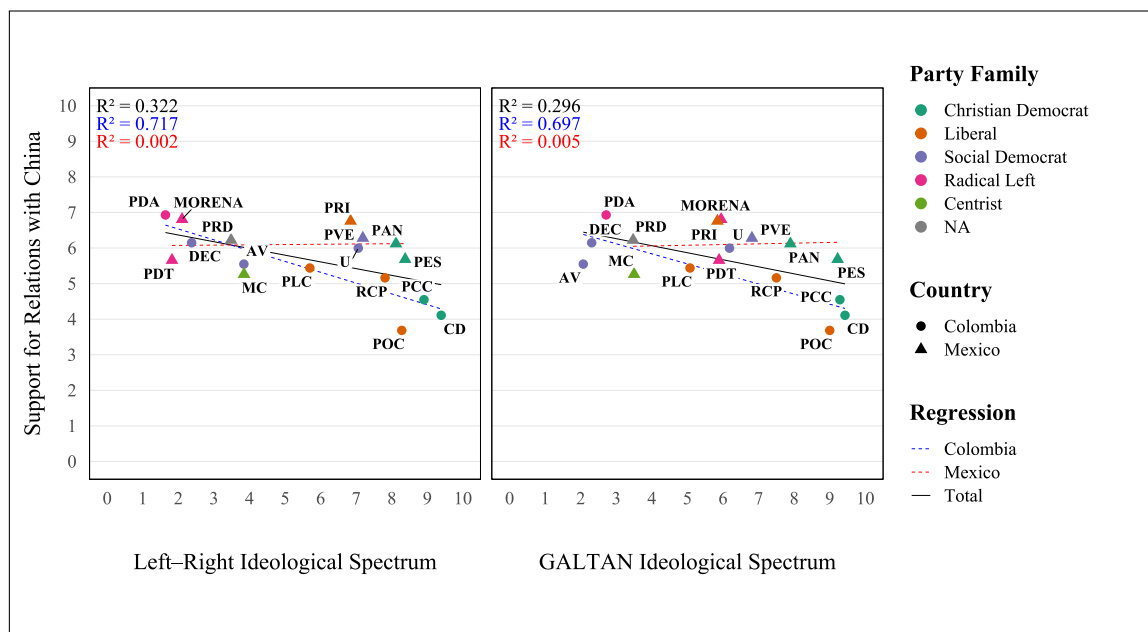
Turning to the relationship with China, Figure 4 shows that Mexican and Colombian parties, across the ideological spectrum, appear to maintain the strong divergence seen regarding U.S. relations. In both the GAL-TAN and LR spectra, Mexican parties exhibit negligible, non-significant patterns (LR: $R^2 = 0.002$, slope $B = 0.008$, $r = 0.04$, $p = .926$; GAL-TAN: $R^2 = 0.005$, slope $B = 0.020$, $r = 0.07$, $p = .866$) (Appendix A, Tables 15-16; Appendix C, Table 31). This suggests an unstructured arena in which centrist convergence dominates.

Meanwhile, Colombian parties display significant negative relationships (LR: $R^2 = 0.717$, slope $B = -0.304$, $r = -0.85$, $p = .004$; GAL-TAN: $R^2 = 0.697$, slope $B = -0.283$, $r = -0.83$, $p = .005$) (Appendix A, Tables 9-10; Appendix C, Table 30). Overall, the more a Colombian party moves to the Right/TAN side of the spectrum, the less supportive it is of relations with China. Interestingly, however, the spread among Colombian parties is less wide, with both Left/GAL

and Right/TAN remaining relatively centered. On one hand, this could be traced back to the aforementioned low salience of the issue in overall discourse. On the other hand, it reflects the problematic positioning of Radical Left parties such as AV and DEC, which are characterized by higher indigenous vote shares in areas where Chinese companies have established controversial mining sites, sparking large protests and environmental concerns.⁹ As such, the relatively low scores of Radical Left parties could be connected to the need to balance their electorate's anti U.S. sentiments, shown in tab Figure 3, with the internal frictions stemming from their indigenous, lower-class voter base.

Returning to the initial question, the steep negative slope for Colombian parties seems to confirm that the Uribist/Anti-Uribist divide, which reflects rural-lower income versus urban-middle-class division, is reflected in extremely different views on Beijing on the two sides. Meanwhile, the flat Mexican line appears to indicate that in its aforementioned more stable 'multi-party elites system' (Barrera et al., 2021) the issue has not been politicised sufficiently to be shaped by social division as in Colombia.

⁹The most recent is the 2022 series of strikes and violent attacks against the gold mining site of the Chinese owned Zijin in the municipality of Buriticá, closeby Antioquia, for human rights concerns and the use of mercury as extractive material (Collins, 2024)

Figure 4*Support for Relations with China Across Ideological Spectrums in Mexico and Colombia*

Note: Scatterplots show the relationship between party ideological positioning and support for relations with China.

Black = total sample; Blue = Colombia; Red = Mexico. Data: CHES-LATAM (2020) & PREPPS (2019)

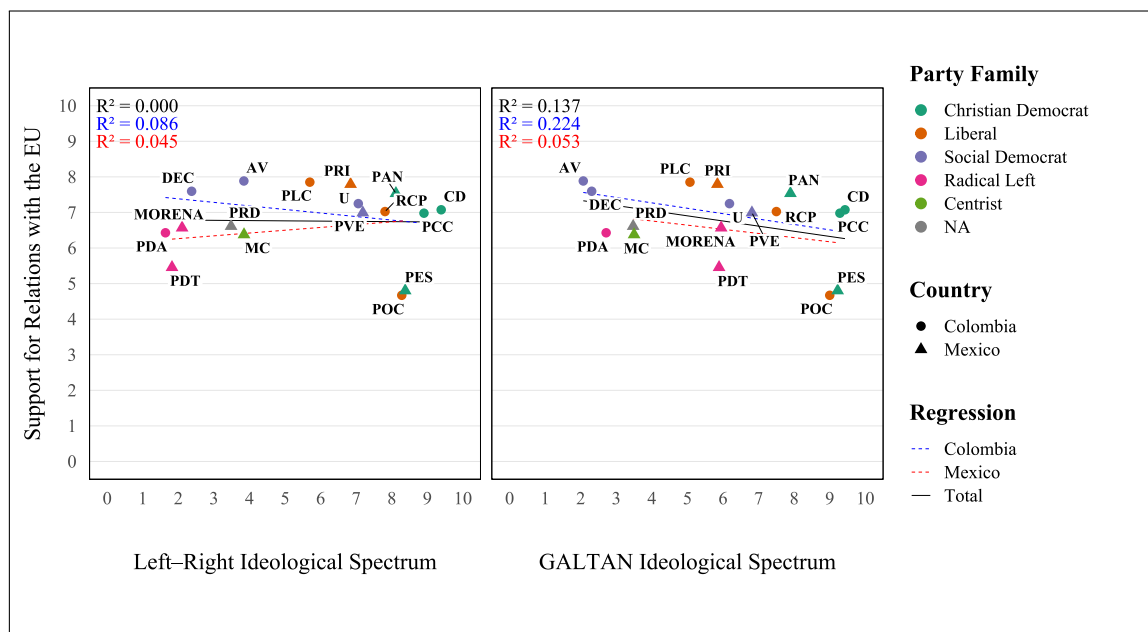
Lastly, figure 5 illustrates the relationship between Colombian and Mexican parties position on Left-Right and GAL-TAN spectrum and their support for EU relationship. Both Colombian and Mexican parties present overall low explanatory power—Colombia LR: $R^2 = 0.086$, slope $B = -0.100$, $r = -0.29$ ($p = .444$); Mexico LR: $R^2 = 0.045$, slope $B = 0.079$, $r = 0.21$ ($p = .613$); GAL-TAN: Colombia $R^2 = 0.224$, slope $B = -0.152$, $r = -0.47$ ($p = .198$); Mexico $R^2 = 0.053$, slope $B = -0.117$, $r = -0.23$ ($p = .582$)—indicating a weak and non-significant relationship between ideological position and stance toward the European Union (Appendix A, Tables 11-12 and Tables 17-18; Appendix C, Tables 30-31). Nonetheless, certain takeaways can be inferred. The low R^2 values suggest a cross-cutting trend and low salience across the ideological spectrum. While Mexican parties' positions remain unrelated to EU relations ($R^2 = 0.053$, $r = -0.23$), Colombian parties show a weak but stronger negative pattern ($R^2 = 0.224$, $r = -0.47$). This indicates that the more TAN a party is—such as CCP and CD—the less likely

it is to support relations with the EU. This likely reflects the association of the EU with liberal international norms and human-rights discourses, which TAN-aligned actors—emphasizing sovereignty, tradition, and national identity—may resist.

Interestingly, Colombian Social Democrats such as AV and DEC—positioned more on the GAL side than Radical Left parties like the PDA—show significantly higher support for relations with the EU. This may derive from a fundamental difference in electoral base. While Social Democrats may align with Radical Left parties on economic policy within the LR spectrum, the former’s more educated, wealthier, and whiter electoral base seems to lead to more progressive GAL stances on value-based issues. In contrast, the PDA’s positions reflect its electorate’s socio-economic characteristics, with more nationalist and TAN-leaning positions. AV and DEC’s more affluent electoral base allows these parties to adopt more progressive GAL stances and therefore more positive views on relations with the EU and the values it represents internationally.

Figure 5

Support for Relations with the EU Across Ideological Spectrums in Mexico and Colombia



Note: Scatterplots show the relationship between party ideological positioning and support for relations with the EU.

Black = total sample; Blue = Colombia; Red = Mexico. Data: CHES-LATAM (2020) & PREPPS (2019)

5 Conclusion and Discussion

This study set out to show how domestic social cleavages in two Latin American democracies resonated ‘beyond the water’s edge’, structuring foreign-policy preferences of Mexican and Colombian parties. The analysis used a mixed design, combining individual-level evidence from the Latinbarometro and expert-coded party-level data from the CHES LATAM and the PREPPPS. The study linked class, ethnicity and territoriality to parties’ positions towards the United States, China and the European Union. The findings are unambiguous: foreign policy is not insulated from domestic policy; rather, it is refracted through it in patterned ways.

First, the Colombian party system presents highly structured foreign-policy preferences. Parties in the Uribista bloc, with an electoral base in rural, lower-income constituencies that

have been the most affected by insurgent violence, cluster on the right/TAN pole and register the strongest enthusiasm for close ties with Washington ($R^2 = 0.92$ on the left–right dimension) (Figure 3). Anti-Uribista parties, rooted in more urban and affluent, oppose the hard-line ‘*mano dura*’ security agenda, which in Colombia implies military ties with Washington, and score noticeably lower on support for relations with the US. The same cleavage runs in the opposite direction regarding China. As expected, parties closer to Washington remain more sceptical of Beijing, while progressive or indigenous-backed parties take a somewhat more positive stance. However, concerns over extractivism and local protest appear to moderate the enthusiasm, expressing a clear negative slope ($R^2 = 0.70$) (Figure 4). Towards the EU, positions flatten and party preferences seem both unstructured and relatively centrist. Nonetheless, even here parties’ position on the GALTAN spectrum retain modest explanatory power, with more left-leaning and social-democrat parties most supportive, possibly because of the relatively progressive values the European Union embodies.

Mexico tells a different story. The overwhelming electoral dominance of the hegemonic MORENA creates a sort of centripetal pattern, in which various groups from different cleavages—from indigenous voters to urban middle-class professionals channel their support to a single catch-all party. This seems to incentivize parties, both MORENA and others, to maintain a relatively centrist position on foreign policy to appeal to the largest possible share of various groups, dampening the noise at the extremes of the spectrum. Consequently, Mexican parties’ attitudes towards the United States correlate only moderately with their ideological position and show virtually no structure on China or the EU. All major parties appear to have taken cautiously cooperative positions on foreign policy. For China and EU relations, this may be caused by a relatively low political salience of the topic, while for the relationship with the United States it may derive from the nexus of proximity, trade dependence and migration. Regardless of the reasons, Mexican social divisions, differently from Colombia, are channeled through few centrist, catch-all parties rather than by more variegated and more ideologically narrow parties, which is reflected in their more extreme positions. Where Colombia’s cleavages map neatly onto

foreign policy, Mexico's are partially submerged by a dominant-party logic that reduces room for partisan differentiation.

These different patterns of social-division refraction expand on the connection between domestic and foreign policy in three ways. Firstly, they confirm the transferability of the translate-and-reflect mechanism identified by Lipset and Rokkan from the domestic to the international stage. Material (Left and Right) and post-material (GALTAN) divisions provide the bricks for parties to build coherent foreign-policy preferences. Second, they show that the number of cleavages and their hardness matter. In Colombia, where most of the political discourse revolves around Uribista/Anti-Uribista divisions—including overlapping cleavages of class, security and ethnicity—external alignment becomes intensely partisan even on foreign policy. Meanwhile, in Mexico, where the political discourse tilts towards centrist positions and several social divisions are channeled through a large catch-all party, issue salience falls and partisan differentiation narrows. Interestingly enough, this dampening of more extreme positions translates to minor parties as well. Thirdly, the results reject the traditional *caudillistic* stereotype of Latin American democracies: charismatic leaders matter, but their positions are structurally limited by their constituents' composition and bounded by the internal divisions they channel. López Obrador's "*abrazos no balazos*" and Uribe's "*mano dura*" personalistic policies reflect underlying groups of interests rather than personalistic preferences free from domestic scrutiny or electoral accountability.

Policy implications follow. In Colombia, the Uribista/Anti-Uribista cleavage means that foreign policy is fundamentally partisan. Any U.S. military-cooperation activity, Chinese investment strategy or European partnership must consider the ruling coalition's social base rather than assume presidential fiat support or flat domestic neutrality. In Mexico, domestic reactions to foreign policy positions are dampened by the centrist position of MORENA's catch-all party, which channels a variety of domestic groups into relatively moderate positions. Foreign relations with China and the European Union remain under-politicised, possibly opening spaces for minor parties to position themselves in a niche still not politicised by MORENA. Regarding the

United States, traditional materialistic values encapsulated by the Left-Right position appear to be the only ideologically contested space at the moment, but it is uncertain whether this can be capitalised on, given the economic ties binding Washington to Ciudad de México. Furthermore, these patterns confirm the need for institutionalised foreign-policy platforms reflecting existing structures designed for domestic policy. If foreign policy does reflect internal divisions, these divisions must have a space to be brought to the national agenda in a transparent way, increasing accountability and legitimacy in foreign-policy decisions.

Several limitations restrict the scope of the research. The datasets capture a single cross-sectional point centered on the 2018 elections; while they can point in a direction, they cannot be conclusive on the indicated patterns nor can they distinguish these patterns from the effects of election-year or political-scandal noise. Furthermore, the combination of two expert-coded datasets invites inter-coder disagreements on specific topics, as noted by the low correlation on the tax–spending dimension ($r = 0.48$). The small number of parties involved, $N = 17$, produces a high risk of model overfitting; large effects can reflect saturation rather than a robust relationship. Similarly, party classification per party family is based on individual voters' preferences as coded in the Latinbarómetro dataset rather than expert-coded datasets such as the Manifesto Project. As such, it doesn't account for voters' different understandings of party families in the same country and, most importantly, between states. A Liberal party may mean something very different for a Colombian voting for the PLC versus a Mexican voting for the PRI. Lastly, results are strictly correlational; the low number of parties involved doesn't allow for the establishment of causal relationships, decreasing the scope of the research.

Future research should therefore focus on (i) extending the time series to account for electoral noise and to include leadership changes and external shocks, such as current U.S. tariffs; (ii) incorporating more cases, such as Chile's fragmented internal debate or Brazil's polarised party system, to increase external validity, establish more robust causal relationships with higher numbers of parties and reduce the risk of overfitting; (iii) including expert-based party classification to increase validity and reliability; and (iii) disaggregating foreign policy into

narrower areas (climate change, migration, investments) to identify with more accuracy where distinct social divisions clash.

To conclude, the research suggests that Latin American foreign policy is neither insulated from domestic policy nor retraceable to simple presidential preferences. Rather, it shows patterns contingent upon the social divisions that animate regional democracies. These patterns are part of a larger internal discourse that, starting from the street, the square and the neighborhood, moves outward beyond the water's edge.

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Appendix A: Regression Tables – Party Support for U.S., China, and EU Relations

Pooled Regression Tables - Mexico and Colombia Party Support for U.S., China, and EU Relations

US

Table 1

Effect of Left-Right Dimension on Party Support for U.S. Relations

Model	B	SE	β	p
Left-Right	0.690*	0.087	0.865	< .001

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for U.S. relations. $R^2 = .748$, adjusted $R^2 = .731$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with U.S. support: $r = .865$.

* $p < .001$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

Table 2

Effect of GAL-TAN Dimension on Party Support for U.S. Relations

Model	B	SE	β	p
GAL-TAN	0.603	0.162	0.694	.002

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for U.S. relations. $R^2 = .482$, adjusted $R^2 = .448$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with U.S. support: $r = .694$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

China

Table 3

Effect of Left-Right Dimension on Party Support for China Relations

Model	B	SE	β	p
Left-Right	-0.189	0.072	-0.567	.018

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for China relations. $R^2 = .322$, adjusted $R^2 = .277$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with China support: $r = -.567$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

Table 4

Effect of GAL-TAN Dimension on Party Support for China Relations

Model	B	SE	β	p
GAL-TAN	-0.198	0.080	-0.544	.024

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for China relations. $R^2 = .296$, adjusted $R^2 = .250$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with China support: $r = -.544$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

EU**Table 5***Effect of Left-Right Dimension on Party Support for EU Relations*

Model	B	SE	β	p
Left-Right	-0.007	0.086	-0.021	.938

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for EU relations. $R^2 = .000$, adjusted $R^2 = -.066$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with EU support: $r = -.021$.

No coefficients statistically significant at conventional levels.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

Table 6*Effect of GAL-TAN Dimension on Party Support for EU Relations*

Model	B	SE	β	p
GAL-TAN	-0.145	0.088	-0.370	.143

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for EU relations. $R^2 = .137$, adjusted $R^2 = .080$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with EU support: $r = -.370$.

No coefficients statistically significant at conventional levels.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

Regression Tables - Colombia Party Support for U.S., China, and EU Relations

US

Table 7

Effect of Left-Right Dimension on Party Support for U.S. Relations (Colombia)

Model	B	SE	β	p
Left-Right	0.932	0.106	0.957	< 0.001

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for U.S. relations. $R^2 = 0.917$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.904$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with U.S. support: $r = 0.957$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

Table 8

Effect of GAL-TAN Dimension on Party Support for U.S. Relations (Colombia)

Model	B	SE	β	p
GAL-TAN	0.776	0.186	0.844	0.004

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for U.S. relations. $R^2 = 0.713$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.688$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with U.S. support: $r = 0.844$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

China

Table 9

Effect of Left-Right Dimension on Party Support for China Relations (Colombia)

Model	B	SE	β	p
Left-Right	-0.304	0.072	-0.847	0.004

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for China relations. $R^2 = 0.717$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.692$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with China support: $r = -0.847$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

Table 10

Effect of GAL-TAN Dimension on Party Support for China Relations (Colombia)

Model	B	SE	β	p
GAL-TAN	-0.283	0.070	-0.835	0.005

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for China relations. $R^2 = 0.697$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.671$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with China support: $r = -0.835$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

EU**Table 11***Effect of Left-Right Dimension on Party Support for EU Relations (Colombia)*

Model	B	SE	β	p
Left-Right	-0.100	0.123	-0.293	0.444

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for EU relations. $R^2 = 0.086$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.025$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with EU support: $r = -0.293$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

Table 12*Effect of GAL-TAN Dimension on Party Support for EU Relations (Colombia)*

Model	B	SE	β	p
GAL-TAN	-0.152	0.107	-0.473	0.198

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for EU relations. $R^2 = 0.224$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.171$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with EU support: $r = -0.473$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

Regression Tables - Mexico Party Support for U.S., China, and EU Relations

US

Table 13

Effect of Left-Right Dimension on Party Support for U.S. Relations (Mexico)

Model	B	SE	β	p
Left-Right	0.389	0.133	0.767	0.026

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for U.S. relations. $R^2 = 0.589$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.551$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with U.S. support: $r = 0.767$.

Note. Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

Table 14

Effect of GAL-TAN Dimension on Party Support for U.S. Relations (Mexico)

Model	B	SE	β	p
GAL-TAN	0.138	0.277	0.200	0.636

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for U.S. relations. $R^2 = 0.040$, adjusted $R^2 = -0.024$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with U.S. support: $r = 0.200$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

China

Table 15

Effect of Left-Right Dimension on Party Support for China Relations (Mexico)

Model	B	SE	β	p
Left-Right	0.008	0.082	0.040	0.926

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for China relations. $R^2 = 0.002$, adjusted $R^2 = -0.064$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with China support: $r = 0.040$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

Table 16

Effect of GAL-TAN Dimension on Party Support for China Relations (Mexico)

Model	B	SE	β	p
GAL-TAN	0.020	0.112	0.072	0.866

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for China relations. $R^2 = 0.005$, adjusted $R^2 = -0.061$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with China support: $r = 0.072$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

EU

Table 17

Effect of Left-Right Dimension on Party Support for EU Relations (Mexico)

Model	B	SE	β	p
Left-Right	0.079	0.148	0.213	0.613

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for EU relations. $R^2 = 0.045$, adjusted $R^2 = -0.019$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with EU support: $r = 0.213$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

Table 18

Effect of GAL-TAN Dimension on Party Support for EU Relations (Mexico)

Model	B	SE	β	p
GAL-TAN	-0.117	0.201	-0.231	0.582

Note. Model includes a single predictor. Dependent variable: support for EU relations. $R^2 = 0.053$, adjusted $R^2 = -0.011$, $n = 17$. Pearson correlation with EU support: $r = -0.231$.

Data source: CHES-LATAM (2020) and PREPPS (2019).

Appendix B: Descriptive Statistics

Colombia

Table 19

Self-Identified Ethnicity or Race in Colombia (S12)

Code	Ethnicity / Race	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
1	Asian	3	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
2	Black	99	8.3%	9.5%	9.8%
3	Indigenous	106	8.9%	10.2%	20.0%
4	Mestizo	500	41.7%	48.2%	68.2%
5	Mulatto	60	5.0%	5.7%	73.9%
6	White	239	19.9%	23.0%	96.9%
7	Other	32	2.7%	3.1%	100.0%
Valid Total		1039	86.6%	100.0%	
No answer (-2)		45	3.7%		
Don't know (-1)		116	9.6%		
Total Responses		1199	100.0%		

Note. Data from Latinobarómetro 2018 survey. Percentages are based on valid responses only.

Table 20
Size of Administrative Units in Colombia (TAMCIUD)

Code	Size of Administrative Unit	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
1	Less than 5,000	341	28.4%	28.4%	28.4%
2	5,001–10,000	31	2.6%	2.6%	31.0%
3	10,001–20,000	62	5.2%	5.2%	36.2%
4	20,001–40,000	89	7.4%	7.4%	43.6%
5	40,001–50,000	40	3.3%	3.3%	46.9%
6	50,001–100,000	119	10.0%	10.0%	56.9%
7	100,001 and more	132	11.0%	11.0%	67.9%
8	(Capital)	385	32.1%	32.1%	100.0%
Valid Total		1199	100.0%	100.0%	
Total Responses		1199	100.0%		

Note. Data from Latinobarómetro 2018 survey. Percentages are based on valid responses only.

Table 21
Religion in Colombia (S10)

Code	Religion	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
1	Catholic	827	68.9%	70.2%	70.2%
2	Evangelical (no specific)	188	15.7%	16.0%	86.1%
5	Evangelical Pentecostal	9	0.7%	0.8%	86.9%
6	Adventist	3	0.2%	0.2%	87.1%
7	Jehovah's Witnesses	8	0.7%	0.7%	87.8%
9	Jewish	2	0.1%	0.1%	87.9%
10	Protestant	2	0.2%	0.2%	88.1%
13	Agnostic	4	0.3%	0.3%	88.5%
14	Atheist	4	0.3%	0.3%	88.8%
96	Other	8	0.7%	0.7%	89.5%
97	None	124	10.3%	10.5%	100.0%
Valid Total		1178	98.3%	100.0%	
No answer (-2)		7	0.6%		
Don't know (-1)		14	1.1%		
Total Responses		1199	100.0%		

Note. Data from Latinobarómetro 2018 survey. Percentages are based on valid responses only.

Table 22
Respondent Education in Colombia (REEDUC.1)

Code	Education Level	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
0	No data	5	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
1	Illiterate	73	6.1%	6.1%	6.5%
2	Incomplete basic education	107	8.9%	8.9%	15.4%
3	Complete basic education	245	20.4%	20.4%	35.8%
4	Incomplete secondary education	114	9.5%	9.5%	45.4%
5	Complete secondary education	371	30.9%	30.9%	76.3%
6	Incomplete university education	49	4.1%	4.1%	80.4%
7	Complete university education	235	19.6%	19.6%	100.0%
Valid Total		1199	100.0%	100.0%	
Total Responses		1199	100.0%		

Note. Data from Latinobarómetro 2018 survey. Percentages are based on valid responses only.

Table 23
Subjective Social Class in Colombia (S1)

Code	Social Class	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
1	Upper class	34	2.8%	3.0%	3.0%
2	Upper middle class	96	8.0%	8.5%	11.5%
3	Middle class	343	28.6%	30.4%	41.8%
4	Low middle class	382	31.9%	33.8%	75.7%
5	Lower class	275	22.9%	24.3%	100.0%
Valid Total		1130	94.2%	100.0%	
No answer (-2)		28	2.3%		
Don't know (-1)		41	3.4%		
Total Responses		1199	100.0%		

Note. Data from Latinobarómetro 2018 survey. Percentages are based on valid responses only.

Mexico

Table 24

Self-Identified Ethnicity or Race in Mexico (S12)

Code	Ethnicity / Race	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
1	Asian	5	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%
2	Black	2	0.2%	0.2%	0.8%
3	Indigenous	185	15.4%	20.2%	21.1%
4	Mestizo	599	49.8%	65.5%	86.5%
5	Mulatto	18	1.5%	2.0%	88.5%
6	White	87	7.3%	9.6%	98.1%
7	Other race	18	1.5%	1.9%	100.0%
Valid Total		914	76.1%	100.0%	
No answer (-2)		20	1.7%		
Don't know (-1)		268	22.3%		
Total Responses		1202	100.0%		

Note. Data from Latinobarómetro 2018 survey. Percentages are based on valid responses only.

Table 25
Size of Administrative Unit in Mexico (TAMCIUD)

Code	Size of Administrative Unit	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
1	Less than 5,000	40	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%
2	5,001–10,000	44	3.6%	3.6%	6.9%
3	10,001–20,000	127	10.6%	10.6%	17.5%
4	20,001–40,000	86	7.2%	7.2%	24.7%
5	40,001–50,000	38	3.2%	3.2%	27.9%
6	50,001–100,000	130	10.8%	10.8%	38.7%
7	100,001 and more	647	53.8%	53.8%	92.5%
8	(Capital)	90	7.5%	7.5%	100.0%
Valid Total		1202	100.0%	100.0%	
Total Responses		1202	100.0%		

Note. Data from Latinobarómetro 2018 survey. Percentages are based on valid responses only.

Table 26
Religion in Mexico (S10)

Code	Religion	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
1	Catholic	866	72.1%	74.0%	74.0%
2	Evangelical (no specific)	30	2.5%	2.5%	76.6%
3	Evangelical baptism	9	0.8%	0.8%	77.3%
4	Evangelical methodist	3	0.2%	0.2%	77.6%
5	Evangelical Pentecostal	16	1.3%	1.4%	78.9%
6	Adventist	5	0.4%	0.4%	79.4%
7	Jehovah's Witnesses	20	1.7%	1.7%	81.1%
8	Mormón	2	0.2%	0.2%	81.2%
9	Jewish	2	0.2%	0.2%	81.4%
10	Protestant	3	0.3%	0.3%	81.7%
12	Believer, not belong to church	24	2.0%	2.1%	83.8%
13	Agnostic	2	0.1%	0.1%	83.9%
14	Atheist	11	0.9%	1.0%	84.9%
96	Other	16	1.4%	1.4%	86.3%
97	None	160	13.4%	13.7%	100.0%
Valid Total		1170	97.3%	100.0%	
No answer (-2)		21	1.8%		
Don't know (-1)		10	0.9%		
Total Responses		1202	100.0%		

Note. Data from Latinobarómetro 2018 survey. Percentages are based on valid responses only.

Table 27
Respondent Education in Mexico (REEDUC.1)

Code	Education Level	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
1	Illiterate	75	6.2%	6.2%	6.2%
2	Incomplete basic education	99	8.2%	8.2%	14.4%
3	Complete basic education	219	18.2%	18.2%	32.7%
4	Incomplete secondary education	35	2.9%	2.9%	35.6%
5	Complete secondary education	532	44.2%	44.2%	79.8%
6	Incomplete university education	88	7.3%	7.3%	87.1%
7	Complete university education	155	12.9%	12.9%	100.0%
Valid Total		1202	100.0%	100.0%	
Total Responses		1202	100.0%		

Note. Data from Latinobarómetro 2018 survey. Percentages are based on valid responses only.

Table 28
Subjective Social Class in Mexico (S1)

Code	Social Class	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
1	Upper class	10	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%
2	Upper middle class	52	4.3%	4.5%	5.3%
3	Middle class	401	33.4%	34.5%	39.9%
4	Low middle class	390	32.4%	33.6%	73.4%
5	Lower class	308	25.7%	26.6%	100.0%
Valid Total		1161	96.6%	100.0%	
No answer (-2)		9	0.8%		
Don't know (-1)		31	2.6%		
Total Responses		1202	100.0%		

Note. Data from Latinobarómetro 2018 survey. Percentages are based on valid responses only.

Appendix C: Correlation Matrix

Table 29

Pearson Correlations Among Key Variables of Mexico and Colombia

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. LRPREPPS	1.00				
2. GALTAN	0.83	1.00			
3. US	0.86	0.69	1.00		
4. CHINA	-0.57	-0.54	-0.55	1.00	
5. EU	-0.02	-0.37	0.18	0.31	1.00

Note. Pearson correlation coefficients between ideological variables (LRPREPPS, GALTAN) and foreign policy positions (US, CHINA, EU).

Table 30

Pearson Correlations Among Key Variables — Colombian Parties

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. LRPREPPS	1.00				
2. GALTAN	0.96	1.00			
3. US	0.96	0.84	1.00		
4. CHINA	-0.85	-0.83	-0.79	1.00	
5. EU	-0.29	-0.47	-0.09	0.46	1.00

Note. Pearson correlation coefficients between ideological variables (LRPREPPS, GALTAN) and foreign policy positions (US, CHINA, EU).

Table 31
Pearson Correlations Among Key Variables — Mexican Parties

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. LRPREPPS	1.00				
2. GALTAN	0.68	1.00			
3. US	0.77	0.20	1.00		
4. CHINA	0.04	0.07	0.37	1.00	
5. EU	0.21	-0.23	0.76	0.61	1.00

Note. Pearson correlation coefficients between ideological variables (LRPREPPS, GALTAN) and foreign policy positions (US, CHINA, EU).

Table 32*Correlation Matrix of Political Attitudes from CHES and PREPPS Datasets*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Left-Right Ideology (CHES)	1.000																	
2. Redistribution (CHES)	0.952	1.000																
3. Environment (CHES)	0.721	0.692	1.000															
4. Tax vs Spend (CHES)	0.857	0.901	0.852	1.000														
5. Deregulation (CHES)	0.907	0.977	0.653	0.910	1.000													
6. Social Policy (CHES)	0.930	0.850	0.860	0.867	0.780	1.000												
7. Religion (CHES)	0.948	0.843	0.780	0.822	0.775	0.972	1.000											
8. Crime (CHES)	0.925	0.940	0.844	0.904	0.888	0.923	0.891	1.000										
9. Ethnic Minorities (CHES)	0.938	0.935	0.842	0.925	0.879	0.955	0.917	0.969	1.000									
10. Left-Right Ideology (PREPPS)	0.979	0.963	0.669	0.848	0.928	0.889	0.897	0.916	0.929	1.000								
11. Tax vs Spend (PREPPS)	0.692	0.567	0.475	0.464	0.492	0.697	0.764	0.595	0.611	0.627	1.000							
12. Redistribution (PREPPS)	0.936	0.962	0.699	0.869	0.940	0.851	0.832	0.907	0.919	0.973	0.564	1.000						
13. Deregulation (PREPPS)	0.925	0.962	0.608	0.826	0.952	0.797	0.789	0.873	0.875	0.970	0.508	0.983	1.000					
14. Environment (PREPPS)	0.862	0.901	0.870	0.944	0.890	0.873	0.816	0.932	0.941	0.878	0.493	0.927	0.877	1.000				
15. Social Policy (PREPPS)	0.933	0.893	0.773	0.824	0.816	0.953	0.933	0.941	0.949	0.922	0.723	0.896	0.860	0.870	1.000			
16. Crime (PREPPS)	0.913	0.956	0.771	0.895	0.926	0.871	0.827	0.957	0.950	0.949	0.503	0.961	0.949	0.942	0.920	1.000		
17. Religion (PREPPS)	0.939	0.842	0.730	0.817	0.775	0.963	0.985	0.874	0.912	0.894	0.780	0.827	0.787	0.800	0.944	0.818	1.000	
18. Ethnic Minorities (PREPPS)	0.950	0.974	0.795	0.927	0.942	0.914	0.894	0.980	0.974	0.957	0.593	0.956	0.933	0.951	0.942	0.977	0.887	1.000

Note. Pearson correlations ($n = 17$). Variables are standardised; source shown in parentheses. Only the lower triangle is displayed once.

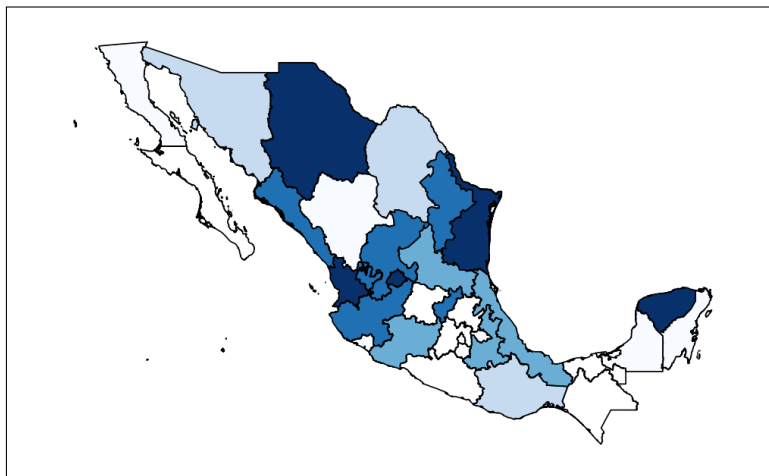
Appendix D: Regional Preferences and Party Coding

Table 34

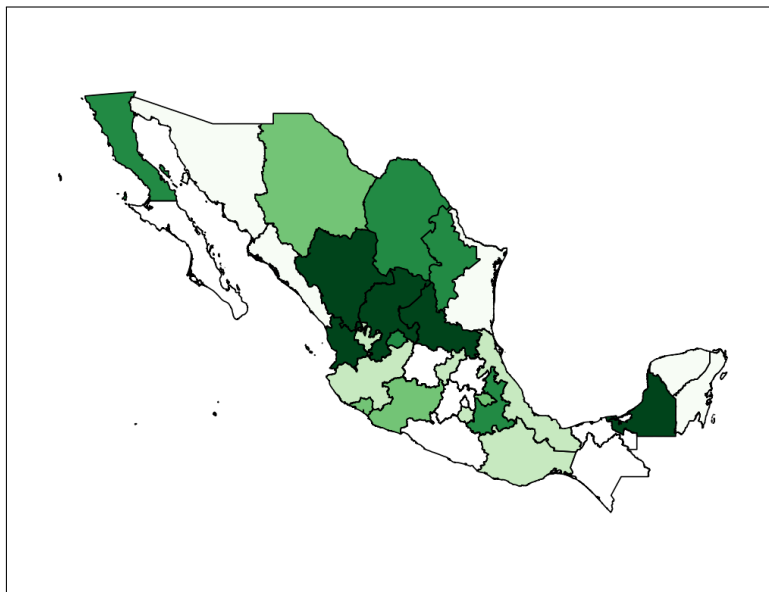
Voting Preferences by Macroregion in Mexico (P50STGBS.A)

Party	MACROREGION						Total
	Northwest	Northeast	West	Center	Southeast	Southwest	
PAN	8 15.7%	12 16.4%	21 23.9%	10 6.8%	7 14.0%	1 2.3%	59 13.0%
PRI	9 17.6%	23 31.5%	17 19.3%	37 25.0%	4 8.0%	9 20.5%	99 21.8%
PRD	0 0.0%	3 4.1%	7 8.0%	4 2.7%	5 10.0%	4 9.1%	23 5.1%
PVEM	0 0.0%	2 2.7%	3 3.4%	5 3.4%	6 12.0%	1 2.3%	17 3.7%
PT	1 2.0%	2 2.7%	4 4.5%	2 1.4%	1 2.0%	0 0.0%	10 2.2%
MORENA	33 64.7%	31 42.5%	36 40.9%	90 60.8%	27 54.0%	29 65.9%	246 54.2%
Total	51	73	88	148	50	44	454

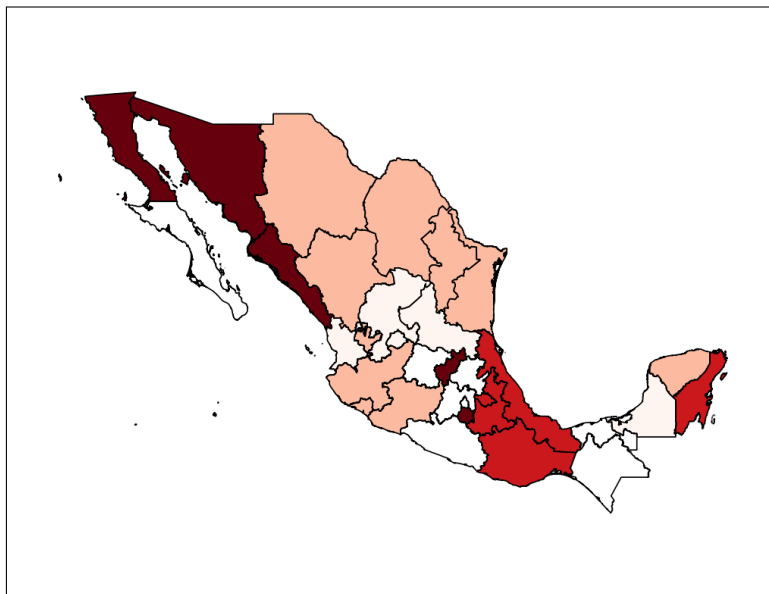
Note: Percentages are within each macroregion. Data from Latinobarometro 2018.

Figure 6*State-Level Support for the National Action Party (PAN)*

Note. Map created by the author using data from the *Latinobarómetro* 2018 survey. Shading reflects the average proportion of respondents in each state who stated they would vote for the party if an election were held tomorrow.

Figure 7*State-Level Support for the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)*

Note. Map created by the author using data from the *Latinobarómetro* 2018 survey. Shading reflects the average proportion of respondents in each state who stated they would vote for the party if an election were held tomorrow.

Figure 8*State-Level Support for the National Regeneration Movement (Morena)*

Note. Map created by the author using data from the *Latinobarómetro* 2018 survey. Shading reflects the average proportion of respondents in each state who stated they would vote for the party if an election were held tomorrow.

Table 34*List of Political Parties and Recoded Party Families*

Abbr.	Full Name	Country	Party Family	Information	Notes
PLC	Colombian Liberal Party	Colombia	Liberal	Traditional center-right, pro-business	Maintained as per Latinobarómetro data
CD	Democratic Center Party	Colombia	Right-populist	Uribista, hardline security stance	Maintained as per Latinobarómetro data
RCP	Radical Change Party	Colombia	Liberal/Center-right	Break-off from liberalism, technocratic	Maintained as per Latinobarómetro data
U	Social Party of National Unity	Colombia	Centrist	Former Santos platform, coalition-prone	Recoded into Social Democrats, from Electoral Alliance
PCC	Colombian Conservative Party	Colombia	Conservative	Traditional, rural, center-right	Maintained as per Latinobarómetro data
AV	Green Alliance Party	Colombia	Green / Progressive	Urban, young, educated electorate	Recoded into Social Democrats from Green
PDA	Alternative Democratic Pole	Colombia	Radical Left	Anti-Uribista, anti-imperialist	Maintained as per Latinobarómetro data
POC	Citizen Option	Colombia	Conservative / Populist	Regional conservative, now marginal	Maintained as per Latinobarómetro data
DEC	Coalition List of Decency	Colombia	Social Democrat	Left coalition, pro-peace	Maintained as per Latinobarómetro data
MORENA	National Regeneration Movement	Mexico	Left-populist	Catch-all, dominant since 2018	Maintained as per Latinobarómetro data
PAN	National Action Party	Mexico	Christian Democrat	Conservative, northern business base	Maintained as per Latinobarómetro data
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party	Mexico	Traditional / Centrist	Former hegemonic party, rural base	Recoded into Liberal, from Electoral Alliance
PRD	Democratic Revolution Party	Mexico	Social Democrat	PRI offshoot, progressive, allied with PAN	Maintained as per Latinobarómetro data
PVE	Green Ecologist Party	Mexico	Clientelist / Green	Opportunistic alliances, not programmatic	Recoded into Social Democrats from Green
MC	Citizens Movement	Mexico	Liberal / Centrist	Urban, middle-class liberal voters	Coded as Centrist, not present in Latinobarómetro
PDT	Labor Party	Mexico	Radical Left	MORENA ally, trade union roots	Recoded into Social Democrats from Electoral Alliance
PES	Social Encounter Party	Mexico	Religious Right	Evangelical, socially conservative	Coded as Christian Democrat, not present in Latinobarómetro data

Note. Classifications were primarily derived from the Latinobarómetro dataset. In certain cases, recoding was applied to avoid oversimplification (e.g., "Electoral Alliance", "Green"). Parties not present in Latinobarómetro but available in CHES-LATAM or PREPPS were coded based on proximity to party families along the GAL–TAN and Left–Right ideological dimensions.