This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.
A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.
This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.
The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.
When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.
MAKING SENSE OF MEXICO’S PLACE IN THE WORLD: A ROLE THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF MEXICO’S FOREIGN POLICY

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Omar A. Loera-González

Submitted in satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh

Ph.D. in Politics and International Relations
University of Edinburgh
2021
DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is of my own composition, based on my own work and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Omar Alejandro Loera González
ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to answer why Mexico has an atypical foreign policy for a country that can be considered a middle power and tackles this empirical puzzle through the analytical tools of role theory. In this work, I argue that conflicting expectations from several actors – domestic and external – have led to a foreign policy that is contradictory to what is expected for a country with Mexico's material capabilities and for its foreign policy objectives. The time frame of the thesis ranges from 1986 to 2018, when Mexico faced various transformations. These transformations occurred in the international system and domestically with democratization and an economic opening that drove the confrontation between its two foreign policy orientations. The different interpretations of these orientations on how to implement Mexico’s foreign policy led to disputes that affected the country's diplomatic performance as a middle power.

Through case studies, the thesis examines three specific settings where Mexico could have displayed middle-power behaviour. The first case study analyses Mexico’s controversial membership and performance in the Iraq crisis within the Security Council of the United Nations from 2002–2003. The second case study examines Mexico’s ambition to display a regional leadership role in regional multilateral bodies such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Pacific Alliance. Finally, the third case study focuses on Mexico’s engagement in the niche issue of respect for human rights and democracy promotion. These three case studies show how role conflict has operated in Mexico’s foreign policy.

In summary, this work contributes to scholarship on Mexican foreign policy and role theory, and it is the first comprehensive application of role theory to the study of Mexican foreign policy.
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION iii  
ABSTRACT v  
TABLE OF CONTENTS vi  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ix  
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS xi  
LIST OF TABLES xiv  
LIST OF FIGURES xv  

1. **Chapter One: Introduction** 1  
   1.1 Mexican foreign policy orientations 8  
   1.2 The middle power debate in research on Mexican foreign policy 10  
   1.3 Contributions, structure, and organisation of the thesis 15  

2. **Chapter Two: Theoretical framework** 18  
   2.1 Limitations and strengths of role theory 28  
   2.2 Approaching middle powers through role theory 31  
   2.2.1 Contextual features and factors influencing Mexico’s middle-power NRCs 35  
   2.3 Conclusions 41  

3. **Chapter Three: Methodology** 43  
   3.1 Research methods in role theory 43  
   3.2 Research design 45  
   3.2.1 Data collection methods 45  
   3.2.2 Content analysis 46  
   3.2.3 Process-tracing 47  
   3.3 National role conceptions 49  
   3.4 Case studies 54  
   3.5 Case selection 55  
   3.6 Conclusions 62  

4. **Chapter Four: Historical background of Mexico’s foreign policy** 63  
   4.1 Mexico’s challenging early existence 63  
   4.2 The Mexican revolution and the beginning of Mexico’s revolutionary nationalism 67  
   4.3. Mexico’s post-revolutionary foreign policy 69  
   4.4 Contradictions in the traditional orientation of foreign policy in the Post-World War II period 71  
   4.5 Historical involvement of Mexico in the Security Council of the United Nations 72
4.6 Mexico’s Latin-Americanism in foreign policy 74
4.7 Mexico’s adoption of liberal values 75
4.8 Mexico’s foreign policy contradictions: Activism in international affairs 79
4.9 Mexico after 1982 81
4.10 The negotiation and enactment of NAFTA 83
4.11 The emergence of the new foreign policy orientation 85
4.12 Mexico’s democratic transition in the year 2000 and the Castañeda doctrine 86
4.13 Final remarks 88

5. Chapter Five: Involvement of Mexico in the Security Council of the United Nations during the Iraq crisis 91
5.1 Introduction 91
5.2 Mexico’s nomination for a non-permanent seat at the Security Council of the United Nations in 2002 93
5.3 Mexico’s participation in the Security Council 102
5.4 Horizontal role contestation during Mexico’s participation in the UNSC 111
  5.4.1 Congress 111
  5.4.2 Cabinet 116
  5.4.3 Civil society 121
5.5 Vertical role contestation in public opinion 122
5.6 External role expectations 124
5.7 Mexico’s national role conceptions as a middle power 127
  5.7.1 Mexico’s good international citizen NRC 128
  5.7.2 Mexico’s supporter of multilateralism NRC 131
  5.7.3 Mexico’s bridge-builder and coalition builder NRCs 133
5.8 Conclusion 135

6. Chapter Six: Mexico’s involvement in the creation and performance of CELAC 139
6.1 Introduction 139
6.2 Mexico in Latin America: Identity, regional influence, and diplomatic diversification 141
6.3 Mexico’s efforts for regional integration 142
6.4 Mexico’s rapprochement with Latin America: The creation of CELAC 144
6.5 Unity in diversity: The performance of CELAC 155
6.6 Mexico’s partial retreat from CELAC and the creation of the Pacific Alliance 157
6.7 Mexico’s continuing partial retreat from CELAC during the Peña Nieto administration 158
6.8 Horizontal role contestation 162
6.8.1 Congress 162
6.8.2 Bureaucracies 165
6.9 Vertical role contestation 167
6.10 External role expectations 170
6.11 Mexico’s national role conceptions as a middle power 172
6.11.1 Mexico’s seeker of regional leadership NRC 173
6.11.2 Mexico’s NRC as a bridge-builder or coalition-builder 175
6.12 Conclusion 177
7. Chapter Seven: Adoption of liberal values in Mexico’s foreign policy 183
7.1 Introduction 183
7.2 Mexico’s historical engagement with liberal values in foreign policy 186
7.3 The 1980s as a turning point in Mexico’s relation with liberal values 186
7.4 The emergence of civil society and the new role of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 187
7.5 The Panama Crisis and the Mexican government’s search for legitimacy 191
7.6 The end of the Cold War and the international turn to liberalism in the 1990s 194
7.7 The gradual inclusion of liberal values in foreign policy platforms during the Zedillo administration 197
7.8 The democratic transition and the Fox administration 206
7.9 Confrontation with Cuba over Mexico’s promotion of liberal values 211
7.10 Inconsistent domestic role contestations and external role expectations 214
7.11 Continuity in the promotion of liberal values during the Calderón administration 218
7.12 The 2011 constitutional reform 223
7.13 Interpretation of the middle-power NRCs relating to liberal values according to foreign policy orientations 225
7.14 Conclusion 228
8. Conclusions: Findings, contributions, and future avenues of research 235
8.1 Alternative explanations 245
8.2 Implications and avenues of future research 248
Appendices: 251
9. References 252
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“México, creo en ti
Como en el vértice de un juramento.
Tú hueles a tragedia, tierra mía,
Y sin embargo, ríes demasiado,
Acaso porque sabes que la risa
Es la envoltura de un dolor callado [...]”

México, creo en ti,
Porque creyendo te vuelves ansia
Y castidad y celo y esperanza.
Si yo conozco el cielo es por tu cielo,
Si conozco el dolor es por tus lágrimas
Que están en mi aprendiendo a ser lloradas.”

-Ricardo López Méndez

Doing a Ph.D. is one of the most exciting and consequential projects I have undertaken. This project would not have been possible without the support of many people and organisations. Most of all, I thank my family. Especially my partner, Alicia Romo Issa, and my parents; María del Socorro González Silva, and Armando Loera Varela; my brothers Pablo Armando and Juan Jaime Federico. I also thank my grandmother Serafina Silva Bermejo, my aunts and uncles Rosario, Azucena, Sergio and Martín González, and Cacho.

Funding for my PhD was made possible by Mexican taxpayers through a CONACyT scholarship, to which I want to express my gratitude for their financial support throughout my project.

I thank my supervisors, Professors Juliet Kaarbo and Mark Aspinwall, for their insight, unconditional support, and all the advice they generously provided over the years.

One of the best outcomes of this journey was to meet people that made me a better person. I am grateful for my dear friends and the generous critics of my work who made my Edinburgh experience so much worthwhile. In alphabetical order, these
people are: Fernando Blake, Benedikt Buechel, Francesco D’Alema, Claudio Colandrea, Alexis Flores, Daniel García, Isabella Gabrovsky, Elisa Gambino, Joe Gazeley, Santiago Inda, Daniel Mobley, Yazmin Morlet, Karina Padilla, Alec Ross, Álvaro Sáez, Carlos Soto, Alistair Stanton, Damian Strycharz, Kim Vender, Patrick Utz, and Kevin Zapata. I am fortunate to have such a constellation of brilliant and good friends in my life.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALADI: Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración (Latin American Integration Association).

ALBA: Alianza Bolivariana de las Américas (Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas).

APEC: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.

BRICS: Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa.

CAI: Comisión de Asuntos Internacionales (Commission of International Affairs).

CALC: Cumbre de América Latina y el Caribe (Latin American and Caribbean Summit).

CELAC: Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States)

CIDE-COMEXI Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas- Consejo Mexicano de Asuntos Internacionales (Center for Research and Teaching in Economics – Mexican Council on Foreign Relations).


COP: Conference of the Parts.

DEA: Drug Enforcement Agency.

DCAM: Delegation for Central America and Mexico-European Parliament.

ELN: Ejército de liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army).

FARC: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces).

FTAA: Free Trade Agreement of the Americas.

G3: Group of Three Free Trade Agreement (Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela).

G8: Group of Eight, also known as the Contadora support group, formed by Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, México, Panamá, Perú, Uruguay, Venezuela.

G77: Group of 77, a coalition of 134 developing countries.

GA: General Assembly of the United Nations.

GATT: General Agreement of Trade and Tariffs.

GDP: Gross Domestic Product.

GEA: Grupo Economista y Asociados (Economics and Associates Group).

IACHR: Inter-American Commission of Human Rights.
ICC: International Criminal Court.
IGOs: Intergovernmental organisations.
IMF: International Monetary Fund.
ISI: Import-Substitution Industrialisation.
FDI: Foreign Direct Investment.
FMLN: Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front).
FPA: Foreign Policy Analysis.
FSLN: Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front).
FTA: Free Trade Agreement.
EU: European Union.
PA: Pacific Alliance.
IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency.
IACHR: Inter-American Court of Human Rights.
IR: International Relations.
HR: Human Rights.
PRI: Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party).
NAFTA: North American Free Trade Agreement.
NAM: Non-Aligned Movement.
MIKTA: Mexico Indonesia Korea Turkey Australia.
NGOs: Non-governmental Organisations.
NRCs: National Role Conceptions.
MERCOSUR: Mercado Común del Sur (Common Market of the South).
OAS: Organisation of American States.
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

OPANAL: Organismo para la Proscripción de las Armas Nucleares en América Latina y el Caribe (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean).

SE: Secretaría de Economía (Secretariat of Economic Affairs).

SRE: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Secretariat of Foreign Affairs).

TIAR: Tratado Interamericano de Asistencia Recíproca (Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance).

TPP: Trans-Pacific Partnership.

SECOFI: Secretaría de Comercio y Fomento Industrial (Secretariat for Trade and Industrial Promotion).

UK: United Kingdom.

UN: United Nations.

UNASUR: Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (Union of South American Nations).


USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

USD: United States Dollars.


UNCHR: United Nations Commission of Human Rights


USMCA: United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 1:</strong> Roles associated with middle powers</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 2:</strong> Inclusion of international norms regarding Human Rights in the constitution of Latin American countries</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 3:</strong> Timeline of critical events in Chapter 5</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 4:</strong> Composition of the Mexican Congress by political party affiliation during the LVIII legislature</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 5:</strong> Perception of Mexico’s good international citizen NRC during the Iraq crisis within the UNSC</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 6:</strong> Mexico’s supporter of multilateralism NRC during the Iraq crisis within the UNSC</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 7:</strong> Mexico’s bridge-builder NRC during the Iraq crisis within the UNSC</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 8:</strong> Timeline of critical events of Chapter 6</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 9:</strong> Interpretation of Mexico’s seeker of regional leadership NRC during the creation of CELAC</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 10:</strong> Interpretation of Mexico’s coalition-builder NRC during the creation of CELAC</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 11:</strong> Interpretation of Mexico’s bridge-builder NRC during the creation of CELAC</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 12:</strong> Timeline of critical events of Chapter 7</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 13:</strong> Interpretation of Mexico’s good international citizen NRC during Chapter 7</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 14:</strong> Interpretation of Mexico’s supporter of multilateralism NRC during Chapter 7</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 15:</strong> Interpretation of Mexico’s mediator NRC during Chapter 7</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 16:</strong> Interpretation of Mexico’s coalition-builder NRC during Chapter 7</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 17:</strong> Comparison of contextual features of the case studies</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of figure</th>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>A model of the operationalisation of the research variables in this thesis</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Relation of middle power NRCs and the case studies</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Evolution of NRCs in Chapter 5</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Evolution of public support to Mexico’s leadership role in Latin America.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Evolution of NRCs in Chapter 6</td>
<td>172</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Flowchart depicting the evolution of Mexico’s middle power NRCs in liberal values through Mexican administrations</td>
<td>231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

The author made all translations from Spanish texts and interviews, and any translation errors are solely his responsibility.
1. Chapter One: Introduction

Many observers consider Mexico to be a middle power, since its territorial extension, demographic features, and economic resources correspond with the definitions and parameters given to this category of states (see Wood, 1990; Antkiewicz and Shaw, 2007; Belanger and Mace, 1997; and Goad, 2000). For instance, middle powers are portrayed as more likely to engage in niche diplomacy, be active in multilateral fora, and act as regional leaders (Pellicer, 2006; Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal, 1993; Mares, 2008).¹

Middle powers are defined in different ways in scholarly research. For example, Neufeld (1995) places middle powers in an intermediate position between great and small powers within a continuous ranking. Welsh (2004) asserts that a remarkable diplomatic capacity to engage with international issues distinguishes all middle powers from other categories of states. Scholars such as Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal (1993) identify multilateralism, self-identification as a middle power, aspirations of regional leadership, and advocacy in niche areas as distinctive attributes of a middle power foreign policy.

However, Mexico has had difficulty projecting itself as a middle power in foreign affairs. Mexican foreign policy is systematically described by researchers as failing to conform to these definitions and enacting middle power roles at a given moment only to abandon them later (Covarrubias, 2005, González 1983; Pellicer 2006). The country’s foreign policy is also presented as being inactive, unenthusiastic, passive, and reactive to global affairs (Covarrubias, 2013; Gómez, 2015).

Despite being a country with relevant material power in the international system, and with Mexican administrations explicitly conveying their intentions to exhibit a foreign policy with the characteristics of a middle power, the country continues to ‘punch below its weight’ in world affairs. Authors such as Sotomayor (2006), Covarrubias, and Schiavon (2018) often present this situation as the result of

¹ Henrikson (2004) defines niche diplomacy as the concentration of attention and diplomatic resources in one specific issue of the international political agenda. Examples involve issues such as climate change and nuclear disarmament.
Mexico’s uncoordinated foreign policy.\(^2\) A comparison with Brazil – the other Latin American ‘giant’ – illustrates an opposite position. For the Brazilian government, a global and active diplomatic presence is paramount to its foreign policy objectives (Pellicer, 2006). This active diplomacy is evident in Brazil seeking a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), actively participating in peacekeeping operations, and consolidating multilateral arrangements such as BRICS and regional groups such as MERCOSUR.

This research explains the absence of a consistent foreign policy in Mexico compatible with a middle power country. Consequently, this thesis has the following main research question: Why does Mexico display an atypical foreign policy for a middle power?

My thesis approaches this question by considering domestic and external elements. In the domestic realm, two competing orientations vie for dominance in Mexican foreign policy. One is the traditional orientation that emerged after the Mexican revolution (1910–1921). This orientation is embedded in an overwhelming anti-American sentiment based on an understanding of national history with frequent foreign interventions by the US and European powers (Mares, 1988). This ‘ethos’ is grounded in doctrinal guidelines such as the Estrada doctrine and Ojeda’s thesis, which advocate non-intervention in external affairs and the protection of sovereignty as paramount goals in foreign policy. The second foreign policy orientation is pragmatic and almost exclusively based on economic concerns, advocating deeper market integration with North America. This position was strengthened by the ‘silent integration’ with the US. ‘Silent integration’ is a term coined by Middlebrook (1991) to describe the increasing – though imperceptible – process intertwining the US and Mexico.

Role theory is used to develop the research argument that both domestic and external factors are important to explain Mexico’s atypical foreign policy. The value of role theory is that it can make sense of foreign policy processes by analysing insights of

\(^2\) For instance, the national development plans (NDPs), which are a series of documents specifying the national objectives, strategies, and priorities of the Mexican government, frequently invoke the specific goal of achieving an active, responsible, and multilateral foreign policy. This is especially true for NDPs from the Fox, Calderón, and Peña administrations.
self and place among other actors in international relations. Role theory effectively captures the myriad components and interactions necessary to fully comprehend Mexico’s foreign policy.

Role theory is a conceptual framework for the study of foreign policy that integrates elements derived from sociology and social psychology to develop explanatory models in foreign policy analysis. From a role theory perspective, foreign policy behaviour emanates from socially defined categories (e.g., \textit{defender of human rights}, \textit{revolutionary state}, \textit{balancer}). This approach is based on the observation that a state’s behaviour in specific contexts is affected by its social positions, the expectations that external actors have of it, and policymakers’ perceptions about the place their country has in international politics. By considering a role as a set of normative duties, external expectations, and self-conceptions, researching Mexican foreign policy through role theory offers an inclusive understanding of how these duties, expectations, and conceptions operate in Mexico’s contextual environment. Additionally, it endows empirical research with a comprehensive way to consider the influence of domestic and external factors in a country’s foreign policy, improving the analysis of foreign policy decisions.

Mexico’s case also provides an important opportunity to consider influences from internal and external sources in the formulation of a country’s foreign policy. This thesis hypothesises that the anomalous behaviour of not adopting a middle-power foreign policy is the result of role conflict caused by the opposition between two foreign policy orientations and conflicting external expectations of roles. This hypothesis builds on previous research (e.g., Walker, Schafer, and Beieler, 2016) that showed how opposed domestic conceptions of foreign policy and conflicting expectations from other states might produce a foreign policy that does not correspond to its role conceptions. Consequently, this project considers Mexican foreign policy and the enactment of middle-power national role conceptions (NRCs) as a dependent variable, foreign policy objectives as independent variables, and role conflict in the form of domestic role contestation between foreign policy orientations and deviating external role expectations as intervening variables.
A central operational concept in role theory is the NRC. National role conceptions are foreign policymakers' perceptions of their nations' positions in the international system (Wish, 1980). This thesis researches Mexico’s middle-power NRCs in foreign policy from the mid-1980s to 2018 when the country went through various transformations. These transformations occurred both in the international system and domestically with democratisation and an economic opening that drove the confrontation between two foreign policy orientations. The different interpretations of these orientations on how to implement Mexico’s foreign policy led to disputes that affected the country's diplomatic performance as a middle power.

Role theory contains two other operational concepts useful to understanding internal and external dynamics affecting the enactment of NRCs in foreign policy. The first concept is domestic role contestation. Domestic role contestation occurs when several roles (role sets) of foreign policy compete for foreign policy enactment. These contestations can be horizontal or vertical. Contestation is horizontal when it occurs between the foreign policy decision-making elite (such as the executive and legislative branches, bureaucracies, or leader advisory groups). Contestation is vertical when different role conceptions between the elites and the general public compete for enactment (Cantir and Kaarbo, 2012; 2016). Domestic role contestation may lead to changes in foreign policy or a foreign policy incongruous with its stated aims. Other countries experience these contestations between different foreign policy orientations as well. For example, these contestations are present in the US between isolationists and internationalists, in the UK between Europeanists and Atlanticists, and in Brazil between traditionalists and globalists (Soares de Lima, 2008; Neto and Malamund, 2015). This research considers Mexico’s processes of contestation by considering distinct contextual elements of Mexican foreign policy, such as presidential leadership, vicinity with the US, and political ties with the rest of Latin America.

The second concept is role expectations. Role expectations refer to the behavioural prescription from external actors to the role-beholder for enactment in foreign policy. These prescriptions are expressed in social interactions (socialisation) with other states and can conflict with the role expectations of other actors. Thies and Wehner (2014) mention that expectations set limits on the range of roles policymakers can
pursue. For instance, Wehner (2015) illustrates this point by writing about Mexico and Brazil’s expectations of Chile’s foreign policy through the use of social cues and demands.

Although previous research has examined Mexico’s unwillingness or inability to adopt a middle-power foreign policy, prior explanations focus on descriptive and overly structural frameworks. Scholars such as Caldwell (2002), De Los Ríos (2012), Ojeda (1976), Riguzzi (2012), Sotomayor (2006), and Seele and Smith (2013), among others, identify geographical proximity to the US as the foremost constraint to the autonomy of Mexico’s decision-making in foreign matters. Others, such as Pellicer (2006), have focused on the country’s ‘confusing regional affiliation’ – belonging economically to North America but sharing a common language and a similar culture with most Latin American countries – as a significant obstacle to a proactive Mexican position in international politics. Nonetheless, according to Sirigu, these approaches produce isolated interpretations that lead to a reductionist understanding of foreign policy, as interactions between several actors are ignored (2015). These viewpoints also focus predominantly on material factors and structural dynamics, omitting domestic and ideational features; thus, they present an incomplete interpretation. A comprehensive integration of different domestic and external components in research will help create a better understanding of foreign policy outcomes.

Likewise, theories based on domestic perspectives often ignore the influence exerted by the international system and other social elements and, in turn, focus their attention on the actions of organisations and bureaucracies, such as in the studies elaborated on by the studies of Allison and Zelikov (1999), or other domestic institutions and political systems like the ones proposed by Evangelista (1997). Despite their limitations, these approaches are prevalent in the analysis of Mexican foreign policy (see Hernández-Rodríguez, 2003; Ai Camp, 2012; Saxe-Fernández, 2002; and Covarrubias, 2003).

Similarly, scholars such as Gómez (2015) and Schiavon (2017) argue that one possible explanation for Mexico’s inability to display a foreign policy similar to those enacted by middle powers is the lack of interest the country's elites show in
their country’s position in the world. Several elements, such as survey results, the insufficient budget given to the country's diplomatic corps, the inadequate number of career diplomats, and the lack of explicit objectives and long-term vision in foreign policy, support this argument. These authors identify this apathetic attitude as a major cause of the country’s inability to exercise an assertive role in world politics.

However, despite the heuristic value provided by this view, this argument still needs to explain the perceptions behind Mexico’s inability to adopt a middle-power foreign policy and the way these perceptions relate to domestic perceptions and external expectations of Mexico’s position and behaviour in the world. This research explains these processes and the ways they have delivered outcomes in foreign policy.

This research identifies three instances where Mexico had the opportunity to enact NRCs related to middle powers. My research focus is exploring how NRCs were filtered through Mexico’s foreign policy orientations and how this influenced whether Mexico enacted a middle power status. I analyse these three episodes through case studies. The case studies employ content analysis using records of legislative debates, diplomatic speeches, interviews, surveys, editorials, reports, books, and press statements. These resources are employed to look for evidence on how domestic contention of roles and orientations and divergent external expectations influence the adoption of middle power NRCs in Mexico. The first case study analyses Mexico’s controversial membership in the United Nations Security Council from 2002 to 2003 and Mexico’s performance during the Iraq crisis. The second case study examines Mexico’s ambition to show a regional leadership role in regional multilateral organisations such as the Community of Latin American and the Caribbean States and the Pacific Alliance. Finally, the third case study focuses on Mexico’s commitment to liberal values, such as respect for human rights and democracy promotion. These case studies produced mixed results in the analysis of the enactment of middle-power role conceptions in Mexico’s foreign policy. The different nature of these cases – with one focusing on Mexico’s involvement in an international crisis within the UNSC, another concentrated on the country’s

---

3 *Mexico, las Américas y el Mundo* was a major, bi-annual survey in Mexico that measured public and elite (academic, business, political, and social leaders) attitudes to the country’s foreign policy and world affairs.
integration with Latin America, and the last case examining Mexico’s attitudes towards a niche issue – offered variance in the analysis. One benefit of using role theory in the case studies of this thesis was the ability to link with middle-range theories to offer greater analytical rigour. Therefore, each of the case studies includes elements that enrich the analysis of Mexico’s foreign policy. For instance, this thesis uses contributions from soft-balancing, bureaucratic politics, and lock-in theories to complement the analysis of the case studies. Although the benefits of these theories are evident, they were not able to explain on their own the enactment of foreign policy in Mexico. Role conflict in the form of domestic role contestation and external role expectations intervened in foreign policy processes to determine the outcome of Mexico’s foreign policy. A visual representation is presented in Figure 1 below to illustrate how the variables in this research relate to each other.

Figure 1: A model of the operationalisation of the research variables in this thesis.
Domestic contestation of Mexico’s NRCs as a middle power and external expectations of these NRCs are treated as the intervening variables in this thesis. Domestic contestations emerged in Congress, cabinets, bureaucracies, and public opinion. External expectations were present in diplomatic summits, international organisations, or through bilateral and multilateral channels. The debates between traditional and pragmatic orientations were manifested in narratives and strategic and national cultures. This thesis aims to find if and how these competing contestations and expectations resulted in Mexico struggling to respond to several demands for enactment in foreign policy from several actors and how this role conflict affected the adoption of middle-power NRCs.

### 1.1 Mexican foreign policy orientations

Role contestation has existed since the late 1980s between interpretations of middle-power NRCs of the traditional and pragmatic foreign policy orientations in Mexico. The traditional orientation, institutionalised since the 1930s, is sovereignty-conscious and advocates for protectionism in trade and to have deeper political ties with Latin America. The pragmatic orientation, also called technocratic or simply new, made its appearance during President Salinas' administration (1988–1994), advocating trade rather than political issues in foreign policy matters.

The traditional or nationalistic orientation emerged after the culmination of the Mexican revolution (1910–1921). This orientation is a reaction to several foreign interventions that the country suffered throughout its history. As such, the traditional orientation advocates for non-intervention, peaceful resolution of disputes, self-determination of all nations, and the juridical equality of states as foreign policy principles. According to Mena (2005, 658), implementing these guidelines was more appropriate for a country that performed a ‘self-righteous observer’ role in the world than a country with Mexico's importance. By adopting this vision, the Mexican

---

4 According to Lock (2017), strategic and national cultures are defined as ideas regarding strategy and identity, respectively.

5 Among the scholars that have previously used the late 1980s as a watershed moment in Mexican foreign policy are Covarrubias, Garza, Schiavon, and Velázquez.

6 Even though the Mexican government began opening the economy to foreign trade in 1982 and joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1986, its foreign policy remained attached to nationalistic guidelines.
government avoided large-scale cooperation with other states and embraced de-facto neutrality in international affairs.

Whereas the first orientation is nationalistic and is officially portrayed as a foreign policy of *principles, not interests*, the second foreign policy orientation is characterised as pragmatic and almost exclusively based on economic concerns, advocating for deeper market integration with North America. This integration with North America also takes place in other areas. For example, to attend to the millions of Mexican nationals in the US, Mexico has an overwhelming majority of its consulates in that country. In addition, even when Mexico had a closed, state-centred economy in the 1970s, 57% of its exports went to the American market. In recent years, this figure is closer to 80%.

The silent integration created a more pragmatic mindset in Mexico that considered the relationship with the US and economic development as vital interests. This *economisation* or *bilateralisation* of foreign policy is the basis of pragmatic orientation and is considered to be the result of having to manage three complex issues with the US. The first issue is the need to attend to millions of Mexican nationals living in the US through the largest consular network any one country has in the territory of another state (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2012). The second issue is the intense Mexico–US trade exchanges amounting to over USD 600 billion per year, roughly half the volume of the Mexican economy (Villareal, 2014). Lastly, the third issue relates to cooperation in arms trade and drug trafficking (McCaffrey, 2009). The close bond with the US, promoted by the pragmatic orientation of foreign policy, was criticised by other countries in Latin America, such as Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, and Venezuela, which viewed Mexico’s new attention to North America as a betrayal of its Latin American roots (Gómez, 2015). In this way,

---

7 For instance, Ana Covarrubias mentions that Mexico did not need to stress its own autonomy anymore, since the main goal of Mexican diplomacy was no longer to achieve a given degree of autonomy but to safeguard the country’s national interests in economic, security, and migration issues with the US.

8 According to McCaffrey (2009), over 90% of the drugs in Mexico eventually cross the US border to meet America’s demand for illegal drugs. Similarly, it is estimated that, on average, over 2000 assault weapons cross the border into Mexico on a daily basis.
Mexico’s attempts to achieve a leadership position in the Latin American region were rejected, affecting the potential enactment of Mexico’s middle-power NRCs. The contemporary era, where both foreign policy orientations cohabitated, coincides with substantial political and economic developments, such as a nascent political pluralism, a renovated role of the national congress as an independent counterweight to the executive branch, and the abandonment of a state-controlled economy for an export-oriented free-market system. It also corresponds with external developments, such as the conclusion of the Cold War and the new international security paradigm that resulted from the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Consequently, this context offers a rich setting to analyse domestic and external sources of foreign policy. Furthermore, these two foreign policy orientations led to the enactment of different interpretations of NRCs. In this way, domestic role contestation between the two foreign policy orientations took place through foreign policy narratives and strategic cultures present within government structures.

1.2 The middle power debate in research on Mexican foreign policy

Unlike emergent powers which tend to have a revisionist approach to international politics, middle powers tend to protect the international status quo (Thies and Sari, 2018). Mexico’s attempts of engaging Western powers to defend the international status quo during the timeframe of this thesis locates Mexico within the definition of middle powers.

Middle powers are defined in many ways in literature. There is an academic consensus that there are at least three different conceptualisations of middle powers. According to Carr (2014), these are the positionist, behaviouralist, and identity approaches. As it is further explained in section 2.2 of this research, role theory integrates these three positions since NRCs can be regarded as ‘socially recognised actors with hierarchised positions based on particular identity repertoires of behaviour’ (Thies and Sari, 2018). In this way, role theory can examine how materialist power and structural position motivates state to pursue a distinctive behaviour in foreign policy by analysing domestic and external elements.
In the case of Mexico, theoretical frameworks are not predominant in the analysis of the country’s foreign policy (Sirigu, 2015). Current research is mostly based on trade relations and empirical and historical accounts.

Most scholars consider the geographic proximity to the US as the foremost factor influencing foreign policymaking (Caldwell (2002), De Los Ríos (2012), Garza (2014), Ojeda (1976), Riguzzi (2012). Nonetheless, there is a disagreement as to how, and to what degree, the northern neighbour’s presence defines Mexican foreign policy. Some positions, like the one held by Ojeda (1976), identify Mexico’s foreign policy as explicitly eluding a sustained engagement with international organisations to avoid being perceived as a country following Washington’s instructions or, on the contrary, to prevent unnecessary confrontations with the US. Other arguments have focused on the perceived opportunity to foster economic growth by exporting manufactured goods to the US, the world's largest consumer market (Vega, 2014).

The conventional view is that the geographic vicinity with the US serves as an independent variable in the design of Mexican foreign policy, considerably constraining Mexican diplomacy’s room to manoeuvre. In the context of this research, both traditions are influenced by the geographic proximity of the US. The traditional orientation reacts defensively against American presence, while the pragmatic orientation supports interdependence with the northern neighbour. Geographic proximity to the US, however, does not predict which orientation will prevail in foreign policy enactments or the variation of them across time.

In counterfactual terms, one interesting question to ask is whether Mexico's foreign policy would follow a diplomatic posture comparable to that of a middle power if the US were not its neighbour. Sotomayor (2006), for example, contests the validity of the geographic vicinity as a constraint to Mexico’s autonomy. Sotomayor looks at Canada – another neighbour and an explicit ally of the US – as an example of how, regardless of this geopolitical closeness to the US, Mexico could still play an active role in world affairs and still be regarded as a middle power.

Covarrubias and Schiavon (2018) find that Mexico’s willingness for an internationally recognised status despite its limited capabilities corresponds to the foreign policies displayed by entrepreneur states. Covarrubias and Schiavon propose
that Mexico’s puzzling foreign policy should be analysed through the theoretical lens of entrepreneurial states. These authors state that Mexico manages its limited foreign policy resources in an entrepreneurial manner due to its willingness to increase its influence in world affairs by building coalitions with like-minded states to pursue a specific agenda. An entrepreneur state lens is an interesting alternative to studying Mexico’s foreign policy from a middle-power perspective, mostly because it reduces emphasis on international hierarchy and analyses foreign policies with a strategic outlook. Research undertaken from a middle-power viewpoint is often case specific or tactical, which might influence research outcomes (Cooper, 2018). However, despite these analytical advantages, the concept of entrepreneur states remains underdeveloped. Cooper (2018) acknowledges that entrepreneurial states need further definitional refinement to gain traction. The middle-power category has more defined parameters and is easily distinguishable from other categories. Section 2.2 of this thesis further covers this issue.

Following this thread, academic research on Mexico’s limited capacity to project a foreign policy that corresponds to its resources and material power has been one of the most important research lines since the 1980s. González’s ‘Uncertainties of a regional middle power; the new dimensions of Mexican foreign policy’ (1983) is a seminal work in the area. González argues that for Mexico to follow middle-power behaviour, the country should possess explicit objectives, a clear self-conception of its place in the world, and political resolve to amplify its international presence. Other articles around that time resonated with González’s arguments. Bagley (1982) and Grabendforff (1984) interpret Mexico’s influence in Central American policy as the actions of a middle power

Pellicer’s ‘Mexico – a Reluctant Middle Power?’ (2006) and ‘Mexico as a middle power in multilateral politics, 2006-2012’ (2013), touch upon the distaste of Mexican diplomacy for a protagonist role and participation in multilateral fora due to the country’s ambiguous regional affiliation, belonging both in the North American and Latin American regions. In terms of Mexico’s socialisation processes, Pellicer adds that despite the intense economic relationship with the US, this country does not
consider Mexico to be a preferential ally (2006). Pellicer claims that ‘for the US, Mexico is a trade partner and an occasionally uncomfortable neighbour’.9

Gómez’s ‘To be or not to be: Has Mexico got what it takes to be an emerging power?’ (2015) is a significant work on Mexico’s performance on the world stage. Gómez argues that Mexico is not necessarily conditioned by its material resources or its vicinity to the US and focuses instead on the inability of its leaders to pursue explicit objectives in the foreign policy agenda.10 This unwillingness from its leadership distinguishes Mexico from other middle powers. Gómez argues that this situation has worsened since the 1990s when Mexican elites decided to practically monopolise foreign policy around the bilateral relationship with the US, neglecting all other bilateral or multilateral concerns, an opinion shared by Covarrubias (2005) and Meyer (2009).11 This monopolisation of foreign policy represented a significant shift in the country, which went from being an anti-American, inward-oriented, nationalist state to becoming a pragmatic country embracing free trade.12 Gómez’s claim that Mexican elites have historically been more concerned with the US than Mexico’s place in the world is coupled with the ‘silent integration’ process and an increasingly asymmetric interdependence with the US. Nevertheless, the US often overlooks Mexico, because it often considers it a domestic concern rather than a bilateral or foreign matter (Garza, Schiavon and Velázquez, 2014), despite the fact that no other country affects daily life in the US as much as Mexico does, according to Seele, Wilson, and Putnam (2011). Furthermore, Gómez’s article also highlights that prior scholarship uses role theory language to analyse Mexico’s foreign policy without applying the theory’s rich conceptual array.

Additional relevant players for Mexico’s foreign policy are other Latin American states, where Mexico is historically considered a ‘big brother’ (El Universal, 2016). Some countries in South America, such as Chile and Colombia, have wanted Mexico

---

9 Additionally, Castañeda and Weintrub have written about both countries’ abysmal misconceptions about each other and their mutual distrust.
10 Tawil (2014) mentions how Mexican diplomats complain about the lack of a state vision in foreign policy with clear positions on relevant international issues.
11 These scholars have called this process the bilateralisation of foreign policy.
12 Mexico’s liberalisation process in the past three decades has led the country to sign free trade agreements with 54 states, more than most countries in the world. Moreover, between 1975 and 2012, Mexico’s foreign trade increased from 28% to 67% as a proportion of its GDP.
to balance Brazil’s influence in the subcontinent (Thies and Wehner, 2014). For its part, Brazil has actively tried to isolate Mexico from regional integration mechanisms, such as the community of South American nations or MERCOSUR. Brazilian scholars and diplomats have characterised Mexico as ‘belonging to the North’, not just in terms of its geographic location but also in terms of its foreign relations, affecting Mexico’s regional leadership and middle power credentials (Gómez, 2015).

Meanwhile, Mexican officials regard the country’s geographic position and its affiliation in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC), and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as privileged. Consequently, attempts have been made to portray Mexico as a bridge country between industrialised and developing countries and to balance its relationship with the US by taking advantage of its new geopolitical credentials (Gómez, 2015; Pellicer, 2013). However, Mexico’s apparent embrace of the global status-quo and macroeconomic neoliberal orthodoxy has led some Latin American governments to reject this endeavour.

Mexican politics is often presented as paradoxical, perplexing, and contradictory (see Edmonds and Shirk, 2009; Deutsch, 1963; Erfani, 1995; Ai Camp et al., 2012). Its foreign policy is no exemption to this depiction (see Starr, 2004; Pellicer, 2006; 2013; González, 1983; Gómez, 2015; Covarrubias, 2008; Saltamacchia, 2014). Mexico is not only an intriguing and perplexing case of foreign policy; it is also particularly suited for analysing the interplay between agency and structure. Renata Keller’s ‘A foreign policy for domestic consumption: Mexico’s lukewarm defence of Castro, 1959-1969’ (2012) and David Mena’s ‘Resistance from within: Why Mexico’s attempt to advance an active foreign policy failed’ (2005) pinpoint the enormous relevance of domestic politics in the elaboration of Mexican foreign policy. The use of role theory, especially regarding domestic contestation of roles, goes beyond the descriptive and overly structural explanations that dominate analysis in the subject. For example, Wehner and Thies’s article ‘Role Theory, Narratives, and Interpretation: The Domestic Contestation of Roles’ (2014) discusses Mexico’s role conflicts in its accession to APEC and its performance once accepted into the forum. The paper shows how role theory can unpack the struggles taking place
within the Mexican government so that foreign policy can be enacted and actors that play a part in this contestation can be identified.

In sum, role theory makes sense of the policymaker’s interpretations of Mexico’s middle power position in the world. Role theory also explains the interplay between several competing external agents in determining a national role for the country and the resulting reorientation in its foreign policy. This explanatory advantage is vital because it helps determine how several foreign actors competed to influence a given state’s foreign policy outcomes. The empirical chapters of this thesis show evidence of this interplay.

1.3 Contributions, structure, and organisation of the thesis
Overall, this thesis contributes to scholarship from different perspectives. The contribution of this thesis to foreign policy analysis (FPA) is an understanding of the relationships between ideational and material factors in foreign policy and a dissection of the interactions between a country’s agency and its structural position. This research offers a fresh perspective to the agent-structure debate by linking purposive actions with external limitations. For instance, Mexico’s self-identification as, and explicit aspirations to be, a middle power interact with the country’s position in the international structure as a neighbour of the US and member of the Latin American community. Another scholarly contribution of this research is to Mexican foreign policy by illustrating the decision-making processes in adopting middle-power traits in foreign policy. Role theory is able to bridge a gap left by conventional theories, which are mostly focused on either structural conditions or domestic concerns. Consequently, this thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of the scholarly research on Mexican foreign policy. This research clarifies how domestic contestations and socialisation with external agents are interconnected and examines how foreign policy orientations have had different interpretations of NRCs; it also examines the ways these processes have affected Mexico’s enactment of middle-power roles in foreign policy.

However, the central contribution of this research was to role theory. The findings of this thesis showcased how role contestation between both foreign policy orientations,
along with deviating external expectations led to role conflict which in turn led to role change. Chapter two engages with the work of other scholars on these concepts and elaborates on the original perspective of this research on how the interplay between these concepts affected Mexican foreign policy.

This introductory section highlights the research question, literature review, and motivations for this thesis. Chapters 2 to 4 serve to give theoretical, methodological, and historical context. Chapter 2 explains how role theory is an adequate lens for explaining the research question, and Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in the research. Chapter 4 offers a historical background to provide an understanding of the underlying analytical processes that take place in the case studies. Later, in Chapters 5 to 7, the content of three case studies develops an analytical adaptation of role theoretical frameworks to contemporary Mexican foreign policy. These case studies evaluate the hypothesis and were selected to identify several instances where Mexico had the opportunity to enact middle-power behaviour with mixed results. In other words, the case studies serve as ‘probes’ to search for instances where middle-power NRCs could be found in Mexican foreign policy related to multilateral organisations or niche issues.

The case studies were selected to explore how Mexico’s middle-power NRCs were enacted and why the Mexican government succeeded or failed in its implementation. The cases show the contestation between two foreign policy orientations in Mexico from 1988 to 2018 and the roles associated with these orientations. The examination of these cases found that role conflict in domestic role contestation and deviating role expectations prevented the adoption of middle-power NRCs, confirming the research hypothesis. However, the thesis also yielded other findings. For instance, this research illustrates how role conflict emerged, and it articulates how Mexican foreign policy is subject to various dynamics – such as democratisation – that promote domestic contestations of roles between two role orientations and divergent expectations from different international players.
A more detailed discussion of the selection of these cases is given in the following chapters.
2. Chapter Two: Theoretical framework

This chapter serves as a theoretical background for the main body of the thesis. This segment introduces the operational concepts of role theory, establishes why role theory is a useful lens for engaging with Mexico’s foreign policy and the research question of this thesis, and covers my criticisms of and contributions to role theory.

Role theory is a comprehensive conceptual framework for studying foreign policy; it builds on concepts derived from sociology and social psychology that can be used to develop explanatory models in foreign policy analysis. For role theory, foreign policy behaviour emanates from socially defined categories (e.g., ally, rogue country, or anti-American). This view is grounded on the observation that states behave in context-specific scenarios and consider social positions, external expectations, and policymakers' perceptions of the country’s place in international politics. While other theoretical conceptions look at material capabilities or political identities as explanations of foreign policy, role theory looks at state behaviour, since behaviour displays more typologies than would otherwise be explained by exclusively structural outlooks (Cantir and Kaarbo, 2016). Role theory successfully reconciles Mexico’s material capabilities with its foreign policy aspirations in this project.

The study of role theory in foreign policy analysis first emanated from the seminal contributions of Holsti, who coined the concept of NRCs in 1970. Holsti’s article, ‘National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy’, considers roles to be a set of categories that policymakers contemplate when implementing foreign policy. A ‘role’ represents a set of normative duties, external expectations, and self-conceptions. In his work, Holsti proposes the study of roles as an operational variable in world politics, since it has sufficient explanatory power to make sense of foreign policy performances effectively. For instance, NRCs and role prescriptions mould the roles that guide the interactions of the state with other players. Decision-makers can modify their behaviour to meet or defy expectations or act exclusively on their self-defined role conceptions (Thies, 2013). In this regard, it is necessary to mention Thies and Wehner’s article, ‘Role Theory, Narratives, and Interpretation: The

---

13 Although identity and roles are both ideational conceptualisations and are closely related, the difference between them resides in roles conveying behaviour based on identity and a vision for what actions the role beholder wishes to portray.
Domestic Contestation of Roles’. This article makes essential contributions to understanding Chile and Mexico's role enactment during their accession to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). The article makes sense of how a national role greatly influences foreign policy behaviour and how these roles can change depending on other countries' external expectations and the interplay of domestic voices. Ideational factors, such as the state’s founding history, past experiences, and national values have also been considered to shape NRCs, an issue that is analysed further in Chapter 4.

In the years that have elapsed since Holsti’s initial contributions, discussions have taken place on role theory’s value to FPA. For instance, Walker (1987) argues that role theory has explanatory value for the field, as it provides new conceptualisations for categorising identities that individuals and groups generate and the processes and structures from which they originate. For Aggestam (2006), role theory stresses how foreign policy can be viewed as a cognitive construct, since foreign policy evolves in correspondence with concepts of self in social reality. In other words, foreign policy is formulated, taking into account the policymakers’ viewpoints of their state’s position in the international system.

The value of role theory is that it can make sense of foreign policy processes by analysing these senses of self and place among other actors in international interactions. Role theory considers a role in foreign policy to involve judgment and skill while conveying a notion of a structure within which roles operate. For example, Thies and Wehner (2014) have demonstrated the added value of using roles in foreign policy analysis vis-à-vis alternative explanations due to the usefulness of roles for the definition and operation of foreign policy narratives.

In summary, role theory seeks to analyse the foreign policies of states from both cognitive and social standpoints. In doing so, it provides an attractive framework for understanding decision-makers’ conceptions of their state in international politics based on external and domestic circumstances. Moreover, Walker considers NRCs to be not only an exclusive element of domestic politics but also a dynamic structure that goes beyond the mere self-reference account from Holsti to contemplate external political discourses in international relations (Wish, 1980; Chafetz et al., 1996). In
Beneš and Harnisch's outlook (2015), these political discourses are constituted by the interpretation and reinterpretation of other actors' expectations regarding the objectives and behaviour of the state that is acting as the role-beholder. Role expectations also influence self-preference by shaping the state’s interests with external cues that may delimit policy preferences. This process is central to this thesis, especially regarding US expectations of Mexico’s foreign policy and the ability of the US to delimit the country’s policy preferences.

States, being elements within a social structure such as the international community, practice norms, and rules. According to Harnisch (2011, 13), these sets of norms and regulations are a means for socialising with other states and are instructive endeavours, as members of the international society ‘learn to become restrained through continuous role-taking’. One example that Harnisch mentions, for instance, is countries' behaviour within the complex social structure of the European Union (EU), as engaging in this supranational framework requires members to constantly practice role-taking. Additionally, Thies (2011) offers the example of Israel as a particularly interesting state that has had a slow process of learning what roles to display throughout its history due to its distinctively complicated socialisation processes.

Socialisation is related to a central tenet of role theory, which is the interaction between agent and structure. There are two accounts to make sense of this relation. The first is the structural-functionalist approach, which considers roles as sets of rights and duties attached to particular social positions (McCourt, 2011). Holsti believes that observed actions can be explained by direct reference to these attributes. From this viewpoint, roles can explain state behaviour and be used in FPA. Nonetheless, the early brand of role theory that immediately followed Holsti’s contributions remained closely aligned with the idea of the state as a unitary actor, echoing the prevailing structural theories of international relations at the time. By this account, states can be seen as agents being socialised into roles but constrained by their structural positions. For example, the limitations posed by the structure of Mexico’s location can explain Mexico’s reluctant regional leadership, a case analysed in Chapter 6.
Alternatively, symbolic interactionism is a variant of role theory that concentrates on the state’s agency to reinvent and transform its structures (Breuning, 2017). For instance, interactionists consider sovereignty to be the product of the definition of agency itself, not the ability to enable agency and enact roles. Interactionists study the way expectations within roles emerge from exchanges with other actors and how states adopt and implement roles (McCourt, 2014). A similar position is shared by Harnisch (2011) and Chafetz et al. (1996), who observe that two cognitive elements constitute conceptions of roles: the ego, which encompasses domestic politics, and the alter, which groups expectations from other players. Since the ego – the state itself – is built upon several cognitive dimensions that may possess different interpretations, conflicts of interpretation may arise. This brand of role theory has also gained validation from studies centred on understanding the interplay of competing voices in determining a national role (see Thies, 2014; Cantir and Kaarbo, 2016). This research uses symbolic interactionism because it is better suited to understanding why Mexico displays an atypical foreign policy for a middle power, since it studies how roles are created due to different domestic and external elements and how states implement these roles into foreign policy.

Symbolic interactionism argues for a view of role theory that encompasses role conceptions, expectations, and demands. According to Aggestam (2006), with symbolic interactionism, role theory is particularly adept at interpreting and examining the construction of identities with the notion of learning through socialisation and the internal reassessment of the socialisation process. In Wehner’s understanding (2015), roles are attached to the actor’s social position in addition to their interactions with and acceptance of other elements. This dual dynamic makes symbolic interactionism even more significant as an analytical tool, as meanings are configured through an interactive process that can be readily identified. However, one of the criticisms made of the symbolic interactionism perspective is that it ignores the fact that the actor arrives at a given interaction with prior roles and identities, making it challenging to incorporate interests typical to the actor’s context. Aggestam (2006) provides a counter-argument to this position by asserting that there is never a first interaction among actors themselves, and role theory can be a
different perspective that highlights how actors interpret information and reassess their roles and behaviour. This thesis adopts Aggestam’s position, as it shows how Mexico reinterpreted its position after changes in international politics and its democratisation process.

There are also schools of thought in the conception of role theory that differ on the sources and factors that shape roles. Beneš and Harnisch (2015), for instance, consider that American theorists tend to emphasise material or cognitive traits as causes for the selection of specific roles to be enacted in foreign policy, while European-based scholars employ a more constructivist understanding, exploring social interactions as role-enactment sources. Nonetheless, there seems to be a consensus among role theorists on the futility of theorising roles without a reference to other sets of roles and recognising the other in the international community. This thesis offers an examination of the context of role contestation and role expectations and provides a novel way to understand the relation between foreign policy orientations and the sources of roles, which role theory has yet to examine.

Furthermore, there is also a widespread agreement that roles have several dimensions and conceptualisations. The argument of this thesis uses the following conceptualisations:

a) **Roles.** Roles are appropriate behaviours that emerge in interaction with other actors in a social environment (McCourt, 2012). Roles give a scope of possible action. In FPA, roles are used to analyse, understand, and explain the foreign policy decisions of several states.

b) **NRCs.** National role conceptions are the internalised expectations of the beholder towards itself (Holsti, 1970). They define responsibilities and obligations in foreign policy. They have the potential to reveal the actor’s motives or the meaning of an action. Holsti describe NRCs as,

> The policymakers’ own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules and actions, suitable to their state, and of the functions, if
any, their state should perform continually in the international system or subordinate regional systems. (Holsti, 1970, 245)

The greater the extent to which policies are socialised and those role conceptions are internalised, the more stable a role will be (Aggestam, 2006; Thies, 2013). Examples of these roles include *bridge-builder, seeker of regional leader, and good international citizen*. NRCs are used in this thesis to observe how both foreign policy orientations had different interpretations of NRCs and how these interpretations became internalised in Mexico’s institutions.

c) **Role expectations, role demands, role location processes, socialisation, and cues.** Role expectations are the prospects that other actors prescribe to the role of the beholder for enactment. Expectations set limits on the range of roles that policymakers can enact (Thies, 2014). These expectations are expressed through the use of role prescriptions.

Role demands limit the number of roles the states, as role-beholders, can select. Other states provide cues to guide role enactment (Breuning, 2017).

Role location occurs when the state situates itself within the international structure. The appropriate role for this location is determined after a bargaining process between other players in international politics and the state itself. For Thies (2012, 2013), this bargaining process takes place with cues and demands during socialisation. Socialisation refers to interactions between the role-beholder and other actors in international politics. Thies (2001) argues that socialisation largely depends on the capabilities of countries. The greater their capabilities, the more roles they can enact. Great powers often have socialisation duties in their sphere of influence. On the other hand, small powers can enact fewer roles and are subject to socialisation by larger powers (Gigleux, 2016). By the same logic, middle powers can be expected to hold dual positions as states being socialised by larger powers while themselves socialising smaller powers. Socialisation also involves cues. The provision of social cues is how other players in the international system, such as other states and NGOs, attempt to elicit behaviour from the role-beholder within socialisation (Thies, 2011). The case
studies in this thesis use these concepts to explore how Mexico has managed expectations of behaviour from other states within the international structure.

d) Role contestation. Role contestation occurs when multiple interpretations of NRCs of the state compete for enactment in foreign policy matters. There are several drivers of role contestation, such as political parties (Brummer and Thies, 2014; Cantir and Kaarbo, 2012) and bureaucracies (Jones, 2017), which hold different role orientations. The effect of the advocacy of these drivers relies on bargaining advantages within the particular context of each state. Moreover, Brummer and Thies (2014) draw attention to how domestic contestation of roles determines – or changes – a national role and the resulting reconfiguration of foreign policy. Cantir and Kaarbo (2012), additionally, illustrate the sources of NRCs by focusing on the elite-masses link, which has been mostly absent in FPA role theory research. It is precisely on this topic of domestic contestation that one of the most distinguished advantages of role theory takes place. Role theory enables the analysis of domestic sources of NRCs and domestic competition between the elites, the opposition, the cabinet, multiparty coalitions, and bureaucracies. By performing this comprehensive analysis, a role theory focus offers a more enhanced understanding than traditional theoretical propositions.

Contestations can be horizontal – between the foreign policy decision-making elite, such as the executive and legislative branches, bureaucracies, or leader advisory groups – or vertical, between the elites and the public in general (Cantir and Kaarbo, 2012, 2016). These contestations influence foreign policy and may lead to incoherencies between a state aim and foreign policy outcomes. Domestic role contestation is treated in this thesis as one of the intervening variable between foreign policy aspirations and outcomes. Domestic role contestations have taken place between proponents of both foreign policy orientations through Mexico’s institutional frameworks.

e) Role performance or enactment. Role performance refers to the actual behaviour in foreign policy. It is the pattern of decisions and actions undertaken in particular situational contexts. This thesis considers a successful enactment as being rooted in
an agreement between domestic and external expectations regarding the appropriateness of a role, commonly leading to coherent foreign policy interactions. According to McCourt (2012), there are three critical dimensions of individual role enactment: the number of roles, the effort invested in a particular role, and the time spent in one role compared to other roles. To illustrate this concept, McCourt (2011) mentions how Britain chose to play a status-quo-oriented role when it decided to respond to the Argentine invasion of the Falklands in 1982. Role enactment is systematically covered in the three case studies of this thesis.

f) **Role sets.** This notion alludes to the series of roles deriving from the various patterns in which a state participates. According to Harnisch (2015), role sets determine role expectations. Actors operating in different environments tend to have rich role sets that may evolve (Aggestam, 2006). Wehner states that some roles can also be dropped from a role set. For example, during the Hugo Chávez era, Venezuela dropped its US-partner role to enact one of a revolutionary state instead (Wehner, 2015). This research shows that foreign policy orientations have often had different interpretations of the same NRCs. These interpretations responded to the different environments that Mexico engaged with, such as a hostile context of foreign interventionism or post-Cold War liberalism.

g) **Role change.** Role change conveys a transformation of objectives in foreign policy. According to Breuning (2017), these alterations rarely occur randomly. Gustavsson (1999) states that three factors must be present for change to take place in foreign policy: i) a transformation in fundamental structural conditions, such as an alteration in the domestic or international system; ii) strategic political leadership that takes advantage of fundamental structural conditions by adapting to them; and iii) national or international crises that force states to reconfigure their policies. As shown in the case studies, this thesis presents an account of how these factors occurred in Mexico and how they conveyed role change, especially in Chapter 7. After analysing data from Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia, Chafetz et al. (1996) concluded that national role conceptions were the source of foreign policy change, while Harnisch (2011) and
Thies (2013) argue against taking the process of socialisation of the state into account with other elements as a cause for change in foreign policy.

h) **Role conflict.** Role conflict occurs when a state is expected to simultaneously display multiple roles – or multiple perceptions of roles – that carry contradictory expectations. This simultaneous display could either entail conflicts within a role (intra-role conflicts) or conflicts among roles (inter-role conflicts) (Thies, 2010). Intra-role conflicts are caused when behaviours and expectations associated with a role are opposed. Inter-role conflicts occur when leaders are guided by more than one role conception at the same time, which carries contradictory expectations (Thies, 2010). The conflict of interpretations between the two foreign policy orientations in this thesis is an example of intra-role conflict taking place in domestic role contestation. In this regard, Hanschel and Moller (2015) researched Indian policymakers’ contradictory roles concerning international humanitarian norms. These conflicting roles led to a reinterpretation of NRCs to meet divergent expectations and accommodate conflicting role contestations and deviating external expectations. The argument of this thesis is that role conflict, as a result of domestic contestations and external expectations, modified Mexico’s foreign policy from its stated aspirations.

i) **Role entrepreneur.** Role entrepreneurs are individuals or bureaucracies who are in the right place at the right time to enforce their beliefs as to the appropriate NRC for the state in the domestic contestation process (Breuning 2013; Thies 2011; Jones, 2017). According to Breuning (2013), successful role entrepreneurs promote a particular NRC, convincing other domestic players to enact this specific NRC in foreign policy platforms. Individuals who aim to be role entrepreneurs so they can advocate for specific role orientations are present in the content of this research.

j) **Role merging.** Role merging is a method for solving role conflict. Barnett (1993) gives the example of how Egypt’s Sadat solved divergent expectations of the country’s *pan-Arabism* and *sovereign state* roles by using only the compatible expectations between them and eventually merging these two roles into a new one. Role merging occurred in one case in this thesis when the Mexican
government merged elements from both foreign policy orientations as a way to solve role conflict.

**k) Role learning.** Role learning results from variations that the state’s foreign policy undergoes based on its role-taking experiences (Beneš and Harnisch, 2015). Role learning often occurs through socialisation experiences. As seen in Chapter 4 and the case studies of this research, Mexico has assimilated many roles based on meaningful interactions with the US, Latin America, and Western democracies.

As seen with these categorisations, roles are relational entities. According to Thies (2010), the position of an element in a group is dependent upon the group’s structure and purpose, which provides a framework for action. Thus, roles could be considered sources of interest, since they delimit the options for state behaviour within a group, as rules and expected behaviour are created through interactions and negotiations among members of a particular social group.

Within symbolic interactionism, there has also been a distinction between different kinds of *others*. Harnisch (2011) argues that interactions with significant others play a relevant part in deciding the behaviour of the state, since, unlike generalised others, a significant other is a specific actor who has two attributes: first, it is the primary socialising agent and is thus a reference point for a given state; second, it holds influence over another actor by using their material or immaterial resources (Harnisch, 2011). The *significant other* can be easily identified because they are frequently represented in the domestic political discourse. Policymakers consistently compare – in positive or negative ways – their state with the significant other. In Mexico's case, the seemingly ubiquitous presence of the US in Mexican politics makes this country the undeniable *significant other*, as it meets the two attributes mentioned by Harnisch. The *significant other* can be identified every time the US is invoked within Mexican political discourse. Alternatively, the *special relation* between Washington and Westminster can also be considered an example of an interaction typical of *significant others*.

Furthermore, Wendt considers roles to be idealised self-conceptions. According to Beasley and Kaarbo (2017), roles are created through compliance with international
institutions' norms and can emanate from other sources besides the international community. In this view, several actors within the same state can possess different conceptions about their position in foreign policy matters, and numerous approaches to foreign policy can thus emerge (Grossman, 2005). This thesis takes this into account by acknowledging the existence of two foreign policy orientations that competed for enactment in foreign policy in the case studies of this work.

Another part of the academic debate on the nature of roles concerns the issue of identity. Breuning (2011) asserts that roles and identity, though closely intertwined, are hardly ever clearly defined in their relationship with each other. Aggestam’s view is the opposite: identity in itself is implemented by taking a role, which reinforces the implementation of one or more identities (2006). Roles, being a product of socialisation processes, are subject to variations and are usually under constant change (Harnish, 2011; Thies, 2013). Other authors, such as Thies, Breuning, McCourt, Thies, and Wehner, treat roles as a means to link identity and action. McCourt (2011) asserts, for example, that Thatcher’s government considered its sense of self in the decision to send a task force to recapture the Falkland Islands in 1982. Thies and Wehner (2014) also observe that Chile struggled to configure its roles and identity to join APEC in the 1990s. This thesis uses this last version of role operationalisation, in which roles link identity and action, as Mexico’s administrations often attempted to pursue policy by considering the country’s sense of self regarding its history, domestic audiences, and external actors.

2.1 Limitations and strengths of role theory

Despite its advantages, such as the rich language of descriptive concepts and the potential to bridge different levels of analysis, scholars have criticised role theory on several issues. One of the most central criticisms given to role theory is centred on its assumptions. For instance, the symbolic interactionist variant of role theory assumes that all aspects of social life are centred on roles, when not all political disputes necessarily entail role contestation (McCourt, 2014). McCourt (2020) touches upon this issue by criticising how role theory falls into reductionism by limiting the plurality of actors involved in the complexity of domestic political debates. This
research considers this critique to be valid and attempts to portray the diversity of relevant stakeholders in Mexico's foreign policy.

Furthermore, authors such as Brummer and Thies (2014) point out the marginal position of role theory in IR and FPA literature. It has been theorised that this position is the result of a lack of engagement with traditional and critical international relation theories and of the fact that role theory is seldom taught in IR academic programs, limiting its diffusion to a new generation of scholars (Thies and Wehner, 2014). Thies (2013) argues that IR scholars see role theory as an indirect link between beliefs and behaviour and prefer not to use it in their analyses. Thies also points out that the small number of empirical studies on role theory may be prompting scholars to rely on other theories. By using case studies, this research addresses this problem and links beliefs and foreign policy behaviour.

Thies and Wehner (2014) have made a series of observations on the shortcomings of role theory. They advise that the study of NRCs should move beyond structural explanations for foreign policy behaviour, particularly in material terms. They also observe that role theory does not provide a connection between domestic and external factors but focuses on contestation or socialisation separately. This thesis examines the interplay between these factors and thus helps to bridge this gap.

However, the most significant criticism of role theory is the absence of a cohesive research methodology. There is no established codebook to help identify NRCs in policy discourses, which has drawn criticism from scholars who pinpoint that identifying roles may be arbitrary. To face this limitation, this thesis identifies NRCs when they are directly invoked in official documents and speeches from policymakers.

Despite its perceived limitations, two topics highlight the added value of role theory. The first is that role theory possesses descriptive and explanatory resources for studying foreign policy. The richness of concepts it offers scholars for validity and validation can easily attest to that. In this view, according to Holsti (1970), the international system can be conceived of as a distribution of several NRCs and not only of patterns of interactions. In this way, the application of new analytical concepts contributes to the study of international relations.
The second prominent benefit is the potential to use role theory as a bridge between FPA and IR because it has a powerful conceptual toolkit, the ability to operate at several levels of analysis, and the capability to converge the agent–structure divide by taking into account domestic mechanisms of policy-making and external expectations. These abilities make role theory exceptionally appropriate for grasping complex socio-political processes (Barnett, 1993; Breuning, 2011; Harnish, 2011). In addition, role theory offers the flexibility to complement middle-range theories and achieve a more comprehensive analytical output (Thies, 2010).

Although role theory has been criticised for being similar to constructivism, for Thies and Wehner, role theory differs from it in the critical notion of agency (2014). They argue that, while role theory falls under constructivism's theoretical umbrella, it provides distinct advantages over its structural and relational variants. For instance, they explain that roles imply motivational dispositions that link identity and actions. Similarly, Beasley, Kaarbo, and Oppermann (2021) claim that, in contrast to constructivism, role theory emphasises agency, since roles originate from agent-based sources, such as material and ideological notions that shape a state’s NRCs. At this point, the value of role theory becomes evident, as it associates identity with interests and motivations for action and relates international elements to domestic dynamics (Cantir and Kaarbo, 2016).

Role theory scholars have described other advantages, including its remarkable aptitude for breaking critical assumptions about domestic politics. Authors such as Cantir and Kaarbo (2016) and Thies (2014) have contributed to the study of how NRCs are formulated and often contested by different actors (elites, cabinets, leaders, and general opinion) within national politics. This analysis disrupts the state's overly-static conceptualisation and the agent–structure divide present in other theoretical umbrellas by ‘unboxing’ the state and enabling researchers to adequately observe the different sets of interactions in the formulation of foreign policy that other theories may not reveal. Another benefit of role theory is the ability to link with middle-range theories to offer more analytical rigour. For instance, this thesis uses soft balancing
and lock-in theories to complement analysis within the contextual situations of the case studies.

Finally, Holsti (1970) and Thies (2014) have argued that role theory is especially appropriate for studying the relevant interactions of different elements in the formulation of foreign policy on subordinates’ systems, such as Latin America. For these authors, role theory can dissect the interactions between their sovereign agency and the structural dependence on a significant other, such as the US. As such, the strengths and benefits that role theory offers to the analysis of Mexican foreign policy is an advantage that scholarship should take into account.

### 2.2 Approaching middle powers through role theory

This thesis tackles the research question by showing the ways particular roles consistent with the middle-power category are enacted in foreign policy. Middle powers contrast with other conceptualisations such as emergent powers because middle powers tend to protect the status quo by maintaining international order (Thies and Sari, 2018). By this definition, Mexico’s attempts at engaging Western powers during the timeframe of this thesis locate Mexico firmly within the conceptual umbrella of middle powers.

Recent research on the foreign policy of middle powers using role theory can explain how domestic and external constraints, such as role contestation and external expectations, influence foreign policy enactments. However, there is no consensus in academic scholarship on what defines a middle power. Previous analyses of middle-power behaviour often include the concept of roles. For instance, Chapnick (1999), Holbraad, (1971), and Lyon and Tomlin (1979) relate the middle power status to roles such as peacekeeping, mediating, and communicating. Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal (1993), alternatively, assert that middle powers serve catalyst, facilitator, and manager roles. Thies and Sari (2018) and Karim (2018) approach middle powers through a role-based theoretical focus. These scholars argue that middle power countries are distinctive from other country categories because of their aspirations and their ability to have agency, leadership, and a willingness to generate influence.
Despite material constraints. For Thies and Sari (2018), middle power is a status role (or a salient role) supported by three auxiliary roles: good international citizen, supporter of multilateralism, and seeker of regional leadership. On the other hand, Karim finds that roles such as coalition-builder, mediator, and bridge-builder are heavily linked with the foreign policies of middle powers. For all these authors, the successful enactment of these NRCs provides evidence of a middle-power foreign policy. This thesis will go further by analysing how a country that could be considered a middle power can have conflicting external expectations and domestic contestations that can affect how the middle-power NRCs are adopted in foreign policy, often producing outcomes that do not correspond to the country’s role conceptions.

Before the recent appearance of role theory in the literature of middle powers, traditional contributions largely agreed that there were three different ways to identify middle powers. According to Carr (2014), these three approaches are position, behaviour, and identity.14

The positionist approach defines middle powers as states that occupy an in-between position among smaller and greater powers in terms of capacity and influence (Jordaan, 2003), emphasising material capabilities in economic and military terms (Roberts and Sebastian, 2015). However, this hierarchical position does not explain the behavioural expectations of many countries. For instance, many small-sized powers seem willing to take a more significant role than their relative power suggests, and many middle-sized powers – in terms of their material capabilities – do not act as if they were playing a significant role in global politics, which is relevant to this research. Karim (2018, 343) states that ‘Many countries that, materially, can be defined as middle powers do not strictly follow the foreign policy behaviours theorised by mainstream middle-power literature’.15

14 Chapnick (1999) portrays the position category as hierarchical and the identity category as functional, but his conceptualisations share the same definitions as those made by Carr.
15 Thies and Sari (2018) theorise that the choice between two orientations (or role sets) of foreign policy is associated with the perception of an external threat and the availability of resources.
Emmers and Teo (2015) and Carr (2014) have proposed that middle powers be engaged from a behavioural standpoint to respond to the positionist approach. They claim that what best defines a middle power is the pursuit of multilateral diplomacy and embracing a *good international citizenship* role in their foreign policy. For these authors, middle powers are keen to participate actively in peacekeeping operations or niche areas like nuclear disarmament or climate change even when these issues do not directly concern their state (Emmers and Teo 2015). Nevertheless, as Karim (2018) states, this behavioural standpoint is overly biased towards the experiences of traditional Western powers, such as Australia, Canada, and Nordic countries. It is also reductionist, as it assumes that similar motivations drive the behaviour of all middle power states.

On the other hand, the identity approach posits that middle powers can be understood as political constructions (Chapnick, 2013; Carr, 2014). According to Carr, a state can be labelled a middle power whenever its leaders assert themselves as such. However, one of the problems with this position is that it suggests obtaining middle power status does not require the approval of an audience of states. In this way, any country's self-identification as a middle power would be sufficient to regard it as belonging to this category of states, even if other international actors do not view it as such. In international politics, self-perception is not enough to analyse how states act, because foreign policies are enacted while considering how other actors accept or reject this self-perception. Therefore, the systematic enactment of middle-power NRCs that are acknowledged by external actors is necessary to sustain a middle-power status.

For Thies and Sari (2018), role theory reconciles the hierarchical, behavioural, and functionalist approaches to middle powers, since roles can be construed as ‘socially recognised actors with hierarchised positions based on particular identity repertoires of behaviour’. Karim (2018) makes a case for studying middle powers through a role theory framework, because role theory can examine how both structure and material interests motivate (or demotivate) states to pursue a middle-power foreign policy by capturing domestic and external dynamics. In his analysis of Indonesia and South
Korea, Karim outlines how roles were formed from internal contestations, external expectations, and historical references. On this last point, Karim mentions that, since political elites frequently invoke history as a justification for their foreign policy roles, traditional role conceptions tend to be stable. Newer role conceptions are more easily contested and vulnerable to being diminished, particularly if these newer conceptions are incompatible with historical notions (Karim, 2018; Beneš and Harnisch, 2015). These last points mirror Mexico's case and the contestation between the traditional and newer, pragmatic foreign policy orientations.

Additionally, Karim (2018) argues that role conflict provides a convincing explanation of some emerging and middle powers’ seemingly contradictory and puzzling foreign policies. He states that such policies are more likely to appear if one or more of the following four situations are present in a national scenario:

(a) Vague and inconsistent role expectations from other international players.
(b) Lack of resources to fulfil a role.
(c) Deviating expectations from external and domestic actors.
(d) Incompatibility between the interests of the state and external expectations


As seen in the introduction, the research hypothesis of this thesis is compatible with Karim’s explanation of the contradictory foreign policies of emerging and middle powers. Additionally, scholars such as Gómez (2015) and Schiavon (2017) have mentioned the lack of resources in Mexico’s diplomatic corps, and the country also faces deviating expectations from its domestic audiences (such as elites and the public in general).

One of the advantages of role theory presented by Thies and Sari (2018) is that it allows for an understanding of the variations in middle power behaviour through a consideration of several angles from social, structural, interactional, and behavioural analysis that other theories might omit. Moreover, role theory also delivers conceptual harmony to the study of middle powers and correctly assesses how policymakers in emerging middle powers articulate their foreign policies by linking a
country’s agency with the external structure (Karim, 2018). This thesis will go beyond the approaches made by Karim, Thies, and Sari by taking into account what mechanisms are involved in the external expectations of roles and domestic contestations of roles. Examples of these mechanisms are strategic cultures and narratives permeating political leadership, bureaucratic politics, and epistemic communities as elements of domestic role contestation between the traditional and pragmatic foreign policy orientations.

In summary, the foreign policy NRCs identified as belonging to middle powers according to the literature presented by Thies, Sari (2018), and Karim (2018) are illustrated in the following table.

**Table 1: Roles associated with middle powers.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles associated with middle powers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Seeker of regional leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Coalition-builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Mediator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Good international citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Supporter of multilateralism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These NRCs presented by Thies, Sari, and Karim are defined thoroughly in the next chapter and are analysed in the case studies of this research. This research considers the enactment of these six NRCs to indicate a middle power status.

### 2.2.1 Contextual features and factors influencing Mexico’s middle-power NRCs

The NRCs analysed in this thesis have been interpreted differently by both foreign policy orientations in Mexico, which has frequently led to contestations where one interpretation prevailed over the other to be enacted as policy. The contestations of these interpretations of NRCs often took place through the contextual features of
Mexico’s foreign policy, such as vicinity with the US, political ties with Latin America, and the country’s strong presidentialist system.

Contextual features, which are present throughout this study, are elements that are relevant to the domestic and structural nature of Mexico. These features are either forged through historical experience or set by geography, or they are part of national or strategic cultures. The contestation of roles between foreign policy orientations and deviating role expectations from external actors, the intervening variables of this thesis, are filtered through these contextual features. Therefore, these features have also affected the outcome of the Mexican foreign policy processes that are analysed in this research.

Other elements, such as bureaucratic politics, the relevance of public opinion, the role of Congress, and the presence of an international crisis, were also factors that shaped domestic role contestation. The role of these contextual elements and influencing elements is discussed briefly in the following paragraphs.

Presidential leadership

Presidential leadership has been a central topic of research in foreign policy analysis. For instance, research in FPA carried out by Alexander George and Margaret Hermann shows how different leadership styles in the executive branch can shape a particular country's foreign policy outcomes (Hermann and Preston, 1994). Thus, presidential leadership refers to the personal involvement of the head of the executive branch of government in a given issue of foreign policy. Wehner and Thies (2021) propose incorporating an individual level of analysis into role theory to examine the agential capacity of leaders in selecting foreign policy roles for their countries.

In hyper-presidentialist political systems like those present in Mexico, it might be assumed that any policy the president promotes would become part of Mexico’s foreign policy. However, the empirical observations made in this thesis demonstrate that this does not necessarily occur. Instead, the outcome is affected by contestation
processes between foreign policy orientations present in other parts of the government and civil society and by expectations from other international actors.

**Vicinity with the US**

As presented in Chapter 1 of this thesis, the consensus in academia is that proximity with the US is an independent variable in the design of Mexican foreign policy, mainly constraining Mexican diplomacy’s room to manoeuvre.

Proximity with the US has permeated all aspects of political life in Mexico. The frequent direct and indirect US interventions in Mexican politics have been an existential threat to Mexico throughout most of its history. The consequences of these interventions are expanded upon in the next chapter of the thesis, but it is clear that sensitivity to foreign interference developed after these historical experiences. For example, this contextual feature explains the traditional orientation’s staunch defence of a nationalistic notion of sovereignty.

In contrast, NAFTA symbolised a new way for Mexican policymakers to perceive the proximity of the US. In times of significant economic peril, the geographic closeness of the US was heralded as a perfect motive for achieving a trade and economic association that would incentivise the Mexican economy. To some policymakers, the US continued to represent a dangerous neighbour, but for advocates of the pragmatic foreign policy orientation, the US represented an opportunity to promote domestic markets.

Similar to the presidential leadership feature, the significant presence of the US in Mexico’s foreign policy might lead to the assumption that US preferences severely constrain Mexico’s foreign policy. Nonetheless, empirical observations in Chapter 5 show that this has not been the case due to fierce resistance from the traditional orientation of foreign policy, which was supported by a significant proportion of public opinion.
Political ties with Latin America

The overwhelming presence of the US in Mexico's domestic and foreign policy has historically promoted the idea that Mexico should counterbalance this massive influence.

Latin America is the natural choice for Mexico’s endeavours to diversify its foreign relations. Mexico shares the same fundamental cultural and historical traits as most countries in Latin America. During the PRI regime, this association with Latin America was often evoked as a duty of Mexico's revolutionary governments to stand in solidarity with its sister nations against imperialist hegemonic expressions.

Although demands for stronger political ties with Latin America remain insistent, they rarely displace the essential bilateral ties that hold Mexico and the US together. Consequently, even though engaging Latin America is a permanent aspiration of the country, Mexico lacks a coherent long-term policy concerning the rest of the Latin American region.

Elements that take part in domestic role contestation

Bureaucratic politics

Bureaucratic politics has been analysed in FPA with an emphasis on the internal bargaining between the different interests present within a state. Allison’s analysis of the decision-making process during the Cuban missile crisis is an example of the prominence of the study of bureaucratic politics in FPA (1971). Vennesson, Breuer, et al. argue that bureaucracies do not necessarily share the same NRCs, which can lead to domestic role contestation and affect foreign policy outcomes (2009).

Bureaucratic Politics is often a result of the style of presidential leadership. An uninvolved head of government can foment a divided cabinet, often causing bureaucratic infighting and an inconsistency between foreign policy goals and outcomes. In Mexico's case, foreign policy is carried out by several government agencies other than the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs. Previous research on how institutional culture, narratives, and rules of the game affect Mexico’s foreign policy, such as that presented by Rozental (1999), Gámez (2001), and González (2006),
demonstrates how different bureaucratic groups have different interpretations of foreign policy goals. These rules of the game are included in this thesis to show how bureaucratic groups contribute to domestic role contestation.

**Conflicting relations between the executive and legislative branches**

Foreign policy analysis has studied how congresses and parliaments influence international politics and foreign policy in several ways. Research conducted by Raunio shows how even weak parliaments have a considerable influence on foreign policy (Raunio, 2014).

The democratisation process that Mexico went through in the timeframe of this thesis implies that the Mexican Congress had a new, invigorated role during this period. Congress was no longer subservient to the President, and a new political plurality often led to conflicts between the President and the Congress. The Mexican Congress frequently rejected executive initiatives in foreign policy matters and, on more than one occasion, denied the ability of members of the cabinet and the President to travel abroad. These conflicts may have originated from the contestations between foreign policy orientations that were present between the executive and legislative branches. Empirical observations from this thesis show that relations between these branches of government were strained during the Fox administration in foreign policy matters, because these branches held different interpretations of Mexico’s NRCs, as shown in Chapter 5. In contrast, Chapter 6 shows how Congress, as a stronghold of the traditional orientation, supported President Calderón’s proposal to achieve greater integration with Latin America. Only when the Calderón administration deviated from the initial objective did Congress show signs of resisting the executive’s policies.

**The relevance of public opinion**

Support of public opinion may affect the decisions made by a government on foreign policy. Public opinion has risen in relevance in the post-World War II international system. For instance, Foyle shows how the public processes information, formulates attitudes, and alters foreign policy, disproving the famous Almond-Lippmann consensus, which portrayed public opinion to be incoherent and unstable with a
negligible influence on foreign policy (1997). A prominent avenue of research on public opinion is centred around the constraints and accountability public participation asserts in democratic regimes. On this point, Kertzer (2018) observes how the influence of public opinion in foreign policy is different from the influence the public has on other issues of public policy. Attitudes from the public towards foreign policy are generally more structured than the specific preferences the public has regarding public policies. Public opinion also tends to cluster around foreign policy orientations like cooperative internationalism or isolationism. This thesis further analyses the role of public opinion in Mexico’s foreign policy orientations.

Foreign policy issues are not a usual policy concern for public opinion in Mexico. However, there are instances in the case studies of this thesis where public opinion influenced foreign policy outcomes. An example is the Iraq War, which captured the attention of public opinion and influenced Mexico’s decision to defy US expectations by not supporting the war at the UNSC.

**Presence of an international crisis**

International crises exert significant consequences on world politics. Events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, 9/11, and the COVID-19 pandemic disrupt international stability and transform the foreign policies of states across the world. Stern (2003) shows how these crises challenge leadership, institutions, and the public to change foreign policy outcomes. A country’s foreign policy may be different if national leaders perceive the international context as relatively calm. For instance, Gustavsson (1999) lists international crises as one of the factors that cause states to reconfigure their foreign policies.

International crises involving Mexico are exceptional occasions where the public's attention is captured. Thus, these international crises propel contestations that would not have appeared otherwise. In addition, international crises may prompt several international actors to exert considerable pressure on the Mexican government to enact a particular foreign policy, highlighting the relevance of external role expectations during these crises.
2.3 Conclusions

Originally used in social psychology, role theory offers foreign policy analysis a valuable descriptive, organisational, and explanatory vocabulary for categorising identities, beliefs, behaviours, and the interactions between agents and structures. It is precisely for this vocabulary that role theory is regarded as a potential tool for bridging scholarship in IR and FPA (Thies and Breuning, 2012). Role theory’s ideal fit for FPA even prompted the social psychologist Carl Backman (1970) to suggest that role theory may well be a particular instance where borrowing a theory has finally paid off.

Furthermore, role theory has evolved from its original assumption of the state as a unitary actor, closely connected with the structural theories of IR at that time, to original conceptions offering a broader array of actors. Since the turn of the century, role theory scholars have made valuable contributions to the study of domestic sources of foreign policy and have successfully linked the concepts of identity and agency through NRCs. It is noteworthy that this feature is mostly absent in other constructivist accounts.

The cognitive variables used in this new wave of role theory scholarship have allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of foreign policy behaviour. Role theory offers the opportunity to examine interactions, performances, and reassessments made in designing and implementing foreign policy caused by systemic or domestic dynamics. This comprehensive framework makes role theory especially suited to the analysis of middle powers, since its conceptual framework reconciles structural, interactional, and behavioural approaches to the study of the foreign policy of middle powers. Therefore, role theory provides an appropriate structure for researching the contestation between the traditional and pragmatic orientations in Mexico’s foreign policy. Role theory also distinguishes the material capacity to act and the potential to change in the international environment. In this regard, role theory sets itself apart from the conventional theories used in FPA, which are embedded either purely in a material understanding of power or normative conceptions within international relations. The gaps in role theory mentioned at the beginning of this chapter can be overcome by finding a discernible association between roles and foreign policy behaviour. This association should be distinguished
using case studies or process-tracing analysis, which are frequently employed for this objective due to their ability to investigate role contestation and decision-making processes and which this thesis incorporates. The following chapter offers an explanation of how this thesis investigates how role contestations and expectations have affected the adoption of middle-power NRCs in Mexico’s foreign policy.
3. Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology of the thesis. The first section outlines how role theory employs methodological research and shows how these methods are applied in this thesis. This section is followed by a discussion of the evidence used to identify national role conceptions. The last section covers the advantages of using case studies and the selection criteria for the case studies in this project.

This thesis applies a qualitative methodology to the research question by using content analysis and process-tracing. The thesis treats Mexico’s foreign policy and the enactment of middle-power NRCs as a dependent variable, foreign policy objectives as independent variables, and role conflict in the form of role contestation and deviating external role expectations as intervening variables. I use a qualitative research design, since it is considered appropriate for explaining complex policy processes in foreign policy and clarifying theoretical relations that cannot be simplified or categorised into quantitative methodological arrangements. According to Bennett and Elman (2006) and McKeown (1999), qualitative research enables the explanation of outcomes of detailed case studies that are temporally and spatially located. In this way, applying a qualitative methodology allows for the circumvention of the limitations imposed by quantitative analysis, such as ignoring specific contexts where foreign policy is developed. To further illustrate this development, I use different techniques to triangulate information, enhancing the validity of the analysis (Denscombe, 2002). Wehner and Thies (2014) bring attention to how contrasting secondary sources with interpretations of primary sources is necessary to triangulate information and identify roles. This triangulation will bring depth to the understanding of the research question.

3.1 Research methods in role theory

Beasley and Kaarbo (2017) maintain that rigor in methodology can be challenging when analysing NRCs, especially considering that a handbook for analysing NRCs has yet to be made. Other authors, such as Walker (1987), have stated that some of the empirical outcomes of role theory research have been weak due to this lack of a coherent method of evidence collection and analysis. Scholars such as Aras and Gorener (2010) have assessed the capability of NRCs to explain new orientations of
Turkish foreign policy to the Middle East by analysing Prime Minister Erdoğan and former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu’s statements. Additionally, Thies and Wehner (2014) recommend that scholars put more effort into developing a method to derive roles from both elite and general public discourses, which could generate relevant contributions for the study of roles, especially in domestic role contestation.

According to Cantir and Kaarbo (2016), empirical work in role theory begins with identifying roles. Thies (2010a) mentions that while there is no definitive methodological approach for identifying roles, they can be extracted from policymakers’ statements and scholarly analysis of events.

Moreover, Ifantis, Andreas, and Triantaphyllou (2015) assert that case studies, such as the ones used in this thesis, are prevalent in the scholarship of role theory because they enable researchers to use empirical evidence to show how roles are operationalised in foreign policy. Examples of case studies in role theory scholarship include Oppermann’s (2012) work on the shifts in Germany’s role conceptions and the subsequent unexpected foreign policy outcomes in the cases of the European financial crisis and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) missions in Libya. Furthermore, Catalinac (2007) analysed Japan’s diverse NRCs and foreign policy decisions during the Gulf war of 1991 and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Similarly, Shih (1988) used case studies to gain insight into dramatic changes in the self-perception and expectations of Chinese policymakers.

Role theory research in foreign policy analysis is eclectic. Several studies have included content analysis, interpretative constructivism, and game theory frameworks (Breuning, 2017). However, most authors, such as Aggestam (2006), Breuning (2011), and Thies (2010a), have used interviews, parliamentary debates, and surveys to discern an association between roles and foreign policy behaviour.

Holsti proposed that NRCs be studied through a quantitative method (counting each time an NRC is enacted) or a qualitative method (considering when they are mentioned), where each role may be weighted differently for its study. In doing so, he used speeches and statements from policymakers. Holsti (1970) cites statements from policymakers to determine how they describe their country’s role in world politics. He exemplifies how statements can be interpreted as indicators of roles.
Holsti concludes that the more involved states are in international affairs, the larger the number of roles states hold, in contrast to those with a more limited presence in world politics. Holsti also considers role conceptions to be an independent variable that can explain foreign policy behaviour.\footnote{In an interview the author had with Professor Holsti at the XXXII annual congress of the Mexican Association of International Studies, he recommended care regarding the ‘excessive amount of abstract terminologies based on assumptions made by a methodology which can be considered as underdeveloped’.
}

Finally, empirical research in role theory often relies on secondary historical research. When these roles are discernible, an association between them and foreign policy behaviour should be distinguished using case studies or process-tracing analysis, as is done in this project. Case studies and process-tracing analysis are frequently employed for this objective due to their ability to investigate role contestation and decision-making processes.

### 3.2 Research design

With the view that the theoretical framework is multi-causal, this thesis uses content analysis and process-tracing as research methods. The combination of different methods increases reliability and diminishes biases and analytical weaknesses. I also rely on primary and secondary sources within and outside Mexico to consolidate analytical rigour.

#### 3.2.1 Data collection methods

This thesis uses two main data collection methods, which are outlined below.

**A. Document analysis**

This thesis uses document analysis to examine Mexico’s enactment of middle-power roles in foreign policy and the influence of domestic contestation and external expectations on these enactments. The data collected and presented in this thesis consists of both primary and secondary sources. The main source of primary information originates from fieldwork carried out in Mexico in 2018.

These documents consist of legislative and ministerial statements, editorials, organisational reports, books, press releases, speeches from policymakers, journal
articles, and reports from wider stakeholders on the topics being analysed. This effort is made to look for evidence of how national role contestation and role expectations have influenced the adoption of middle-power roles in Mexico's foreign policy.

**B. Interviews**

I use four semi-structured interviews of scholars influencing Mexican foreign policy or with first-hand knowledge of it. Interviews are regarded only as a data-collection method complementary to document analysis.

These data-collection methods are examined through content analysis and process-tracing. The following sections explain these methods.

### 3.2.2 Content analysis

To Breuning (2017), content analysis constitutes a reliable technique for identifying NRCs. Moreover, Dyson and Parent (2018) argue that content analysis is able to predict foreign policy by allowing scholars to decipher the attitudes and beliefs of policymakers.

Role theoretical research usually has two phases. The first is role identification and the second is finding the association of roles with foreign policy behaviour (Cantir and Kaarbo, 2016). My approach to identifying roles is both inductive and deductive. It is inductive because it involves searching for roles in several documents, and it is deductive because I have a priori knowledge of the existence of NRCs.

One criticism that could be made of this approach is that the statements from policymakers may or may not genuinely reflect their beliefs and attitudes. Authors such as Suedfeld et al. (2005) and Schafer and Smith (2017) claim that content analysis is a reliable method to evaluate the beliefs of policymakers, since they tend to talk about what they think. Spoken and written communication reflect thought processes, especially when policymakers make the same kind of statements consistently. Moreover, other primary and secondary sources and statements from other policymakers are triangulated to achieve more robustness in the identification of NRCs.

Another element of content analysis is discerning whether citizens broadly share the NRCs expressed by policymakers. Fortunately, the biannual survey *México, las
Américas y el Mundo can complement this point. Scholars can use the phraseology from this survey to elicit interpretations on how public opinion and policymakers’ views contrast with each other, filling the void described by Breuning (2017). For example, México, las Americas y el Mundo measures attitudes from the population and leaders in Mexico to several issues, such as geopolitical belonging and attitudes towards the US and Latin America. In addition, questions about whether Mexico should strive to be a regional leader in Latin America, what it means for Mexico to be a responsible global player, and how Mexico should cooperate in multilateral efforts speak directly to NRCs such as good international citizen, supporter of multilateralism, and seeker of regional leadership, which are associated with the foreign policies of middle powers.

Finally, although similar, roles should be differentiated from policy preferences. Likewise, not all policy disagreements invoke contested roles. Policymakers might disagree on which policy best serves a national role but may still agree on a national role. For instance, a NATO state could increase or decrease its defence budget without bearing on its role as a vital ally to the US. In this thesis, Mexico’s NRCs embrace broader ideas about the international duties and responsibilities of Mexico, which may or may not lead to actual policies.

3.2.3 Process-tracing
The case studies in this thesis incorporate process-tracing to search for the causal mechanisms involving the different research variables and analyse if these variables are linked to any change in outcomes. Breuning (2017, 13) argues that process-tracing can deepen our understanding of the causes and effects on the adoption of role conceptions, since ‘it is not yet clear whether national role conceptions precede behavioural change or whether behavioural change leads to change in role conceptions’.

37 This survey is also helpful in establishing whether citizens are able to identify their state’s role conceptions, which is a research endeavour that has puzzled several scholars in FPA, such as Valerie Hudson (1999). The survey is also useful for discerning horizontal and vertical role conceptions in this thesis. In addition, the absence of surveys that directly ask about roles is one of the reasons interpretation is needed. Gaskarth (2016) has already drawn interpretations from phraseology in his research.
Bennett and George (1997) suggest that process-tracing can refine the analysis of causal variables in single and multiple case studies research by narrowing down the possible causes of an outcome. Therefore, process-tracing is an instrumental tool in this research for comparing the variances in the three case studies and assessing whether causal variables were affected by Mexico's contextual features in each case.

Process-tracing in role theoretical research is used to understand the causes and effects of role change (Breuning, 2017). In this project's context, process-tracing allowed me to see the causal processes that motivated Mexican foreign policy throughout the timeline of each case study. In particular, process-tracing illustrated if and how one foreign policy orientation was enacted over the other and how changes in attitudes or the positions of policymakers had any effect on the enactment.

Furthermore, the correct employment of process-tracing in this thesis demonstrated that Mexico’s foreign policy is not only conditioned by factors such as geography or its deeply centralised decision-making process, but by other factors, such as domestic contestation of roles and external role expectations. Moreover, process-tracing was useful in ruling out alternative arguments to the findings of this thesis. These alternative arguments are discussed in the conclusions.

This research uses mid-level and macro-level processes. For example, domestic role contestations between the two foreign policy orientations and Mexico's decision-making processes are related to mid-level analysis. The examination of Mexico’s evolution in its relation with the US and Latin America are used as macro-level analysis.

According to Collier (2011), for process-tracing to successfully track causal-process observations in case analysis, it has to meet several requirements. First, description is needed to systematically examine the selected diagnostic evidence (Mahoney, 2010). Secondly, awareness of the sequences of independent, dependent, and intervening variables is needed. Finally, the use of counterfactuals, a common endeavour in the study of IR, is necessary (Levy, 2008).

According to Hansel and Oppermann (2016), counterfactuals offer validity to arguments by testing theoretical propositions. Furthermore, Collier (2011) and Yin
(1994) assert that the correct employment of counterfactuals depends on meeting the specifications mentioned earlier. This thesis meets these expectations by applying an explicit description of the events being analysed in the case studies, performing a close follow-up of the variables involved, and using theory to guide case studies and counterfactual analysis.

3.3 National role conceptions

This section presents and defines the NRCs used in this thesis. This thesis identifies NRCs when they are directly invoked in official documents and speeches from policymakers or when external players acknowledge these NRCs. An NRC was identified in this project whenever ‘Mexico’ or pronouns such as ‘we’ or ‘us’ were mentioned in relation to Mexico’s duties and responsibilities in its foreign policy. If an NRC was mentioned in a document several times concerning the same issue, it was counted only once. In comparison, if more than one NRC appeared in a document, each of them were counted separately.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, a middle-power foreign policy is defined in this thesis as the enactment of the NRCs associated with middle powers from the rationale provided by scholars such as Thies, Sari, and Karim. These six NRCs are as follows: good international citizen, supporter of multilateralism, seeker of regional leadership, mediator, bridge-builder, and coalition-builder. These NRCs alone are not unique attributes of middle powers, but their systematic enactment is evidence of middle power behaviour in foreign policy.

Since states do not simultaneously articulate all NRCs, and these roles are constantly changing due to domestic contestation and external role expectations, the simultaneous enactment of all NRCs associated with middle powers is not considered a requirement for identifying middle-power behaviour (Thies and Sari, 2018; Karim, 2018). Moreover, as Neack (1992; 2017) states, there are no unique attributes to middle-power behaviour, but the combined, widespread enactment of roles attributed to middle powers can systematise middle-power behaviour. Therefore, enacting most of these NRCs in foreign policy is necessary and sufficient for Mexico to be considered part of the middle-power category.
A brief explanation and examples of these middle-power NRCs are provided below.

**Supporter of multilateralism**

Middle powers are often associated with multilateralism, as engaging in multilateral organisations enhances their bargaining power, which is often structurally constrained. Middle powers gain legitimacy and moral authority by participating in multilateral diplomatic initiatives (Thies and Sari, 2018).

Karim explains how classic examples of middle-power countries, such as South Korea or Indonesia, translate their aspiration for middlepowermanship into multilateral diplomacy. This notion resonates with the argument of Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal (1993) that international relations are also a game of skill in multilateral activity. Other scholars, such as Souter (2016), focus on the attributes of the defence of liberal values, such as human rights, through multilateralism. In this way, multilateralism enables the enactment of other middle-power NRCs, such as the *good international citizen*.

Support for multilateral diplomacy in Mexico can be operationalised in membership and active involvement (i.e., presenting initiatives and participating actively) in international organisations. The display of support for multilateral diplomacy in legislative debates, party platforms, and official documents and the acknowledgment of this NRC by other parties in international politics (NGOs and national governments) are evidence of the successful enactment of this role in foreign policy.

**Example:** ‘*Mexico promotes the establishment of an international agenda through the international regulation and the strength of its institutions [...] Today, as in the past, activism in multilateral affairs offers Mexico the possibility to be a counterweight – the only one which is credible and possible – to its vital but asymmetric relationship with the United States*’ (Castañeda, 2001c, 51).

**Bridge-builder**

This NRC is manifested in the country's positioning act to build a consensus, highlighting the convergence of interests in international politics (Karim, 2018). This NRC is often enacted in times of international crisis through multilateral means.
Evidence that this NRC is being enacted includes diplomatic summits, state visits, statements, and the external recognition of Mexican efforts to facilitate communication between two international positions in conflict. This NRC should not be confused with being a mediator, as the mediator NRC involves a more formal exercise of negotiation where only two actors in conflict are involved. The bridge-builder NRC can be enacted outside of traditional diplomatic structures and usually involves more than two parties.

**Example:** ‘Despite the distance between the positions of the members of the council with regards to Iraq, Mexico calls for any differences that constrain us from achieving an agreement regarding Iraq to be discussed here and resolved here [...]. We are particularly troubled by the diverse affinities and common values constructed with so much effort through so many decades, being eroded at this moment [...]. In the maintenance of peace, our collective interests are cemented. That is how we understand our responsibility as a member of the UNSC. Mexico is convinced that we need to explore all alternatives, we have to take advantage to resolve this issue peacefully’ (Derbez, 2003c, 188).

**Mediator**

Mediation is a formal process in international politics whereby a third party assists other parties in dispute to resolve their conflict through interactive negotiations. Evidence for this NRC enactment emanates from primary and secondary sources in which Mexico aimed to become involved in facilitating the negotiation between two conflicting parties, and this aspiration was acknowledged by the involved parties.

The mediator role has been related to middle-power performance since 1979 with Lyon and Tomlin’s research on Canada’s foreign policy, in which they argue that middle powers are often peacekeepers, communicators, and mediators in world politics. Thies and Sari write that middle powers tend to assume the role of third-party conflict mediators in their foreign policy behaviour (2018).

**Example:** The National Liberation Army (ELN) published a press statement in 2004 that said, ‘We are willing to establish direct communication with the Mexican
Seeker of regional leadership

A regional power is a state that projects influence in a specific region to shape its regional agenda for other countries in the area (Yilmaz, 2017). Regional leadership is an essential element for evaluating a state’s impact as a middle power. Although not all regional leaders are middle powers, most middle powers are regional leaders. This could be said of Canada, which falls within the middle-power category but is generally not considered a regional power. Similarly, Karim (2018) found that Indonesia, for example, used its regional leadership role to pursue a middle-power status globally as its leverage increased in several extra-regional forums.

The seeker of regional leadership NRC can be operationalised by using explicit statements in official documents denoting the Mexican government's aspiration to be the regional leader in Latin America by maintaining an essential presence in the area and in organisations of regional integration. Secondary sources analysing this goal have also been used, as well as the acceptance or rejection of this aspiration by Latin American states.

Example: ‘We always put Mexico at the forefront of Latin American policy [...] I saw in it the opportunity for Mexico to increase its relevance in the region, as well as to promote something in which I believed: Latin American integration.’ (Calderón, 2020, 369).

Good international citizen

Cooper theorises that the good international citizen concept might be associated with middle powers due to the concentration of resources in niche issues that are ignored by both great and small powers. This emphasis on niche issue gives middle powers a comparative advantage for installing those issues, such as human rights, in the international agenda (2013).
According to Thies and Sari (2018), this NRC could be considered an umbrella concept covering similar behaviours that middle powers sustain. Cooper (2013) suggests that a country that enacts a good international citizen foreign policy often has a diplomatic tradition with a prestigious record of having endorsed niche diplomacy issues. Examples of these niche issues are the protection of the environment; a commitment to values that are considered universal, such as human rights; advocacy for development; the promotion of democracy; and respect for international law. Thies and Sari (2018) also observe that middle powers enacting this NRC tend to protect the status quo by maintaining international order. Based on these conceptualisations, this NRC will be operationalised by finding specific evidence of times when Mexico's foreign policy aspired to be involved in niche-diplomacy issues and these aspirations were acknowledged by other actors in international politics.

**Example:** ‘Mexico has historically supported peace. In different international conflicts, like the one in Iraq, our country's position has been based on defence of peace’ (Presidencia de la República, 2002a, 141).

**Coalition-builder**

The *coalition-builder* NRC is frequently identified in literature as a middle-power attribute. Efstathopoulos (2018) states that middle powers often build coalitions with like-minded states against the hegemonic force of major powers or pursue a common agenda in multilateral organisations.

This NRC is operationalised by Mexico’s management of regional alliances and the country's leadership in international institutions with like-minded states to implement and execute a specific agenda. This NRC will be enacted if Mexico's foreign policy creates formal and informal collaborations with like-minded states and if other actors are receptive to Mexico's actions as a coalition-builder.

**Example:** ‘During the current administration, the most successful integration effort has been the Pacific Alliance, without a doubt. This is an alliance that we should promote and solidify as an instrument of political dialogue and cooperation and
genuine integration between four Latin American Countries: México, Colombia, Perú and Chile’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2017).

3.4 Case studies

To answer my research question and examine why Mexico’s foreign policy is not compatible with the NRCs associated with middle powers, the project uses three case studies. These case studies present evidence in the form of speeches, legislative and ministerial statements, and other documents on the processes of role contestation and role expectations.

My research question – why does Mexico display an atypical foreign policy for a middle power? – seeks to explain policy-making processes as well as the interactions, constraints, and expectations of policymakers. I believe that case studies are uniquely positioned to provide a holistic understanding of the research aims and offer insights into how role sets in foreign policy are contested and socialised.

I follow Yin (1994) and Brown (2008), who suggest that case studies should be used when a research design possesses three essential characteristics: when the use of theory is systematic, when case studies are especially suited to addressing why and how questions throughout a contemporary context, and when the researcher has little to no control over the subject of study. Additionally, Gerring (2004) argues that case studies are especially suited to identifying causal mechanisms when one allocates empirical knowledge into a theoretical framework. Yin (1994) and Flybjerg (2011) also observe that because of their vast potential to include documents (both primary and secondary), observations, and interviews, case studies represent a thorough and extensive methodology capable of analysing a phenomenon from different angles.

Thus, case studies in this research work as plausibility probes and are selected based on their likelihood of finding NRCs associated with middle powers (Eckstein, 1975).

Each case study presents a narrative and a timeline that lists the sequence of events relevant to each case. Subsequently, I explore narratives in search of evidence that confirms or contradicts my hypothesis. I also identify the appropriate counterfactual test to evaluate this evidence. I do this by comparing an observed value to one or more hypothetical values that could be considered alternatives to my hypothesis.
3.5 Case selection

The case studies are used to search for middle-power NRCs in instances where middle-power behaviour could be found. Mexico’s involvement in a multilateral organisation like the UNSC, its role in creating regional groups such as CELAC, and its engagement in niche issues such as liberal values are all examples of these instances. A comparative case study analysis is elaborated in the conclusion of this research to compare the variances and similarities between the case studies. Selecting case studies with different timeframes allowed to highlight the effect of role contestation in domestic role contestation and external role expectations across different issue areas and contextual features.

The case study selection followed the logic of identifying several instances where the Mexican state aspired to enact roles associated with middle powers. As such, the cases are unique but they also share patterns and similarities with other episodes in Mexico’s foreign policy and in the foreign policies of other countries. The aspiration to enact middle-power NRCs is identified in official documents such as NDPs, reports, and policymakers' speeches. The case studies analyse how middle-power NRCs were disputed and if they were ultimately rejected or enacted in foreign policy. The case studies also cover different time frames, which enables the examination of the evolution of foreign policy. As a result, the case studies manifest variances between them.

These particular cases were chosen for two main reasons. First, all three cases illustrate contestation between the two orientations of Mexican foreign policy from 1988 to 2012, which were manifested in Congress, cabinet members, and other domestic actors. Second, these cases cover the six NRCs associated with a typical middle-power foreign policy according to the literature presented by Thies and Sari (2018) and Karim (2018), as covered in the previous chapter. Consequently, these cases are useful for identifying where Mexico had the opportunity to enact NRCs associated with middle powers and for finding evidence of how role contestations and role expectations affected the enactments of these NRCs. It is worth mentioning that the enactment of these NRCs varies from case to case depending on the interpretation of the contextual situation from members of the
different foreign policy orientations. Accordingly, the cases reflect these differences. The six middle-power NRCs introduced in Section 2.3 of this thesis are presented in Figure 2 below. Figure 2 illustrates the relation of these NRCs in the case studies in this thesis. These six middle power NRCs are thoroughly defined, justified, and contextualised in the next section of this chapter.

![Figure 2: Relation of NRCs associated with middle powers that Mexico attempted to implement and the selected case studies.](image)

The first case scrutinises Mexico’s participation in the debates regarding the US-led military intervention in Iraq within the UNSC in 2003. The second case examines Mexico’s involvement in creating the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Finally, the third case inspects the adoption of liberal values in Mexico’s foreign policy from 1986 to 2012. The result of the different contestations and deviating expectations of NRCs was the successful enactment of one interpretation over the other. In only one case did role merging take place as a way to solve role conflict.

**Case 1: Mexico’s participation as a non-permanent member of the UNSC during the deliberations for the invasion of Iraq**
Towards the beginning of the Fox administration (2000–2006) and before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Mexico nominated itself for a non-permanent seat at the UNSC for the 2002–03 mandate. This nomination to the UNSC was part of the government's strategy to achieve a multilateral and active foreign policy (Mena, 2005).

In the early months of 2003, the US and the UK were striving to persuade other members in the UNSC to support a joint resolution that would allow the use of force to disarm Iraq of supposed weapons of mass destruction. In Mexico, an intense debate among different political, academic, and economic actors about the country's role in the council took place. This debate was probably one of the few instances in Mexican history where the country's foreign policy was the central topic of a national dialogue. On one side of the debate, some analysts in Mexico and part of the administration saw an opportunity to be pragmatic by attempting to increase the country’s leverage with Washington, positing that Mexico should behave like a partner and an ally (Schiavon, 2004). On the other side of the debate, almost all political opposition argued for the endorsement of the constitutional and traditional principles of non-intervention and peaceful resolution of conflicts (Fernández, 2003 cited in Zárate, 2005). In the end, the vote to authorise the use of force in Iraq did not take place, as Washington was unable to convince Mexico and other countries to support their resolution in the UNSC (Zárate, 2005). However, after the initial military operations had begun in Iraq, the Mexican government publicly condemned the intervention and declared that if a vote on the British–American resolution had taken place at the UNSC, Mexico would have voted against it (Zárate, 2005).

This debate was also present within bureaucracies. Some sectors of the Foreign Ministry, the foreign minister himself, the Federal Treasury, and the Ministry of Economy, along with important business sectors, supported the notion of voting in favour of the British–American resolution to disarm Iraq as a gesture of solidarity with the US, Mexico’s most important trade partner. On the other side of the debate were other sectors of the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Interior, which privileged public opinion that overwhelmingly supported voting against a US-backed resolution (Herrera-Lasso, 2006).
This case was selected because, being one of the rare occasions where foreign policy was an issue in the public agenda, the contestations between the traditional and pragmatic orientations became visible and had significant implications in foreign policy in a time of international crisis. Furthermore, Mexico also faced significant external expectations from numerous parties. The debates on whether Mexico should join the UNSC and whether Mexico should support the British–American intervention in Iraq in 2003 relate to three middle-power NRCs: *good international citizen, supporter of multilateralism, and bridge-builder*. In official documents and speeches from policymakers, the Mexican government explicitly stated that they wanted to contribute to the world by being a member of the UNSC. By opposing the American and British attitudes towards Iraq, Mexico’s ambassador at the UNSC directly evoked the country’s inalienable support of multilateralism. Likewise, in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Mexico appealed to all members of the UNSC to bridge their differences.

**Case 2: Mexico’s involvement in the creation and performance of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)**

In 2009, Mexico invited other governments in Latin America to begin consultations to transform the Rio Group – an association for political consultation of countries in the region – into a more formal and consolidated regional group. This group incorporated Cuba and excluded the US and Canada, unlike the Organization of American States (OAS).

According to Bonilla and Jaramillo (2014), with the creation of CELAC, Mexico sought to accommodate itself in Latin America through a more aggressive presence in the region. With the Cancun declaration of 2009, where CELAC was formed, Mexico aimed to improve its ‘abandoned’ relations with the governments of the region, especially after the confrontations that previous Mexican administrations had with several Latin American countries, which led to the country being marginalised and isolated in the region (Saltamacchia, 2011).

In addition, President Calderón's (2006–2012) administration wanted to build coalitions to promote regional integration and consolidate Mexico's regional
leadership (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2011). Chabat (2014, 35) argues that President Peña (2012–2018) expressed the desire to make Mexico an active power in international politics, recover the ‘lost’ leadership status the country possessed in the region, and make Mexico have an ‘emergent power role’. Another sign of the relevance given to the region by the Peña government, according to Bonilla and Jaramillo (2012), was that Peña’s first trip abroad as president-elect was to Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, and Guatemala.

Benítez (2016) claims that this rapprochement strategy towards the region was an attempt by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to retrieve its former influence in foreign policy, which had eroded to the detriment of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Interior. Benítez argues that Mexico failed to achieve its goals at CELAC because the country prioritised its economic relations with North America and due to the tensions emanating from the perceptions of Cuba, Venezuela, and Brazil that Mexico ‘betrayed’ the Latin American region by signing NAFTA (Benítez, 2016, 80).

This case study was selected because it illustrates the divergent expectations from different external actors in Mexico’s decision to have stronger relations with Latin America, a common endeavour in Mexico’s foreign policy. This case study also incorporates Mexico’s creation of and involvement with the Pacific Alliance during the same period, so both foreign policy orientations can be compared directly. This case study analyses the enactment processes of the following NRCs: seeker of regional leadership, bridge-builder, and coalition-builder. The seeker of regional leadership NRC was frequently found in official documents and policymakers’ speeches from the Calderón administration. The bridge-builder and coalition-builder NRCs correspond to Mexico’s roles within CELAC and the Pacific Alliance during the Peña administration. With CELAC, Mexico unsuccessfully attempted to bridge differences in a polarised region. The coalition-builder NRC was enacted when Mexico finally opted to lead the Pacific Alliance, a group of like-minded governments espousing free trade.

Finally, while there are other interpretations of Latin American integration, this chapter relies on Mexican sources since its objective is to analyse the domestic role contestations and external role expectations of Mexico from the point of view of the
Mexican policymaker. Wider considerations on the evolution and nature of regionalism in Latin America is covered in this case study by taking into account sources from countries and organisations that Mexico interacted with during that time.

**Case 3: Adoption of liberal values in Mexico’s foreign policy**

This case contrasts with the previous cases because there has been an interesting interplay between domestic actors and external expectations in a process that has lasted 25 years. Both domestic and external actors have forced the Mexican government to change its foreign policy concerning democracy and HR through role demands.

At the end of the 1980s, Mexico went through a dual transition in economic and political affairs (González, 2006) that favoured the gradual adoption of the defence of democracy and the protection of human rights as fundamental principles in the pragmatic foreign policy orientation (Velázquez, 2008). This dramatic shift took place within the context of a colossal series of economic crises, internal demands for democratisation, and the post-Cold War geopolitical conditions of unipolarity.

At the beginning of his government, Salinas (1988–1994) vehemently resisted foreign pressures to cooperate in democratic and HR concerns. Some scholars, such as Chabat, consider this to be an example of Mexico’s desire to adapt to the Western liberal model, since democracy and human rights were part of the US–Mexican bilateral agenda during NAFTA's negotiation (1991; 2013). The adoption of liberal values into Mexico's foreign policy continued with President Zedillo (1994–2000), who agreed in 1997 with the EU’s democratic clause conditioning a free trade deal with Mexico’s guarantee of respecting HR and democracy. Furthermore, President Zedillo decided to appease the demands for strengthening democratic institutions and respect fundamental human rights in Mexico after the revelation of notorious massacres in the country's southern region.

In the year 2000, for the first time in seven decades, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) lost the presidential election. The National Action Party (PAN) occupied
the executive branch for two federal administrations (2000–2006 and 2006–2012). The Vicente Fox government (2000–6), recognised by the international community as being ‘eminently democratic’ (Mena, 2005), proposed that Mexico exploit a new democratic bonus to improve its international legitimacy and portray a new, active role in the world (Velázquez Flores, 2008; Castañeda, 2001e, 174).

The establishment of the defence of democracy and human rights within the pragmatic orientation strongly differentiates it from the traditional foreign policy, whose primary function was to protect the closed, semi-authoritarian system of the PRI by limiting foreign interference (Velázquez, 2015). However, the traditional orientation continued to be firmly entrenched within Mexican institutions, and thus the implementation of this new foreign policy faced strong resistance from bureaucratic sectors and the Congress. In response to this, liberal values were added as normative principles of foreign policy within the Mexican constitution in 2011. This case study had a different structure than previous chapters due to the nature of the topics being analysed. The adoption of liberal values into Mexico's foreign policy was a process that took more than 25 years (1986–2011). This process contrasts with the three-year timeframe (2000–2003) of the first case study and the eleven-year span (2006–2017) observed in the second case study. Consequently, this case addresses the subject differently, examining the domestic role contestation of NRCs and external role expectations at specific moments rather than analysing these mechanisms in a particular section in the chapter.

In summary, this case illustrates a visible example of the hypothesis of this thesis. It demonstrates the relevant interplay between domestic contestations and external expectations and its effect on foreign policy. It also analyses how the new orientations in foreign policy faced staunch opposition from the traditional orientation within the domestic realm and with external role expectations. For instance, according to Smith (1998), the US expected a democratic Mexico to conduct a more harmonic relationship with Washington. However, the bilateral relationship was less predictable. Electoral democracy encouraged anti-American sentiment in Mexico. The good international citizen, the supporter of
multilateralism, and the coalition-builder NRCs were successfully enacted in Mexico’s adoption of liberal values, which official documents and speeches attest to. Though Mexico attempted to enact the mediator NRC, this NRC was rejected on two occasions.

3.6 Conclusions
The use of content analysis and process-tracing enables this thesis to answer the research question and to analyse how external expectations of roles and domestic role contestations influence Mexico’s behaviour as a middle power in its foreign policy. Thus, by using meticulous analysis at various levels, this research contributes to the empirical analysis of Mexican foreign policy, role theory scholarship, and foreign policy analysis.
4. Chapter Four: Historical background of Mexico’s foreign policy

Following the theoretical framework in Chapter 2, this chapter analyses the historical background underpinning the three case studies of this thesis. It is not the purpose of this chapter to give a general overview of Mexico’s history. Rather, the objective of this historical framework is to identify the elements that, according to role theory, are needed to examine the tensions between foreign policy orientations feeding role conflict and how these tensions influenced Mexico’s adoption of middle power NRCs. Since role theory scholarship seeks to understand the perspective of the decision-maker in foreign policy, ideational factors such as formative experiences and a country’s foundational history are relevant in shaping NRCs in foreign policy (Breuning, 2011). Therefore, this chapter demonstrates how policymakers have considered interpretations of historical experiences in Mexico to shape their self-perceptions of the country’s interactions with external role expectations and how these perceptions have influenced the adoption of middle power NRCs in foreign policy.

Mexico was often the victim of great power politics during most of its early existence. Consequently, interactions with the rest of the world have frequently been perceived as sources of danger rather than opportunities, complicating Mexico’s relations with other countries (Zaíd, 1984). The country's history is filled with dramatic episodes highlighting the vulnerability of the Mexican state with the rest of the world and underlining the state's restrictions to provide basic provisions of governability to the country. For example, authors such as Whitehead (1981) and Kaplan (2012) explain the considerable challenges of administering the country due to adverse geographical features and convoluted national history.

4.1 Mexico’s challenging early existence

Mexico began its existence as a state in the context of severe adversities in international and domestic affairs. The War of Independence (1810-1821) devastated the country as it is estimated that half a million people – one out of every twelve
inhabitants - perished during the conflict (El Colegio de México, 2008).\textsuperscript{18} Furthermore, in the first decades that followed its independence, the country had an unstable political landscape with only a handful of governments serving their full constitutional terms due to power struggles and coups. In the first two years of independent life, Mexico went from being an empire to adopt a Republican system and lose its Central American provinces.

The country also had to repel several foreign military interventions during the first half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, including an attempt at restoring Spanish rule in 1829 and French and British military expeditions and interventions in 1836, and the Caste War of 1847-1901.\textsuperscript{19}

In addition to European imperialism, Mexico also had to face increasing American expansionism exhibited in the Manifest Destiny and the Monroe doctrine (Genaro Estrada Archival Fund, 1928).\textsuperscript{20} American settlers in Texas seceded from Mexico in 1836, and the province was annexed to the United States in 1845, prompting the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). The war with the United States is arguably the most important historical event in Mexico. The humiliating loss of 55\% of the territorial extension due to the Guadalupe-Hidalgo Treaty of 1848 and Mexico’s extreme vulnerability during the American invasion of the Mexican mainland is an episode that marked the negative perception of its primary significant other. Since this moment, the US became the external agent that held more sway over Mexico’s foreign policy through material and immaterial means and occupied a central place in its political narratives. The war with the US transformed the perception of the northern neighbour from a source of inspiration due to its war of independence against a European power and the implementation of its democratic regime to a country that represented an existential threat to Mexico (De Los Ríos and Riguzzi, 2012).

\textsuperscript{18} Except for Haiti, this war was the costliest war of independence in the Americas in terms of the number of casualties. It also contrasts with the process of independence of Brazil, which was bloodless.

\textsuperscript{19} The French and British intervened in Mexico either to exploit natural resources or to force compensations to their citizens residing in Mexico for damages caused from the country’s several internal conflicts.

\textsuperscript{20} Manifest Destiny was the name of the widespread notion that American settlers would inevitably colonise the North American west. The Monroe doctrine was a US policy aimed to oppose European colonialism in the Americas.
Other threats to the existence of the Mexican state originated with secessionist uprisings taking place before, during, and after the Mexican-American war, denoting the Mexican government's precarious situation at the time. For instance, states such as Tabasco, Zacatecas, Yucatán, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas had insurgencies that sought to constitute independent states, and in cases such as the Republic of Yucatán, to integrate with the United States (El Colegio de México, 2008).\(^{21}\)

Besides territorial disintegration, access to international credit was another relevant topic in the foreign policy agenda throughout most of the 19\(^{th}\) century. The financial situation was desperate, as tax collection was limited. The industry was destroyed due to the continuous wars that plagued the country. Moreover, domestic trade was discouraged by a lack of infrastructure and the prevalence of custom taxes of trade between states (Arroyo, 1998).\(^{22}\) Therefore, in what was a recurrent issue in foreign policy until the 20\(^{th}\) century, one of Mexico's most pressing challenges was the desperate struggle for diplomatic recognition to access international credit.

The issue of international credit created vicious cycles that reproduced other vulnerabilities for Mexico. This is illustrated in the Reform War (1857-1860), another civil war depicting liberals against conservatives and where both factions had to appeal to foreign powers for financial relief. While the Conservative faction relied on the assistance of European monarchs in the Mon-Almonte Treaty, the liberal government negotiated the infamous McLane-Ocampo treaty with the United States (Genaro Estrada Archival Fund, 1928). The McLane-Ocampo treaty would have financed the liberal side, which badly needed to fund the war effort. Nevertheless, the treaty severely compromised Mexico's sovereignty as it would have granted several concessions to the US such as a perpetual right of transit on several routes throughout the country, the right to intervene in domestic affairs, and the placement of some territories in Northern Mexico as collateral payment in case the Mexican government defaulted on its debt (De los Ríos and Riguzzi, 2012).

Although the McLane-Ocampo Treaty was never ratified, it showcases the level of

\(^{21}\) The refusal of the American Senate to admit Yucatan as a state in the midst of the tensions of pro-slavery and anti-slavery states prevented this annexation.

\(^{22}\) The economic situation of the country was so severe that it is estimated that GDP per capita did not grow until the 1870s, half a century after Mexico achieved independence (see Sánchez Sántiro, 2010).
despair of the Mexican government at the time, which was willing to put its sovereignty in jeopardy in exchange for urgent financial assistance.\textsuperscript{23} Adding to the troubles of the Mexican government, at the end of the Reform War, the victorious liberal faction led by President Juárez declared a two-year moratorium on foreign debt, triggering an invasion by a combined military force of British, Spanish, and French troops in 1861 to force payment (El Colegio de México, 2008).\textsuperscript{24} The Treaty of Soledad, negotiated on behalf of the Mexican government, achieved the Juárez government's recognition by Spain and the U.K, and it also convinced these powers to vacate the territory of Mexico. France, having imperialist ambitions in the Americas and being encouraged by the conservative sectors within the country, decided to invade the Mexican mainland and establish the Second Mexican Empire, with Maximilian of Habsburg, an Austro-Hungarian archduke, as emperor of Mexico.

The Second Mexican Empire lasted until 1867, with Republicans prevailing over conservatives and imperialists in a war known as the Second French intervention. The first foreign policy doctrine in Mexico was developed in this context. The Juárez doctrine encompasses the principles of national sovereignty, non-intervention, and peoples' self-determination, which later constituted the Carranza and Estrada doctrines. This doctrine states: ‘Mexico is a country as independent as the most powerful nations on Earth […] We must promote the principles of respect for the sovereignty of all nations’ (Juárez, 1862). This doctrine is the notorious result of Mexico's negative historical experiences in the first decades of independent life. Only with the Porfirio Díaz regime (1876-1911) did the country enjoy moderate stability in domestic and external spheres. Until this point, it can be seen that threats to territorial integrity and sovereignty by internal and external sources were persistent features for Mexico from the moment it became an independent nation.

\textsuperscript{23} As was the case with the addition of Yucatán and other former Mexican states into the American Union, the only obstacle for the entry into force of this treaty was the refusal of the Northern states in the US Senate to ratify it due to the belief that this treaty would benefit the Southern states in the imminent American Civil War (1861-1865).

\textsuperscript{24} One of the outcomes of this conflict was the interruption of diplomatic relations between Mexico and the Holy See that were only resumed until 1994. The involvement of the Church in the Reform War, and in the Cristiada War (1926-1929) where the Mexican state waged war against organised Catholicism, were perceived by the Mexican state as yet another kind of foreign interventionism.
The main concern for foreign policy throughout most of the 19th century was to safeguard the state's fragile sovereignty from more powerful countries, repeatedly displaying defensive actions in diplomacy. In some junctures, the Mexican government's difficult positions led to paradoxical decisions such as placing the territorial integrity of the country as a collateral guarantee in exchange for much-needed funds to preserve the government against domestic threats. Additionally, the circumstantial fact that relations between northern and southern states in the United States were tense saved the country's territorial integrity on more than one occasion. Consequently, Mexico’s self-perception was that of a weak state, with limited autonomy on the international stage and a foreign policy that responded to domestic inputs rather than interests abroad. These features endured in Mexico’s foreign policy in the following decades.

4.2 The Mexican revolution and the beginning of Mexico’s revolutionary nationalism

The Porfirio Díaz regime developed a more consolidated foreign policy as the government enjoyed more stability and a relative sense of prosperity. During this time, Mexico developed a strategy of diversification of foreign relations and investments to balance the influence of the US with European presence in investments, arts, and trade (Hernández, Kuntz, et al., 2012). However, President Díaz's constant re-elections and the country's administration by his cabinet alienated many sectors of the population, such as peasants, workers, and a nascent middle class that did not have access to political representation. The demands of these sectors converged to ignite the Mexican revolution (1910-1921). Along with the American invasion of 1846-48, the Mexican revolution is a colossal moment in its history and one of the most critical events in the twentieth century (Knight, 1986; Katz, 2005). The revolution is the foundation of the modern Mexican

---

25 In the latter part of the 19th century, the country enjoyed a healthy financial situation and managed to have financial surpluses. Economic growth was the second highest in Latin America, after Argentina (See Sánchez Sántiro, 2010).
26 This strategy also led the country to strengthen relations with other countries of the world, leading to the 1888 treaty of friendship and trade with Japan. Mexico was recognised by Japan as the first country to make a treaty with it on equal terms (See El Colegio de México, 2008).
27 A prominent part of Díaz’ cabinet were part of a group called *the científicos* or ‘the scientists’, due to their belief that public policies ought to be based on positivist politics.
state and grounded the nationalist revolutionary project that influenced the traditional orientation of foreign policy.

The outcome of the revolutionary struggle was devastating as 10% of the population perished from famine, disease, or battle casualties (El Colegio de México, 2008). The aftermath of the revolution saw the creation of the Party of the National Revolution that ruled the country until the year 2000.

Additionally, the US militarily intervened on three different occasions during this armed struggle, contributing to its negative appreciation as a significant other. It was within this context that the Carranza doctrine of foreign policy was created. This doctrine was the second great foreign policy doctrine in Mexico, and it greatly influenced the proclamation of the Estrada doctrine over a decade later. President Carranza (1917-1920) revived the spirit of the Juárez doctrine but established a particular emphasis on the legal equality of nations and the predominance of the interests of the state over the particular interests of foreign individuals and private companies:

Diplomacy must not serve for the protection of private interests, nor to put at their service the strength of nations. Nor should it serve to exert pressure on the governments of vulnerable countries, to obtain modifications to the laws that are not convenient for the subjects of powerful countries. (Carranza, 1918)

The Carranza doctrine directly alludes to Mexico’s self-perception as a ‘weak country’, subject to abuse by foreign powers, and that had to face a new form of pressure in the form of foreign private companies seeking to exploit the natural resources of the country such as oil. The Carranza doctrine created a strong correlation between foreign policy and national security by linking the administration of natural resources as an issue where the state has exclusivity. The Carranza doctrine was a pillar of the nationalistic revolutionary paradigm that influenced foreign policy's traditional orientation in Mexico.29

28 American ambassador Henry Lane Wilson actively supported the coup against the democratically-elected government of President Madero in 1911. In addition, the US occupied the Port of Veracruz in 1914 and the punitive expedition of 10,000 American troops invaded the northern state of Chihuahua seeking to arrest or kill General Francisco Villa in 1916.

29 Thornton (2021) demonstrates the international influence of Mexico’s revolutionary nationalism in multilateral governance institutions, where the country assumed a leadership position to change
4.3. Mexico’s post-revolutionary foreign policy

One of the top priorities for several governments in the aftermath of the revolution was to seek external recognition, particularly from the US. After three years of negotiations, the US recognised the government of Obregón and his successor, Elías-Calles, which made it possible to consolidate the Party of the National Revolution, which incorporated the military, peasant, worker, and proletariat sections that had taken part in the revolution.³⁰

The historic struggle to obtain international recognition to legitimise the government and obtain much-needed international finance was a decisive influence in the way Secretary of Foreign Affairs Genaro Estrada (1927-1932) interpreted Mexico’s position in the world. The Estrada doctrine reiterated the self-perception of Mexico as a vulnerable country subject to punitive external expectations.³¹

On September 27, 1930, Secretary Estrada stated:

> It is a very well-known fact that Mexico has suffered like no other country, the consequences of the practice that lets foreign governments judge the legitimacy or illegitimacy of another government, provoking in that way a situation in which the national constitution of governments or authorities, seems to be subordinated to the opinion of strangers. […] After a detailed study on the matter, the government of Mexico has transmitted instructions to its Ministers or Commercial Attaches in the countries affected by the recent policies, letting them know that Mexico does not pronounce itself in the sense of giving recognitions because it considers that it is a denigrating practice that not only hurts the sovereignty of other nations but puts them in the case that their internal affairs can be qualified in any sense by other governments, which assume a critical attitude by giving opinions, in favour or against, about the legal capacity of foreign governments.

Therefore, the government of Mexico limits itself to maintain or withdraw, when it thinks it is convenient, its diplomatic agents or to continue accepting, when it also considers it suitable, the diplomatic agents accredited in Mexico international norms and rules that favoured the defence of the sovereign equality of states and addressed imbalances of the global economic order.

³⁰ Later to be renamed Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, in 1946.
³¹ Other countries in the region suffered the same external modes of interference. For instance, the Calvo doctrine used by other Latin American countries is a corollary of the non-intervention principle. This doctrine states that international investors can only use the courts of the country on which the investment is located.
by other nations, without qualifying, precipitously, the foreign nations’ right to accept, maintain or replace their governments or authorities. (Estrada cited in Jessup, 1931, 720)

This statement served as the basis of the Estrada doctrine, and constituted the essence of the traditional orientation of foreign policy and Mexico’s foreign policy's cornerstone for the rest of the 20th century. The traditional orientation of foreign policy justified the continuous defensive positions in Mexican diplomacy for decades to come as several governments used this doctrine to avoid the ‘denigrating practice’ of international recognition and eluded foreign entanglements. Besides non-intervention, the Estrada doctrine was also based on the principles of self-determination of nations and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

The adoption of the Estrada doctrine confirms the country’s historical lack of significant interests beyond its borders until the 1930s, a behavioural trait opposite of what could be regarded as a foreign policy of a country that could be considered a middle power. The implementation of this doctrine made Mexico a self-righteous observer of world politics, embracing a de-facto neutral stance in the international system (Mena, 2005).

The nationalisation of the oil industry and the Second World War created a different kind of collaboration between Mexico and the rest of the world. Counter-intuitively, when the administration of President Cardenas (1934-1940) nationalised the assets of American, British, and Dutch oil companies in the country, Washington did not intervene to defend the interests of US oil companies and resisted pressures from these companies to place an embargo of US technology to Mexico. This lack of reaction was the establishment of the good-neighbour policy in the United States to improve relations with Latin American countries in the context of increasing geopolitical tensions in Europe (Koppes, 1982).

During the Second World War, Mexico and the US collaborated in military affairs for the first time since the raids against apache Indians in the late 19th century (De los Ríos and Riguzzi, 2012). Mexico provided millions of labourers and workers to

32 Non-oil trade was not significant as the Industrialisation by Import-Substitution model was put into practice from the 1930s until the early 1980s.
relieve the home front in the US and supply a steady amount of primary resources such as minerals and oil to the American industry. Due to the sinking of six Mexican oil tankers by German submarines, the government declared war on the axis powers on May 22, 1942, providing the allies with fighting units that participated in the Pacific theatre.

4.4 Contradictions in the traditional orientation of foreign policy in the Post-World War II period

The principle of non-intervention of the traditional orientation of foreign policy was not always followed rigidly in the post-war period. Several Mexican administrations actively supported socialist-inclined rebellions and governments to reiterate their revolutionary and leftist credentials to domestic audiences (Mares, 1988). Examples of this activism were the material and diplomatic support given to the Spanish Republic during the Spanish civil war, the government of President Allende in Chile, and different rebel groups during the Central American civil wars such as the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) in Nicaragua and the Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN) in El Salvador (Mendoza, 2014).

The selective application of the Estrada doctrine in Mexican diplomacy caused several conflicts with the expectations from the US when it needed Mexico’s support in hemispheric issues. One such example was the confrontational attitude of the Castro regime towards the US. The Mexican government openly supported the Cuban revolution as it allowed the embracement of a Latin-Americanist position to the anti-imperialist resentment present in many sectors of the population. This support also allowed the display of a diversification strategy that endowed the country with more autonomy.

The difficult position of having to conciliate domestic needs for legitimacy and the expectations from the US was undertaken through the Ojeda formula. The Ojeda

---

33 The Bracero program that lasted from 1942 to 1964 employed more than 4 million Mexican labourers in American fields.
34 In the case of the Spanish and Nicaraguan Civil War, Mexico’s support went beyond mere diplomatic postures as it supplied ammunition and firearms to the socialist side in both conflicts.
35 The Mexican and the Cuban regime had the implicit agreement of Mexico supporting Cuba in international organisations in exchange for Cuba not interfering in domestic affairs (Ojeda, 2008).
formula was a foreign policy strategy where the US accepted Mexico’s right to disagree with Washington on fundamental issues of Mexican interest in exchange for active cooperation and support in essential global topics relevant to the US (Ojeda, 1976). The application of the Ojeda formula was designed to procure relative sovereignty vis-à-vis the US and provided parameters of predictability in the bilateral relation. With this, Mexico managed to preserve a considerable margin of manoeuvrability as it exploited the country's stability as a bargaining element with Washington. The US, in turn, regarded stability to be crucial in its crusade against communism and thus, tolerated disagreements and anti-American nationalist rhetoric in Mexican politics (Ojeda, 1976).

An area of diplomacy where the Ojeda formula permeated was multilateral affairs. Mexico abstained from participating actively in multilateral organisations such as the United Nations (UN) to avoid a potential conflict with the US or be put in the awkward position of supporting US policies, which was unpopular and contradicted the anti-American rhetoric of the Mexican regime. Mexico’s involvement within the UN framework is given in the next section as a historical background in chapter 5.

4.5 Historical involvement of Mexico in the Security Council of the United Nations

In what some scholars have called an act of self-censorship in foreign policy (Ortiz-Mena, 2007), Mexico has avoided continuously being part of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The benefits and disadvantages of being a non-permanent member of the UNSC have been discussed internally since the creation of the UN in 1945 (Sotomayor, 2008). In the first-ever elections for membership in the UNSC held in 1946, Mexico was designated a non-permanent member for a one-year term. However, the notion that prevailed after this participation was that it was better to privilege working within the General Assembly rather than participating in the UNSC. It was considered that, due to the inherent structure of the UNSC, any kind of involvement in international organisations violated the constitutional principle of protecting the legal equality of States. Involvement in the UNSC would likely put Mexico either in the unpopular position of supporting the US or cause unnecessary friction with the country's most important bilateral relationship. However, in 1980
Mexico was admitted again to the council as a compromise candidate to break the impasse created after 154 rounds of voting between Colombia and Cuba (Marín-Bosch, 2008).

Joining the council in 1980 was one of the most transcendental decisions in Mexican foreign policy of the latter half of the century. Marín-Bosch, (2008) and Thierry-Muñoz (2002) argue that Mexico decided to assume this nomination because its foreign policy at the time was assertive and consistent with an emerging middle power behaviour. Mexico possessed vast oil resources and was an active participant to counter the American intervention in the Central American civil wars during the 1970s and 1980s.

In 1991, President Salinas' administration, endorsed by most Latin American governments, decided to nominate Mexico for non-permanent membership in the council for the 1992-93 biennium. Nonetheless, this decision provoked considerable resistance in academic and bureaucratic circles that viewed this membership as an unnecessary risk (Heller, 2008). In the end, the escalating tensions in the Persian Gulf convinced the government of Mexico that the international context was not favourable for membership in the UNSC and declined its postulation in support of Venezuela. The Salinas government perceived that the country would have had a narrow margin of maneuver in the council with potential conflict in the Persian Gulf and therefore opted instead in concentrating its attention on the negotiations that led to the creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Heller, 2008).36 Following the guidelines of the Ojeda formula, a hypothetical closer relationship with the northern neighbour was interpreted as a constraint for the participation of Mexico in multilateral organizations, and would have eroded the revolutionary credentials that were used as a legitimization device by the regime (Schiavon, 2004). On the other hand, a hypothetical confrontation with the US in

---

36 According to former diplomat Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, previous Mexican participation in the UNSC was motivated by the desire of Mexico to have a leadership role in Latin America, although Sirigu (2015) states that these involvements were not caused by an explicit willingness from the part of Mexico but were more a product of external circumstances such as the compromise nomination of Mexico to the council in 1980.
multilateral platforms such as the UNSC would have threatened the US’ vital role as a political interlocutor for Mexico with other states (Bondí, 2004; González, 2001).

4.6 Mexico’s Latin-Americanism in foreign policy

This section serves as a historical background to Chapter 6, highlighting the importance of ‘Latin America’ as an abstract term used as an alternative significant other that is often used rhetorically by policymakers to counterbalance the overwhelming presence of the US in Mexico.

The international context in the 1950s and 1960s was coherent with applying an isolationist economic model such as the Import-Substitution Industrialisation (ISI). Despite this isolationism, the country began to embrace relations with Latin American countries to counterbalance the overwhelming presence of the US One platform that Mexico used to develop this counterbalance strategy was the Organisation of American States. Mexico actively worked towards constraining the US within the OAS to increase its cost of acting unilaterally and build coalitions with states in a similar position, reproducing a feature of the diplomacy of small powers (Saltalamacchia, 2014; Gigleux, 2016). Mexico also resisted the promotion of democracy in the hemisphere. This was evident in the 1954 US coup that overthrew the government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala. The US sought to legitimise its interventions in the region by linking these interventions against ‘communist interventions in the region’ with the defence of democratic governments. Mexico sponsored an unsuccessful counterproposal, which defended the right of countries in the hemisphere to choose their preferred system of government.

‘It is not admissible that any state attempts to impose its form of government to other countries in the American continent. The socio-political regime belongs to the internal jurisdiction of the state’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1958). This position was present in the defence of the Castro regime, opposing the expulsion of Cuba from the OAS and being the only country in Latin America that did not break relations with the Cuban government during this time. The Mexican government

37 For instance, Wehner and Thies (2014) assert that Mexico’s accession to the APEC in 1993 was in part due to Washington’s efforts to convince their partners in APEC to admit Mexico as a full-member, socialising Mexico with other entities and states.

38 Mexico maintained that the OAS favoured the interests of the US, and avoided active participation in this regional organisation (See Pellicer, 1966; Ojeda, 1976).
took a similar position when it harshly criticised American intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965. However, Mexico’s most significant diplomatic contribution to the region was the 1967 Tlatelolco treaty, making Latin America the first ‘de-nuclearised’ region by outlawing the development, storage, distribution, and tests of nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Organisation for the Proscription of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (OPANAL), based in Mexico City, was created to administer this treaty (Mendoza, 2014). The efforts of Alfonso Garcia Robles, Echeverría’s Secretary of Foreign Affairs, in creating the Tlatelolco Treaty was acknowledged by the international community when García Robles was awarded the Nobel prize for Peace in 1982. This episode illustrated Mexico’s regional leadership NRC.

Mexico’s integration with North America in the 1990s turned much of the country’s attention to the Global North's economic affairs. This integration prompted a response from Latin American leaders and diplomats, who criticised this move to abandon Mexico’s ‘Latin American roots’ (Benítez, 2016, 35). The detachment from the region led scholars such as Pellicer (2006) to characterise Mexico’s position in the world as a middle power that had no appetite to display any regional leadership role.

4.7 Mexico’s adoption of liberal values

This section serves as a historical background to Chapter 7. Liberal values represent the tenets that western democracies promoted in foreign policy platforms such as democracy and human rights in the 1990s and 2000s. Chapter 7 demonstrates how democracy promotion and the defence of human rights were gradually incorporated into foreign policy narratives in Mexico as part of the new foreign policy orientation interpretation. Eventually, the interpretation from the pragmatic foreign policy orientation of the promotion of liberal values was included as a constitutional guideline in 2011, 23 years after the inclusion of the traditional orientation's foreign policy principles. The inclusion of HR in the constitution helped consolidate Mexico’s enactment of middle power NRCs by concentrating diplomatic resources in a particular niche issue of the international agenda, an archetypical behaviour of middle powers (Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal, 1993).
The promotion of liberal values has been evoked in the foundational documents of the state and on every constitution ever since.\textsuperscript{39} For instance, the current constitution of 1917 was the first legal charter in the world to recognise social rights (Majeed, Watts, and Brown, 2006). In the international context, Mexico first began to promote liberal values since the celebration of the Dumbarton Oaks conference in 1944. At Dumbarton Oaks, the Mexican government advocated the inclusion of HR issues in the final document that the conference produced. Mexico also proposed creating a declaration of nations' duties and rights and including the international declaration on duties and rights of men as appendices of the UN Charter (United Nations, 1945). Mexico also vehemently defended the principle of the ‘reserved domain of the state’ in international politics, reaffirming its non-intervention principle.

Furthermore, the Mexican government highlighted the need to create an international organisation to set procedures for applying the principles gathered within this declaration, which will later be the UN Commission of Human Rights (Covarrubias, 2008). In the Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace of 1945 held in Mexico City a year later, the government insisted on including HR as a paramount issue of hemispheric relations (Heller, 2008).\textsuperscript{40} Authors such as Chabat (2009) and Mendoza (2014) argue that the advocacy of Mexico to liberal values can be explained as a strategy to bring legitimacy to an authoritarian regime when the international system was not interested in criticising the internal situation of the country. Besides, Mexico’s historical vulnerability to great powers incentivised the country's involvement in the consolidation of international law, an area where liberal values were becoming essential elements. However, according to Covarrubias (2008), Mexico envisioned the United Nations as an organisation that conveyed a juridical ethos instead of being a political body. As Chapter 5 analyses, the creation of the Security Council within the UN framework proved that the new international organisation had a political focus rather than a juridical one. This focus prompted Mexico to champion the principle of non-intervention and avoid active participation from UN organisations.

\textsuperscript{39} Such is the case with \textit{Sentimientos de la Nación}, written by founding father Morelos and approved by the insurgent congress of Anáhuac in 1813 and included in the insurgent constitution of Apatzingán in 1814.

\textsuperscript{40} Colloquially known as the Chapultepec conference.
The absence of external role expectations on Mexico’s adherence to liberal values enabled the government to use democracy and HR as issues that validated its position within domestic politics. The political interest in the outside world was negligible, and the Import Substitution Industrialisation model meant that economic links abroad were not a priority. Consequently, external expectations and domestic contestation of roles had a limited effect on the country’s foreign policy during the 1940s and 1950s. For instance, the PRI regime was only willing to engage the US in strictly necessary issues. For its part, Washington seemed satisfied by having stability south of the border guaranteed by the PRI government in the Cold War context (Keller, 2012). In the domestic theatre, the government elite's cohesion around the same ideological orientation and the creation of the diplomatic service contributed to the consolidation of the rule of the President over bureaucracies in foreign policy and prevented domestic role contestation (González, 2008).

During the 1960s, liberal values began to play a more central part in political life. In 1968, a massive student protest calling for more political openness was violently repressed by government agents, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of innocent people. Although the extent of the repression was known in the outside world, the country was not scrutinised by other international players’ HR and democracy issues. The Mexican government successfully hosted the XIX Olympic games just some days later, showcasing Mexico as a modernist country (Sikkink, 1993; Zolov, 2004). Nonetheless, although the 1968 massacre did not provoke significant international criticism, it did generate meaningful domestic responses, as minor guerrilla uprisings took place throughout the country (Aguayo, 2010).

In addition, the administrations of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) and López-Portillo (1976-1982) adopted an active position defending HR and denouncing dictatorships in Chile, Spain, and Rhodesia, criticising the apartheid in South Africa. Moreover, Mexico proposed to recognise Zionism as a form of racism in the UN's General Assembly in 1975. Mexico’s motivation to adopt these postures stemmed from the
need to acquiesce to Mexico’s progressive sectors after the 1968 massacre (Ojeda, 1986). 41

International attention on the issue of liberal values in Mexico started to change in the 1980s when high-impact crimes such as the murders of journalist Manuel Buendía and DEA agent Enrique Camarena took place and drew severe criticism from the US. This situation coincided with the rise of the political opposition in Mexico, which started to gain power and contest its domestic and international position in liberal values. A series of civil disobedience movements were carried out in Northern Mexico in 1986 that gathered international attention and prompted the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) involvement. From that point onward, liberal values became the centre of domestic role contestation between the different interpretations of the NRCs from the traditional and new foreign policy orientations. Liberal values also became an issue in external role expectations, where western democracies and NGOs increasingly prescribed foreign policy roles to Mexico in the form of social cues. Mexico accepted these cues because it wanted to improve its interaction with western democracies. A significant part of the country’s elites and public opinion wanted liberal values to be internalised in its legal framework.

For instance, the end of the Cold War and the Lake Doctrine application in Washington that endorsed democracy and the expansion of free markets were important events where the prescription of new social cues by Mexico’s primary significant other was obvious. These intermingled processes of external expectations and domestic demands led to the promotion of human rights—a fundamental tenet of the new foreign policy orientation—to be included as a constitutional foreign policy mandate in 2011. As can be attested in Table 2, by incorporating international guidelines of HR, Mexico followed a regional trend and facilitated the enactment of Mexico’s middle power NRCs, a process that is further analysed in Chapter 5.

---

41 Katz (2019) writes how another reason for adopting these positions originated from Echeverria’s ambition to be a leader of the Third World Movement and for eventually being elected as Secretary-General of the UN.
Table 2: Inclusion of international norms regarding Human Rights in the constitution of Latin American countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perú</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brasil</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cámara de Senadores, 2014.

4.8 Mexico’s foreign policy contradictions: Activism in international affairs

Mexico’s apparent distaste for active engagement in world politics started to change in the 1970s. Significant international and domestic changes occurred during this time, which altered the Estrada doctrine's application and underlined the contradictions between Mexico’s role in the global system and the principles of the traditional orientation of foreign policy.

At the beginning of the Echeverría administration (1970-76), the president declared an active foreign policy was not a goal in his administration (Valero, 1979). However, just years later, the Mexican government intervened in other states' domestic situation, distancing itself from the non-intervention principle. For instance, Mexico condemned the human rights violations of the Chilean and Spanish dictatorships. Echeverría was motivated to hold these vocal postures to appease the
radical left in Mexico after the 1968 massacre and due to the deceleration of the Mexican domestic industry (Chabat, 2013; Ojeda, 1986). However, Mexico’s rhetoric interventions provoked severe criticisms from international media. The Chilean and Spanish regimes reacted by indicating the Mexican government's incongruence when Echeverria himself participated in the 1968 student massacre when he was Minister of the Interior. These interventions constituted an example of the Estrada doctrine's limitations on Mexico’s engagement with the outer world. Proponents of the traditional orientation also perceived this active involvement as a source of prestige and ‘moral authority’ for Mexico’s foreign policy despite this recognisable contradiction with the non-intervention principle (Presidencia de la República, 1994).

Echeverria also prompted Mexico to take a protagonist role in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to promote a revision of the Bretton Woods system through the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of the States. Even though industrialised nations never implemented the contents of the charter, this proposal was accepted in the General Assembly of the United Nations and demonstrated the leadership role that Mexico had within the NAM.

Much like Echeverria before him, Lopez Portillo (1976-1982) did not vocally express his intention to display an active foreign policy during his administration. However, the Central American civil wars challenged the perception that Mexico did not have interests outside its borders. This period represents the first time that Mexico has been regarded as regularly exhibiting a foreign policy of a middle power. For instance, González (1983) and Bagley (1982) defined Mexico’s diplomacy as having regional clout and a strong presence in multilateral affairs, archetypical features of the middle powermanship.

The severity of the civil wars in Central American threatened Mexico's southern border's stability, and it enabled the country to have the regional clout that Bagley and González referred to. In this period, Mexico actively supported the Sandinista guerrilla in Nicaragua, and Jorge Castañeda, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, declared that Mexico wanted to isolate the Somoza regime Nicaragua ‘to accelerate

42 In 1968, a massive student protest calling for more political openness was repressed violently by government agents which resulted in the deaths of more than 300 innocent people.
the overthrow of this regime’ (Castañeda, 1981, 193). This involvement directly contravened the non-intervention principle of the Estrada doctrine. Several governments in Latin America even denounced Mexican interventionism in Central America after the joint communiqué Mexico and the French government was released in 1981. In this communiqué, both countries agreed to confer political representation to the rebel Frente Farabundo Martí Para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN). This action provoked a reaction by the governments of Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, Chile, and other Central American countries that produced the Caracas Declaration, denouncing Mexican interventionism in El Salvador’s internal affairs (Mares, 1988).

A relevant factor in explaining this renewed activism was the discovery of vast offshore oil fields in 1979. According to Grayson (1979; 1988), the Lopez Portillo administration felt confident enough to make bolder decisions regarding foreign policy due to the extraction of massive petroleum and gas fields and the considerable amount of profit these fields generated for the government. The prices of petroleum and the expectation of even higher prices in the future were perceived by the political elite as a window of opportunity to foster growth and development and as an enabling element to increase its influence within its vicinity (Mares, 1988). For instance, Mexico provided Central American and Caribbean nations with preferential oil prices to expand its regional influence through the San José Accord of 1981 (Gurría, 1994).

4.9 Mexico after 1982

The beginning of the Reagan administration and its assertive involvement in the Central American civil wars constricted Mexico’s margin of foreign policy action. It also showcased the counterproductive effect of Mexico’s intervention in Central America by being partial in its involvement within the region. In its partiality, the country failed to stabilize the region and had motivated the US to interfere in the region, greatly diminishing its influence in its regional vicinity. The government of President De la Madrid (1982-1988) drastically modified domestic and foreign policy. Mexico’s involvement in the Central American civil
wars continued through a process known as Contadora. Launched in 1982, Contadora was a diplomatic initiative of Mexico to find a peaceful solution to Central American conflicts by acting as a broker of a peaceful resolution among all sides rather than undertaking one-sided support. In this initiative, Mexico invited Colombia, Panama, and Venezuela to mediate in the internal conflicts that swept Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. The Contadora process was well received by other governments in the region. Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil formed a support group for Contadora, which eventually evolved into the Group of Eight, and afterwards as the Rio Group. In time, the Contadora Process contributed to the Esquipulas and Chapultepec peace treaties, ending the civil wars in Guatemala and El Salvador, respectively.

However, the most decisive foreign policy decision emanated from the catastrophic economic crisis of 1982. The collapse of the international oil prices in 1981 was much mismanaged by the Mexican government and led to a massive sovereign debt on which the country defaulted. This crisis was the most severe in the country’s history, and it compromised its international position in the next years.

The devastation of the domestic market due to the 1982 crisis led to the replacement of the ISI model with an export-oriented model to stimulate the economy (Colegio de México, 2008). The opening of the economic system meant that the outside world was no longer perceived as a source of threats but as a source of opportunities. As a function of this new self-perception, the new, pragmatic orientation of foreign policy emerged. This orientation promoted closer economic links with developed countries than traditional orientation based on nationalism, Latin-Americanism, and limited isolationism. Meanwhile, the proponents of the traditional orientation depicted this shift in foreign policy as overwhelmingly concentrated on economic issues and the North American region (González and Struder, 2012). The principles of the Estrada doctrine were introduced as constitutional guidelines in May 1988 as a reaction to the growing influence of the new foreign policy orientation and to ‘reiterate the traditional diplomatic attitudes of the nation’ to ‘guarantee its application by future governments’ (Castro, 1989, 34; Gámez, 2001; Starr, 2004).

---

43 The name emanates from the name of the Panamanian island the foreign ministers of the group initially gathered.
The interpretation by the De la Madrid administration that economic opening was necessary to counter the effects of the 1982 crisis that led Mexico to join the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) in 1986. The country’s entrance into the GATT was the beginning of a trend where Mexico sought to insert itself into global trade organisations. The interpretation of the Carlos Salinas administration (1988-1994) was that the country ought to take part in the struggle for markets and capital that was taking place at the end of the 1980s and 1990s (Chabat, 2013). Despite Mexico being the next-door neighbour of the largest consumer market in the world, economic integration with the US was seen as politically unattainable due to the strong entrenchment of the traditional orientation of foreign policy (Castañeda and Pastor, 1989; Toro, 2009). For instance, the US continued to be regarded as a ‘historic enemy’ of Mexico by high-ranking officials during the De la Madrid administration (Krauze, 1986). Due to this perception, Salinas engaged with European countries and Japan as potential markets for Mexican products rather than seeking the US first (Chabat, 2013). However, after unproductive meetings at the 1990 Davos Summit with representatives of these countries, Mexico finally drew closer to the US and Canada to negotiate a future North American trade deal.

4.10 The negotiation and enactment of NAFTA

Due to the resistance that announcing trade negotiations with the US generated among the public and elites espousing the traditional orientation of foreign policy, Salinas used the Mexican Senate to introduce the topic to the national agenda. Salinas asked the Senate, which had a vast PRI majority, to hold a series of consultations on Mexico’s trade interactions with the world (Blanco, 1991). Unsurprisingly, these consultations concluded that it was in Mexico’s interest to engage Canada and the United States to negotiate a free trade agreement. In addition, the conclusion of the document established that Mexico’s economic sovereignty was assured (Tomlin and Cameron, 2000).

44 For example, Secretary of Interior Manuel Bartlett was reported to say that capitalists, the catholic church and the US were historic enemies of the Mexican State (Krauze, 1986).
45 Although issues pertaining to foreign policy rarely become subjects of national debates (Bondi, 2004).
A similar position was made with the Commission of International Affairs (CAI) of the PRI, which supported the President’s interpretation of the new, pragmatic orientation of foreign policy. Bondí (2004) found that out of 27 articles in a volume dedicated to foreign policy, only one text advocated for closer relations with Latin American. This highlights the gradual reinterpretation of nationalism and sovereignty towards a more pragmatic self-perception of Mexico’s interactions with the world. Negotiations towards a regional trade agreement formally started in the summer of 1990. These talks lasted more than three years on which side deals regarding labor and environmental regulations were included in the negotiations’ general framework (Tomlin and Cameron, 2000). The legislative branches approved the free trade agreement of the three North American countries, and NAFTA went into effect on January 1st, 1994.

Along with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo of 1848, NAFTA was the most consequential treaty in Mexico's history. For the first time, the relation with the primary significant other was bounded by a normative framework of procedures and rules, that gave parameters of predictability to both countries' external expectations (Vega, 2014). NAFTA also illustrated a critical reconfiguration of the US not as a limitation of Mexico’s autonomy but as an enhancer of it. Now, Mexico could diversify its interactions with other countries using NAFTA as a platform to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from several sources. This diversification of interactions would have been difficult to achieve otherwise. Although NAFTA has been portrayed as a hegemonic tool where Mexico followed the role prescriptions from the US, it is well documented that the Mexican state had the initiative to engage the U.S and initiate trade negotiations.46 Moreover, the Mexican government still protected the energy sector - the last stronghold of revolutionary nationalism - from foreign interference.

---

46 Cicantell (2001), for example, portrays NAFTA as a hegemonic tool of the US.
4.11 The emergence of the new foreign policy orientation

Furthermore, Mexico’s embrace of the new, pragmatic orientation of foreign policy created two problems that affected the country’s enactment of its middle power NRCs in the case studies of this thesis. The first problem was Mexico's divergent role expectations by the US and Latin American countries. Mexico’s engagement to western democracies and its turn to the North by joining the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) in 1993 and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1994 was severely assessed by Latin American countries as a detachment of the Latin American identity of Mexico (Pellicer, 2006). Mexico’s estrangement with the region that shares similar cultural affinities contrasted with the relation with the US.

Despite NAFTA, the bilateral relation between Mexico and the US was often depicted as ‘a marriage of convenience’ (Weintraub, 1990) or as ‘distant neighbours’ (Riding, 1984). Mexican diplomats were aware of the severe misinterpretations between Mexico and the US. For example, Ambassador Pellicer stated that even though Mexico was a commercial partner and an occasionally uncomfortable neighbour to the US, it never characterised its relation with Mexico as ‘special’ (Pellicer et al, 2006, 45). Moreover, the Mexican ambassador to the US during the negotiations of NAFTA stated that:

‘We [Mexico and the US] will be neighbours forever, are partners for the moment, but we will never be friends, as for them we lack the stature to be treated equally in the same way as they treat the Canadians’ (Montaño, 2004, 89).

Moreover, American officials regularly lectured their Mexican colleagues on corruption and democracy, a condition that Weintraub (1990) assesses as ‘US insensitivity to Mexico’s concerns and Mexican hypersensitivity’ to American rhetorical expressions. This situation affected Mexico’s enactment of its middle power NRCs in the case studies of this thesis due to the difficult task of articulating the conflicting role expectations and demands from actors that influenced Mexico’s place in the world.
The second problem has two dimensions regarding domestic sources of foreign policy. The first dimension relates to the marginalisation of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs from foreign policy decisions in favour of the Secretariat of Economic Affairs. This bureaucratic competition exemplified the emergence of the economic variant of foreign policy in Mexico and the increasing contestation between the interpretation of NRCs between the traditional and the new foreign policy orientations. For instance, Rozental (1999) and Gámez (2001) illustrate the statutes and bureaucratic culture of foreign policy in Mexico. One part of such contemporary culture is the predominance of the Secretariat of Economy and the Office of the Presidency in foreign policy decisions to the detriment of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs due to its advocacy of the traditionalist orientation.

The second dimension from the emergence of the new, pragmatic orientation of foreign policy was the incomplete opening that Mexico experienced. The vigorous embrace of economic liberalism contrasted with the absence of liberal values in Mexico's foreign policy platform. This inconsistency hindered the country’s socialization with western democracies by not following their social cues and affected Mexico’s enactment of middle power NRCs.

4.12 Mexico’s democratic transition in the year 2000 and the Castañeda doctrine

The promotion of liberal values in foreign policy became a central pillar of the political alternation of power in 2000. Mexico’s process of economic liberalization and political openness in the 1980s established more competitive elections (Dillon and Preston, 2004). In this context, Vicente Fox, nominated by the National Action Party (PAN), was elected President on July 2, 2000, and assumed office on December 1 of the same year. His election broke with more than seven decades of uninterrupted semi-authoritarian rule by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

The political alternation of power in the year 2000 had two distinct effects on foreign policy analysed in this thesis. Firstly, the elections endowed the country with a new self-perception as a democratic entity that President Fox’s officials interpreted as a ‘democratic bonus’, to improve
Mexico’s position in international politics (Castañeda, 2001b; Castañeda, 2001c; Fox, 2002). This new self-perception exacerbated domestic role contestation between the two foreign policy orientations. Several officials from the Fox administration formulated statements at the beginning of the administration to distinguish the embrace of the new foreign policy orientation from the traditional one. The National Development Plan (NDP) also made this distinction by stating it was ‘indispensable to play an active contribution in the new international architecture’ in virtue of the country’s position and importance in the world (Presidencia de la República, 2001a). This position highlighted Mexico’s middle power attributes in a document of this kind for the first time.

Furthermore, President Fox’s secretary of foreign affairs, Jorge Castañeda, labeled the traditional orientation of foreign policy as a defence of the country’s regime (Castañeda, 2001a). Similar words were stated by President Fox himself when he said that ‘the previous version of foreign policy was mostly concerned about the survival of the regime, disregarding genuine national interests’ (Fox Contigo, 2002). President Fox also declared that the traditional foreign policy orientation ‘paralysed foreign policy as the result of the regime's incapacity to acknowledge that the world had changed’ (Fox, 2002, 12).

The Castañeda doctrine was created in this context. This doctrine endorses a more active role for Mexico in the world (Castañeda, 2000). The Castañeda doctrine significantly influenced the Fox administration's decision to nominate Mexico for a non-permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Chapter 5 further covers the repercussions of this doctrine.

Secondly, the new-found balance of power in Mexico has been considered a cause of political gridlock in the country, affecting foreign policy formulation (González, 2006). For instance, Congress denied President Fox and his cabinet the possibility of traveling abroad on several occasions. Legislators also overwhelmingly opposed

---

47 For instance, the Mexican constitution establishes that the President and members of the cabinet must seek approval from Congress to travel abroad. These requests were occasionally denied during the Fox administration.
the Fox administration's criticisms of Cuba and Venezuela's human rights violations (Covarrubias and Muñoz, 2007).

According to the Mexican constitution, the Senate has the faculty to approve the appointments of the diplomatic corps, publish statements about the state of Mexican foreign affairs, ratify international treaties, and approve the deployment of troops abroad. Historically, the legislature has been subordinate to the President, as both mostly originated from the same political party. However, since 1997 there has been a new distinctive role for Congress within Mexican foreign policy that showcased the contestation of NRCs between the two foreign policy orientations. This distinctive role of congress responds to a nascent political pluralism, and this contestation of the interpretation of NRCs will be analysed thoroughly in the case studies of this thesis.

4.13 Final remarks

Mexico's historical experiences provide the context underlying the foreign policy decision-making processes covered in this thesis. Historical developments explain the defensive diplomatic positions of Mexico in most of the 19th and 20th centuries. As we will see in the following case studies, the salience of historical references can be empirically identified in several political debates. This association between historical experiences and foreign policy behaviour is consistent with role theoretical frameworks. For instance, Beneš and Harnisch (2015) state that historical roles are difficult to dissolve and tend to reproduce patterns of behaviour that may lead to domestic role contestation such as the one present between the traditional and the pragmatic orientations of foreign policy.

Throughout most of its existence, Mexico's interactions with the rest of the world shaped its self-perception as a weak country that was a recurrent victim of great powers. This self-perception helped establish foreign policy behavioural guidelines such as the Juárez, Carranza, and Estrada doctrines that stress the defence of sovereignty, non-intervention, and equal legality of states. The traditional orientation of foreign policy made Mexican political elites unwilling to portray an active

---

48 The Senate has its own independent research Centre in foreign policy-The Gilberto Bosques Institute- with the task of offering relevant information and advice to lawmakers.
engagement with the world, self-restraining from consistent long-term participation in international politics instead.

In this regard, the conceptualization of the significant other can illustrate some relevant aspects of Mexico’s interaction with the rest of the world. In this chapter, it can be seen that Mexico had evolving relations with two significant others. A primary significant other being the United States, and Latin America is an alternative significant other. While the US bears overwhelming influence in the country, Latin America is routinely evoked in Mexico's political discourses as an abstract entity related to Mexican identity and independence vis-à-vis the United States.

Role theoretical frameworks explain how an influential neighbour influences role learning through historical experiences. At this point, the Mexican political elite constructed national role conceptions through the traditional orientation of foreign policy against the US. This negative construction is a process that Beneš and Harnisch refer to as negative othering, which nurtured Mexican nationalism and anti-American narratives in Mexico's foreign policy.

A new self-perception of Mexico in the world began to emerge in the 1980s due to domestic demands of democratisation and new interactions with the US when Mexico joined the GATT, and NAFTA was created. These actions constituted a new relationship with the US as Mexico’s primary significant other, which was no longer treated negatively but seen increasingly in a positive light. The new association with the US assisted in Mexico's socialisation with Western democracies when Mexico joined the OECD and with Asian economies when Mexico joined the APEC. The increasing margin of manoeuvre of Mexico in foreign affairs endowed the country with more opportunities to enact middle power NRCs. The firm and decisive change in foreign policy prompted the emergence of the new foreign policy orientation that cohabitated with the traditional orientation during this thesis's timeframe. Since both orientations of foreign policy constituted different interpretations of Mexico’s foreign policy NRCs, role domestic contestation and role
conflict took place. These conflicts between foreign policy orientations are analysed in the following case studies.
5. Chapter Five: Involvement of Mexico in the Security Council of the United Nations during the Iraq crisis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores Mexico’s participation as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) during the 2002–3 period. The chapter presents evidence of the processes of role contestation, role expectations, and how these mechanisms have affected role conflict and the enactment of middle-power NRCs in Mexico's foreign policy. A particular emphasis is made on the country’s position regarding the Iraq war and how external expectations and the domestic competition for enactment between two different interpretations of NRCs shaped decisions in Mexico's foreign policy. The results of this case study highlight the display of NRCs associated with middle powers that Mexico attempted to pursue at the UNSC.

After analysing documents and speeches from relevant policymakers, the case study found evidence of the enactment of the following NRCs: coalition-builder, supporter of multilateralism, and good international citizen. The traditional and pragmatic orientations of foreign policy in Mexico were in constant competition for their interpretations to be enacted. In addition, while the Mexican government attempted to enact the bridge-builder NRC, advocates of the traditional orientation backed the enactment of the coalition-builder NRC with other members in the UNSC that wanted to restrain the British–American intention of invading Iraq.

Bureaucracies, the Congress, and scholars participated in a nationwide discussion about the NRCs Mexico ought to articulate. As this chapter shows, Mexico’s participation in the UNSC caused one of the few instances in national history where foreign policy was part of the public agenda. Mexico’s controversial membership in the UNSC provoked conflicts between foreign policy orientations, causing hesitancy in the country’s performance and an inability to conform to its middle-power status. Primary sources such as speeches and documents that are proponents of both orientations delivered throughout this case can be regarded as diagnostic evidence of these interpretations. The thesis then analyses the processes of Mexico’s contestations and eventual enactment of NRCs. Finally, an analysis of the mechanisms involved in the case was made to infer whether each mechanism worked
as theorised or if the observed manifestations of domestic role contestation and divergent role expectations differed from the research hypothesis.

Ultimately, this case discovered that the solid position of the traditional orientation in diplomacy, along with the influence from vertical role contestation and bureaucratic politics, propelled the traditional orientation to have their interpretations enacted in the coalition-builder and supporter of multilateralism NRCs. The evidence of role merging between both orientations was found only in the good international citizen NRC. Despite role conflict, Mexico’s middle-power NRCs were acknowledged by several countries due to the position of Aguilar Zinser as ambassador in the UN during the Iraq crisis. The case ends with an analysis of how Mexico’s NRCs as a middle power were contested by different interpretations of foreign policy orientations. By doing this analysis, the case goes beyond what is already known about this context from other studies.

A comprehensive timeline of critical events covered in this chapter is presented below.

**Table 3: Timeline of critical events in Chapter 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2000</td>
<td>The NDP announces a new, active role for Mexico in foreign policy matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2000–October 2001</td>
<td>Mexico campaigns for a non-permanent seat at the UNSC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2001</td>
<td>‘War on Terror’ declared by the Bush administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2001</td>
<td>Membership elections at the UNSC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2002</td>
<td>Congress ratifies Aguilar Zinser as ambassador to the UN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2002</td>
<td>The US claims it found evidence of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in Iraq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2002</td>
<td>Secretary Castañeda makes Mexico’s support of the US resolution conditional on reaching a multilateral consensus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 8, 2002</td>
<td>Resolution 1441 is adopted. This resolution considers that Iraq violated resolution 687 regarding WMD and ballistic missiles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 27, 2002</td>
<td>Assessment of Iraqi WMD capabilities carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2003</td>
<td>Castañeda resigns due to bureaucratic infighting. Derbez is his successor at the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2003</td>
<td>Derbez delivers a speech at the UNSC to amend differences between countries in the council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 4, 2003</td>
<td>Aguilar Zinser is briefed on Iraq’s WMD by the team of Jeremy Greenstock, the British ambassador.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 7, 2003</td>
<td>The final report from Hans Blix states that evidence of the existence of WMD was not found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 20, 2003</td>
<td>Operation Iraqi freedom begins. Fox and Aguilar Zinser openly criticise the beginning of military operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2003</td>
<td>Mexico assumes the presidency of the UNSC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2003</td>
<td>Midterm elections in Mexico.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2003</td>
<td>Aguilar Zinser resigns from his post.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2003</td>
<td>Mexico’s non-permanent membership term at the UNSC ends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2 Mexico’s nomination for a non-permanent seat at the Security Council of the United Nations in 2002

Vicente Fox's electoral victory in the year 2000 made some policymakers perceive this transition as an opportunity to obtain a new, relevant place for Mexico in world affairs (Presidencia de la República, 2001a; Castañeda 2000; Castañeda, 2001a). President Fox and his newly appointed secretary of foreign affairs, Jorge Castañeda, conceived a new foreign policy where Mexico could attain a proactive role in multilateral institutions while achieving a special relationship with the US (Castañeda, 2001a). In fact, according to Castañeda, the only foreign policy strategy able to manage the overwhelming presence of the US was embracing multilateral diplomacy. In an op-ed, Castañeda laid out the foreign policy guidelines for the new administration:

> Given the asymmetry of our relations and the hegemonic position of the US in the international system, the only way our country can balance its foreign
policy agenda and its interests abroad is by developing a more intense activity in multilateral affairs. (Castañeda, 2001a)

The promotion of the new foreign policy agenda and the desire to play a more active role in world affairs is present in official documents and speeches. For example, the National Development Plan (NDP) makes the connection between an active performance in international politics and Mexico's presence in the UNSC (Presidencia de la República, 2001a). According to the NDP, the rationale for an increased protagonist role in the world was that ‘Mexico’s geostrategic position, its interests, its diplomatic tradition, and its development needs, makes it indispensable for playing an active role in the new international architecture’ (Presidencia de la República, 2001a). This statement makes a clear connection between sources and outcomes of foreign policy and the perception that these sources are sufficient reasons for Mexico to have a bolder foreign policy. The NDP also criticised the traditional orientation and announced the intention to contend for a non-permanent seat at the UNSC:

    The foreign policy of Mexico has followed the principles based on the constitution, which are the product of historical experience. However, these principles cannot be enacted abstractly […]. Mexico will intensify its participation and influence on international fora, actively participating in the new international architecture […], in this context, and with these objectives, Mexico will seek to become a member of the UNSC for the 2002-2003 period. (Presidencia de la República, 2001, 62)

This was the first time Mexico’s nomination for the UNSC was announced. Soon after the Fox administration began on December 1, 2000, the formal procedures for Mexico’s nomination to this body were set in motion. In his memoirs, Castañeda offers other reasons for Mexico’s interest in becoming part of the UNSC. In his words, ‘[We saw that] Mexico’s weight and prestige could contribute to international security. Mexico had to participate [in the Security Council]. To use a football metaphor: If you’re not in the field, you cannot score goals’ (2014, 101). These remarks echo the recurrent use of expressions showing the will to reposition Mexico's place in the world by becoming involved in the new international architecture.
Furthermore, Fox, Castañeda, and other government officials distinguished the new foreign policy orientation from the traditional one. In an article, Fox stated,

The foreign policy practiced during 70 years of one-party government should be put in the balance, despite the pretensions that there existed an unalterable doctrine that the old regime wanted to perpetuate to the point of including its principles into our constitution […] There were brilliant moments, but we should also recognise that all these efforts in foreign policy were paralysed as the result of the incapacity of the regime to acknowledge that the world had changed […] we have decided to integrate the best of the past with the needs of the present: To achieve an active multilateral presence and to deepen our relationship with the United States. (Fox, 2002, 14)

Thus, the traditional orientation was regarded as an obstacle Mexico had to overcome to be involved in the contemporary world. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the President perceived that both orientations were not mutually exclusive, particularly on the supporter of multilateralism NRC. For example, the government envisioned it could maintain a strong multilateral presence, a feature that the traditional orientation supported, while simultaneously having close collaboration with the US. Castañeda, for his part, alluded to the traditional orientation and contrasted it to the new, pragmatic foreign policy orientation:

Confident that history would not change, the principles of non-intervention, sovereignty, self-determination of the peoples, legal equality of the states and peaceful resolution of conflicts were included in the constitution […] Mexico will be involved in the transformations of the world with specific weight on or to influence several issues, particularly those of the new international agenda [...] This would allow us to project influence following our geopolitical profile […] The ideas exposed here are not always understood correctly. It is not necessary to be a superpower to participate in the construction of the international system […]. Other states or actors end up imposing their solutions, that on some occasions do not take into account Mexico’s interests or even go against them. (2001c, 52)

49 Another explanation is that dismissing the traditional paradigm entirely would have faced strong resistance from government bureaucracies and public opinion.
50 By the new international agenda, Secretary Castañeda referred to expressions of unipolarity made by the US in international politics during the early 2000s.
In a speech to the diplomatic corps in Mexico on June 27 of 2002, Castañeda linked the aspiration of greater Mexican involvement in international affairs to the nomination of Mexico to the UNSC:

Through an intense campaign and thanks to the backing of most of the governments you represent, we achieved the support in our nomination to seek a non-permanent seat of the UNSC. We are participating actively in this and other forums in the construction of the new international architecture that shall regulate the relations among nations during the next decades. (2002b, 168)

Likewise, in the November 16, 2002, edition of Fox Contigo, a weekly radio program that was transmitted every Saturday by President Fox and government officials, President Fox and Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Enrique Berruga mentioned that Mexico wanted to participate in the UNSC to reposition its place in the world and to have a say in the most pressing issues of the world (Fox Contigo, 2002).

These statements offer several references to middle-power attributes and connect sources of foreign policy behaviour with the desired outcome of playing a larger part in the world. The statements also criticise the traditional orientation's anachronistic nature, as it was thought that it had not adapted to the recent transformations taking place in the world since the end of the Cold War. The culmination of the Cold War and the end of the bipolar era was believed to have endowed Mexico with more space to manoeuvre in international politics and it was thought that it was necessary for the country to be more proactive to avoid other countries imposing policies on Mexico. Moreover, its new democratic status offered Mexico an opportunity to improve its image abroad (Chabat, 2009; Bondí, 2004; González, 2001; Castañeda, 2001; Fox, 2002). Fox asserts that the traditional orientation on foreign policy was mostly concerned about the regime's survival, disregarding genuine national interests and effectively isolating the country from the world (Fox Contigo, 2002; Chabat, 2013). In contrast, the new foreign policy was designed, in Castañeda’s words, for
‘Mexico to increase its influence and to have a new role in the global agenda’ (2000, 183).

However, the administration’s largest challenge was to merge the simultaneous consolidation of a strategic relationship with the US with active multilateral diplomacy. The Fox administration believed that a new era of harmonious relations with the US endowed Mexico with more room to manoeuvre in the UNSC, and the Mexican government's desire for a closer relationship with Washington appeared to be reciprocated. On March 15, 2001, George W. Bush made his first visit abroad as President to Fox’s ranch.51 Bush highlighted the meaning of this visit as a sign of a new era of Mexican–American relations: ‘The US does not have a more important relationship in the world than the one we have with Mexico […], our two countries are committed to being good neighbours and good friends’ (The White House, 2001a).

Similar words were expressed by Fox during his speech addressing a joint session of Congress on Capitol Hill, once again implying discrepancies with prior diplomatic mindsets:

I know that for many Americans, as well as for many Mexicans, the idea of trusting in the next-door neighbour may be risky and even unwise. Those perceptions have deep roots in history […]. My presence in this place is a testimonial to a willingness to draw our two nations closer. Mexicans and Americans wish to establish, with all seriousness, a new relation, a mature, equitable, and firm relation based on mutual trust. Trust! (Presidencia de la República, 2001c, 188)

This attitude and the close bond between both presidents were criticised by several diplomats and scholars who believed that the pragmatic orientation endangered Mexico’s international autonomy. The new foreign policy orientation was thought to have compromised the country’s sovereignty by placing the country too close to US preferences, in addition to not corresponding to the historical roles of Mexico (Cámara de Diputados, 2002b; Cámara de Diputados, 2002h; Cámara de Diputados, 2002i; Cámara de Diputados, 2002j; Pellicer, 2003).

---

51 Likewise, President Fox was the first state visit Bush received during his administration.
Castañeda, meanwhile, was mindful of public opinion. Castañeda stated that the democratic victory in the year 2000 presented Mexico with ‘acknowledgement from the international community’ (Castañeda, 2001c). In his yearly report as foreign affairs secretary, Castañeda evoked different polls measuring public opinion in the US and Mexico.

The recent Harris survey in October 2001 considers that 40% of the US population regard Mexico as a close ally, compared with 28% from last year. In this way, the public opinion of the US locates Mexico as one of its foremost allies, along with Great Britain, Australia, France, and Germany […]. This happened in Mexico too. In a recent survey by GEA, 74% of Mexicans thought that Mexico should give diplomatic support to the United States. (Castañeda, 2001e, 188)

This statement showcases an absence of vertical role contestation up to this point. Nonetheless, since the traditional vision was still deeply rooted in Congress and public opinion, membership in the UNSC was still considered a taboo subject for Mexican diplomacy (Castañeda, 2001a; Cámara de Diputados, 2001a; González, 2001; Pellicer, 2006). Prominent diplomats like Manuel Tello fiercely defended the traditional orientation from his post as the head of the Mexican diplomatic academy when Mexico started to campaign for a seat in the UNSC. The influential diplomat was adamant that participating in the UNSC was a limitation more than an enhancer of Mexico’s goals of being ‘a responsible player at the international level’ (Covarrubias and Muñoz, 2007). By Tello’s account, the traditional orientation was still ‘valid despite the new international and domestic context’ (Tello, 2001). In addition, he characterised the new foreign policy as being more based on the country’s short-term interests than a manifestation of an orientation. Nonetheless, the view from foreign secretary Castañeda persisted, and in December of the year 2000 Mexico openly campaigned for a seat at the UNSC for the first time in its recent history in what some policymakers, such as Marín-Bosch (2008), have described as an intense, costly, and aggressive nomination.

Despite Castañeda’s aim to deploy a dynamic multilateral diplomacy while possessing a robust partnership with the US, the 9/11 terrorist attacks transformed the geopolitical landscape on which this initial appreciation was based. The events of
9/11 generated a great degree of pressure from the US, as Washington did not tolerate any margin of dissidence in the War on Terror that ensued with the invasion of Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. On that day, President Fox addressed the nation from his presidential office to ‘firmly support’ the attack against the Taliban regime. In this speech, Fox stated that although Mexico did not want a new war, Mexico considered the 9/11 attacks to be an attack against humanity and against the national interest and aspirations of the Mexican people (Presidencia de la República, 2001d). This was coupled with Castañeda’s declaration made immediately after the 9/11 attacks: ‘Friends should not bargain their support’ (De Los Ríos and Riguzzi, 2012, 573).

With these new developments, Mexico’s nomination to the UNSC was seen by Congress and some diplomats as unsustainable. In the context of the War on Terror, supporting military operations of any kind within the UNSC violated the constitutional mandate to avoid international interference and conflicted with Mexican public opinion, which overwhelmingly opposed American military operations in Iraq (Zárate, 2005). Furthermore, Mexico became a member of the UNSC at what some policymakers described as ‘the worst possible moment’ (Marín-Bosch, 2008). When Mexico was accepted into the council, Fox and Castañeda believed that the risks and political costs that membership of this body would incur were minimal and that the tendency towards consensus within the council, which was characteristic of the 1990s, would continue to prevail. Moreover, Mexico believed that in the event of new military operations, the US would rely on NATO rather than the UNSC for fear of Russian obstruction in the UNSC (Heller, 2008). Castañeda interpreted the new international context as an opportunity to bargain for a potential migration agreement with Washington that would regulate the legal situation of millions of Mexican citizens in the US in exchange for Mexico’s support in the War on Terror (Bondí 2004; Millán, 2003).52

Nonetheless, there were several inconsistencies between statements from the government and its actions. For instance, the secretariat of Foreign Affairs found it

52 This migration agreement was part of the Fox administration’s foreign policy agenda. However, giving 3 million Mexican nationals amnesty was considered politically achievable after bilateral meetings were held just before the events of 9/11 (Chacón, 2002).
too difficult to react to the rapid changes that occurred after the end of the Cold War and after the 9/11 attacks. The Mexican government was slow in formally expressing its solidarity after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, releasing a press statement only on September 18. This was viewed in the US as an explicit lack of support from a supposed ally (Presidencia de la República, 2001b). The Fox administration continued to face domestic pressures to abandon its intention of joining the UNSC. Intellectuals and diplomats used their positions and personal connections with policymakers to influence and support the traditional foreign policy orientation (Covarrubias and Muñoz, 2007; Navarrete, 2001; BBC Mundo, 2003). In the end, Castañeda’s view prevailed once again, and the Mexican state pressed for its nomination to the UNSC to represent Latin America and the Caribbean along with Chile, which was elected a year earlier.

The elections of the new members of the UNSC took place on October 8, 2001 – one day after the invasion of Afghanistan began – when Mexico competed against the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana. These countries had been working on their nominations for more than three years (Schiavon, 2004; Vautravers and González, 2012). Mexico was elected after a two-round vote for a biennial term beginning on January 1, 2002. A month later, on November 10, 2001, President Fox addressed the 56th General Assembly of the United Nations where he justified Mexico’s belonging at the UNSC with the country’s will to be a voice for developing countries: ‘Our purpose is that Mexico’s participation in the UNSC will contribute to the voices of those countries which are not normally heard’ (Presidencia de la República, 2001a, 169).

Castañeda, for his part, stressed that Mexico’s purpose in this organisation was ‘to improve the position of the country in the world’ (2001). The next point on the foreign policy agenda was to select Mexico’s UNSC representative. According to

---

53 National security advisor Aguilar Zinser mentioned that the Mexican government not only took quick measures to cooperate with Washington after 9/11, but also took into custody hundreds of Muslims ‘only to assure the US if these people were fleeing from the US’, putting aside civil rights protections at great risk of political scandal in the country (Crossette, 2003).

54 Just before Mexico’s accession to the UNSC, 62% of the population supported the country’s participation in the council (Basañez and Moreno, 2003).

55 According to Velázquez (2008), the sudden, aggressive campaign of Mexico to become a member of the UNSC caused diplomatic tensions with the Dominican Republic and other countries that had already pledged their vote to the Dominican Republic.
Castañeda, he, as the secretary of foreign affairs, had the prerogative to assign Mexico's ambassador to the UN. Castañeda wanted Eduardo Navarrete, a career diplomat, as the security council ambassador and even introduced him to John Negroponte, the American ambassador to the UN, as Mexico’s future ambassador in the organisation (Meléndez, 2003). Nonetheless, Fox appointed former National Security Advisor Adolfo Aguilar Zinser to the position without consulting Castañeda, who, as a secretary of foreign affairs, was to be the formal direct superior to the ambassador to the UN.

In the words of Castañeda, he preferred an ambassador who ‘would only obey my orders without taking the initiative […] having Aguilar Zinser, who was creative, intelligent, and independent was the opposite of what I wanted’ (2014, 103). Castañeda and Aguilar Zinser opposed each other not only in personal power struggles but also in their principles and goals. While Castañeda wanted to make an implicit alliance with the US, Aguilar Zinser defended the use of the traditional orientation to safeguard the country’s sovereignty amid aggressive attitudes from Washington. The relation between the future representative of Mexico and the secretary of foreign affairs was thus deplorable. For example, Ambassador Aguilar Zinser and Castañeda confirmed that they were not on speaking terms during Mexico’s participation in the UNSC. Ambassador Aguilar Zinser made this situation clear in an interview, and Secretary Castañeda confirmed this situation in his memoirs: ‘The relation with Aguilar Zinser was made through the undersecretary of Multilateral Affairs. I suspended all communications with Adolfo unless it was strictly protocolarian’ (Castañeda, 2014, 104; Ekaizer, 2005).

On January 16, 2002, the ratification of Aguilar Zinser’s appointment was made by a Joint Congressional Committee. The newly appointed ambassador argued that Mexico’s presence in the UNSC was needed for the country to be an active part in the new world order, using diplomatic instruments to resolve disputes peacefully and to ‘promote greater participation of non-permanent members in the solution of international conflicts’ (Cámara de Senadores, 2002). Congresspeople in the commission expressed their concerns about the absence of the principle of non-
intervention in his working manifesto and demanded that he include it, which Aguilar Zinser immediately did without reservation (Cámara de Senadores, 2002a).

Congresspeople on the committee, such as Senator César Camacho, noted that Aguilar Zinser’s vision was not compatible with Fox or Castañeda’s foreign policy platforms. Deputy Idelfonso Guajardo maintained that his party, the PRI, had always opposed Mexico’s membership in the UNSC. Senator Natividad González believed that membership in the UNSC was more a risk than an opportunity and reasserted that the ambassador had to follow the traditional principles of foreign policy present in the Mexican constitution. The Senators and Deputies that explicitly opposed Mexico’s membership in the UNSC invoked the traditional orientation in this confirmation hearing and decided to abstain from voting. However, after the vote, the members of the joint commission requested that Aguilar Zinser act in conformity to the traditional principles of foreign policy, to send periodic reports to the Senate, and to appear before the Senate every time it was required (Cámara de Senadores, 2002; Cámara de Senadores, 2002a).

5.3 Mexico’s participation in the Security Council

On September 20, 2001, President Bush announced the beginning of the War on Terror in a Joint Session of Congress. This marked the beginning of the so-called Bush doctrine, a foreign policy arrangement based on preventive military actions to ensure national security. The phrase ‘either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists’, expressed by Bush during that speech, summarised the new international attitude from the US (The White House, 2003). Months later, on January 29, 2002, 29 days after Mexico assumed its place at the UNSC, Bush used the terminology ‘axis of evil’ in his State of the Union address to describe the governments of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, which according to him were sponsoring terrorism and possessed alleged weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Subsequently, officials in the Bush administration began to proclaim the existence of meetings between the

56 This announcement took place weeks before the vote in which Mexico’s nomination to the UNSC was successful, meaning that the Fox administration had time to withdraw the country’s nomination. The withdrawal of Mexico’s nomination from UNSC membership has happened previously when the Salinas administration withdrew Mexico’s nomination as geopolitical tensions started to build up before the Gulf War.
leadership of Al Qaeda and officials from Saddam Hussein’s government. The assessment from the Fox administration that the US would rely on NATO rather than the UNSC and that involvement in the latter would convey minimal risks to Mexico was altered when the US increasingly resorted to the UNSC in the War on Terror and started to link Al-Qaeda with Iraq’s government.

Fox responded to the bellicose rhetoric of the Bush administration and to increasing tensions in international relations in a speech before the European Parliament. During this speech, Fox stated that Mexico was ‘contributing to a new international architecture that safeguarded peace and international security’ in the UNSC (European Parliament, 2002). Less than four months later, during his second State of the Union speech (September 1, 2002), Fox reacted more visibly to these international tensions by declaring that Mexico was defending the pacific resolution of disputes and international law: The President mentioned that ‘Mexico has historically supported peace. In different international conflicts, like the one in Iraq, our country’s position has been based on defence for peace’ (Presidencia de la República, 2002a, 141).

In July 2002, Mexico voted in favour of resolution 1422, granting American citizens immunity in the International Criminal Court (ICC), which prompted severe protests inside Mexico that went from public complaints from Aguilar Zinser and the resignation of the Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs Miguel Marín-Bosch to criticisms from lawmakers who regarded the position of Mexico as that of appeasement to the US. One congressman, deputy Augusto Gómez, accused Castañeda of taking orders from the US Secretary of State Colin Powell (Cámara de Diputados, 2002a). This episode raised concerns that Mexico would acquiesce to US demands during the Iraq crisis.

After this episode, discussions in the UNSC were monopolised by the alleged connection between Iraq and Al-Qaeda. On September 12, 2002, President Bush gave a speech in front of the UN General Assembly declaring that Iraq represented a direct threat to the world and that, in flagrant violation of UN resolutions, Iraq had

---

57 There are unconfirmed reports that Secretary Powell called Castañeda to pressure Mexico into voting in favour of the resolution (Proceso, 2002a).
managed to acquire a large arsenal of WMD. Iraq responded by denying these accusations and allowing UN weapons inspectors to enter their facilities (Lopez de Lara, 2015). Washington characterised Iraq’s actions as a mechanism to gain time and proposed to the UNSC a resolution authorising the use of force to disarm Iraq. The draft of this resolution was made jointly by the US and the UK and was severely condemned by Russia and France.

The next day, on September 13, 2002, Castañeda gave a speech before the UN General Assembly where, for the first time, the Secretary did not directly support a position endorsed by the US Secretary. Castañeda stated that Mexico supported France’s proposal of two conditions: evaluating Iraqi military capability through weapons inspectors and reaching a consensus on what multilateral stance the UNSC would adopt in case of defiance. The Foreign Secretary also warned against tentative unilateral action against Iraq:

Mexico considers that a unilateral military action without any previous consultation with the UNSC would weaken the international architecture for security and could affect the consensus in favour of the fight against international terrorism derived from the attacks one year ago. (United Nations, 2002a)

After eight months of deliberation, Resolution 1441 concluded that Iraq had violated the terms of Resolution 687 on WMD and the construction of certain types of ballistic missiles. This resolution was accepted unanimously on November 8, 2002. Mexico justified its vote in favour because inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were involved in the inspections. During his intervention that day, Aguilar Zinser warned against any possible unilateral use of force against Iraq, as this would damage the credibility of the council. The ambassador stated,

Mexico considers that this decision by the council preserves this organ's legitimacy and efficiency in the mandate to maintain peace and international security […], this has been what has oriented Mexico’s actions in this council […]. I reiterate Mexico's conviction that the use of force is only valid as a last measure and with previous authorisation from the UNSC. (United Nations, 2002b)
The Iraqi government agreed to the provision of Resolution 1441 five days later, and a team of weapons inspectors led by Hans Blix, chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), and Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the IAEA, arrived in Iraq on November 27. After weeks of assessments, the weapon inspectors only found violations of previously unreported conventional armament and in the range of some missiles. However, they did not find conclusive evidence of the existence of WMD (United Nations, 2003).

Some days later, President Fox made an official journey to Europe, where he visited the UK and France. During a press conference on November 11, Prime Minister Blair acknowledged that Britain’s relation with Mexico was ‘passing through a difficult time’, but he recognised Mexico’s leadership in international issues (Presidencia de la República, 2002b). Three days later, Fox delivered a speech in the French National Assembly highlighting the similarities between Mexico and France over the Iraq crisis and arguing that any eventual action against Iraq should be based on the reports presented by the weapon inspectors to the Secretary-General of the UN (Presidencia de la República, 2002c). This position was shared by Ambassador Aguilar Zinser and even Castañeda himself. In some statements made to a Senate committee that was analysing Fox’s second State of the Union address, Castañeda condemned Iraq’s unsatisfactory response to previous UN resolutions, but he emphasised that,

> In the case of additional Iraqi failure to comply with UN resolutions, the actions to take must always be articulated through the UNSC […]. Mexico is carrying out intense consultations with France over the evolution of this complex problem. No member of the council should decide, unilaterally, the course of action. (Cámara de Senadores, 2002)

Therefore, it is apparent that unilateral action was the deciding factor that made Secretary Castañeda change his position. Castañeda mentioned in an interview Mexico’s position in the UNSC at this point. In his words,

> [The idea was to] stick to France, if France supports the US, we do too; if France does not support the US, we do not […] When France said no; we said no; when we said no; Chile said no; when we and Chile said no, Pakistan said no. And with that, Washington did not have enough votes in the council […]. In the APEC summit celebrated in 2002, I told Colin Powell that if he
convinced the French, we were in, and that if we could help him convince the
French, we would do it. (Castañeda cited in Rodríguez, 2008, 160-161)

This statement complements the accusations of Aguilar Zinser in 2004, when the
ambassador declared that Castañeda was preparing for Mexico’s support of
Washington in the war with Iraq by having personal meetings with Secretary of State
Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice with this aim.

According to Ugalde (2004), at the end of 2002, Aguilar Zinser had total control over
decisions made in the UNSC and even gained influence in the design of foreign
policy to the detriment of Castañeda. Lopez de Lara (2015) suggests that Castañeda
was using the UNSC as leverage with Washington in exchange for a tentative
migration deal. When this migration deal was deemed unreachable, Castañeda’s
position weakened. This view is compatible with the appraisal made by Castañeda’s
in his memoirs: ‘Each week, I felt how my force and influence within the cabinet
became weaker’ (Castañeda, 2014, 110). This situation led to the resignation of
Castañeda in January 2003; he was succeeded in his post by a former rival in the
cabinet, Ernesto Derbez, the secretary of economic affairs.

Secretary Derbez recalibrated Mexican diplomacy to be closer to the traditional
orientation of foreign policy (Serrano, 2007). However, Derbez still equated
Mexico’s presence in the council with middle-power attributes and compared the
traditional orientation in foreign policy to a rigid and unmovable wall (Derbez,
2003a). Derbez said,

[…] Mexico is currently a middle power. We are the tenth largest economy in
the world; the eleventh largest exporter, we are the third-largest country in the
Americas in terms of the size of population […]. As a democracy that aspires
to regional leadership, should we not assume a more active and engaging
role? Mexico needs to assume a foreign policy cemented in the traditional
principles but oriented in concrete strategies and policies designed to foment
national development in the international agenda. (Derbez, 2003a, 15)

Unlike his predecessor, Derbez enjoyed good relations with Aguilar Zinser at the
UN, in part because there was a basic understanding between them concerning Iraq.
Derbez thought that in the UNSC, Mexico would defend ‘causes, not countries’
(Derbez, 2003a, 19). In a speech before the UNSC on February 5, 2003, Derbez said
that Mexico's position in that council was ‘to achieve the disarmament of Iraq in the most peaceful and efficient way possible […]. We have shared this content with other members of the council, so this message goes to the authorities in Iraq with more force’ (Derbez, 2003b, 184).

The next month, on March 4, 2003, Aguilar Zinser said in an interview that he was called by Sir Jeremy Greenstock, the UK’s ambassador at the UN, to the British permanent mission in the UN. An officer from the British Secret Intelligence Services briefed the Mexican ambassador on the supposed existence of WMD in Iraq. Aguilar Zinser asked the agent if he was confident in the existence of these weapons. The agent replied that Britain did not have any evidence, only that Hussein had developed a sophisticated system to hide WMD. The Mexican ambassador noted that this contradicted the statements of Prime Minister Blair and Ambassador Greenstock, who were fervent believers in the existence of WMD on Iraqi soil. This meeting had Aguilar Zinser convinced that the US and Britain were determined to invade Iraq regardless of a mandate from a UNSC resolution allowing the use of force (El País, 2004).

Some days later, on March 7, 2003, the council was analysing the report of the weapons inspectors in Iraq. Hans Blix produced a final report on the inspections that stated that evidence of WMD was not found and that more documentary proof was necessary to discard a WMD program (Blix, 2006). In that session of the council, Derbez attempted to enact the bridge-builder NRC and stressed the need for the reconciliation of differences between members of the UNSC:

Despite the distance between the positions of the members of the council with regards to Iraq, multilateral diplomacy is still valid. Mexico calls for any differences that constrain us from achieving an agreement regarding Iraq to be discussed here and resolved here […]. We are particularly troubled by the diverse affinities and common values constructed with so much effort through so many decades, being eroded at this moment […]. In the maintenance of peace, our collective interests are cemented. That is how we understand our responsibility as a member of the UNSC. Mexico is convinced that we need to explore all alternatives, we have to take advantage to resolve this issue peacefully. (Derbez, 2003c, 190-191)
Meanwhile, the US and the UK argued that the question of the storage of anthrax and nerve agent VX in Iraq had not been resolved and that Iraq had long-range missiles that were not previously recognised, threatening international peace (Sotomayor, 2008).

The perception from the US and the UK was that the final report from the UNMOVIC denoted that Iraq was in violation of Resolution 1441 and that, therefore, the UNSC had to ‘guarantee international security’. With this in mind, both the US and the UK began to work towards a draft of a second resolution that would legitimise the use of force to disarm Iraq of WMD (De Los Ríos and Riguzzi, 2012). Despite enormous pressure from the US, Mexico refrained from sponsoring a second resolution with Spain, the UK, and the US. Mexico pointed out that the spirit of Resolution 1441 was to promote the disarmament of Iraq through inspections commissioned by the UN, not through armed intervention and that more time was needed to verify the claim that Iraq was harbouring WMD. This position was shared by France, whose representative, Dominique de Villepin, emphasised that an armed intervention was not warranted in the way established by the UN charter (Sotomayor, 2008). Russia, China, and France were nominally against the invasion but did not want to veto the resolution and be seen as obstructionists. Therefore, these countries were more inclined to abstain (Castañeda, 2014). In the absence of a veto, the US and UK needed nine votes out of 15 in the council to pass their proposal. Faced with opposition on the part of France, China, and Russia as permanent members of the council and Mexico, Chile, and Germany as non-permanent members, the US and the UK decided to abandon their efforts to push for a second resolution. Britain, the US, and other countries began military operations in Iraq on March 20, 2003.

In this way, Mexico did not have the opportunity to vote in a second resolution. However, it deployed more than 30,000 troops to protect its borders and basic infrastructure in the first weeks of the Iraq War, cooperating with the US at a military juncture for the first time since World War II (Domínguez, 2008). Furthermore, President Fox addressed the nation a few hours before the start of hostilities, reiterating that Mexico supported the peaceful and multilateral resolution of conflicts.
in international affairs and that his government rejected the decision to go to war.\textsuperscript{58}

In this unusual statement, Fox stated,

\begin{quote}
Mexico reiterates the multilateral way of diplomacy […]. By defending the posture of Iraq’s disarmament through peaceful means, Mexico has shown its maturity and political responsibility. We are a pacifist nation; we are a pacifist government. We believe that diplomatic methods have not been sufficiently used […] (Presidencia de la República, 2003, 194-195)
\end{quote}

Ambassador Aguilar Zinser also explicitly declared that if a vote had taken place, Mexico would have voted against the invasion of Iraq. After these declarations, President Fox’s approval ratings increased to 80%, and 85% of the Mexican population condemned the war. These popularity levels were deemed by the government as positive for the intermediate elections the following year and were one of the highest approval ratings of Fox’s administration (Schiavon, 2004; Mena, 2005). According to Castañeda (2014), Fox’s nationwide, televised speech on March 20 was unnecessary, and it was meant to improve his popularity months before the midterm congressional elections in July 2003.

As a result of this defiant position towards the US, there was a diplomatic estrangement with Washington. The US president explicitly threatened the use of punitive actions by declaring that ‘there will be a certain sense of discipline’ for Mexico and other countries that opposed the US in the UNSC (Krugman, 2013).\textsuperscript{59}

Other observers such as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and analyst Kenneth Pollack declared that Mexico would pay the price if it decided not to support the US. The US ambassador to Mexico, Anthony Garza, explicitly stated to the Mexican press that ‘You get to know who your friends are in difficult times’ (El Universal, 2003). Moreover, conservative sectors in the US condemned the Mexican position, labelling it as ‘treason’ and questioning Mexico's attributes as a partner. For instance, Wall Street Journal editorials demanded the termination of NAFTA and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[58] In addition to the obvious exception of Bush and the countries involved in military operations in Iraq, Fox was the only head of state to address his country just before the invasion of Iraq.
\item[59] According to Pellicer (2006), the ambassador of the Dominican Republic in Mexico at the time commented that, in the end, the Dominican Republic was relieved that Mexico frustrated its nomination to the UNSC.
\end{footnotes}
called for a tourist boycott of Mexico for turning its back on the US at a crucial moment (De Los Ríos and Riguzzi, 2012). However, although the estrangement between the governments was visible in symbolic attitudes, it never led to a substantial rupture in the cooperation between the countries. For instance, Bush delayed his response to a telephone call made by Fox and cancelled the Cinco de Mayo celebration in the White House. However, trade and security cooperation remained unaffected (Schiavon, 2004).

Some months later, Derbez contended that Mexico’s performance in the UNSC during the Iraq crisis was a response to the country’s adoption of international law and its multilateral vocation amid the different roles that several national actors advocated (Derbez, 2003a).

Finally, in an explicit critique of the traditional orientation of foreign policy, Derbez declared that Mexico had not followed the guidelines of the traditional orientation and had displayed a multilateral foreign policy. Derbez asserted that one ought to question whether a foreign policy for the 20th century was the most adequate to face challenges from the 21st century (Derbez, 2003a).

Mexico assumed the rotating presidency of the UNSC on April 1, 2003, 11 days after the invasion of Iraq. Aguilar Zinser declared that Mexico would lead an effort to find a role for the UNSC in the restoration of peace. The ambassador stated that Mexico sought a consensus to develop an effective plan for the UN to play an important humanitarian role in Iraq once hostilities ceased (Voice of America, 2003). On August 19, 2003, Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN representative in Iraq, was killed in an attack on the UN headquarters in Baghdad. After this attack, the Mexican delegation worked on proposals aimed at protecting UN workers (Heller, 2008).

Aguilar Zinser’s two-year term as ambassador came to an end in November 2003. At a conference at the Ibero-American University of Mexico City, the Mexican ambassador described how the US perceived its relationship with Mexico:

> The US has never seen Mexico as its partner as it does with European countries; they see us as a backyard [...] Salinas intended to have a marriage of convenience with the US within NAFTA, but the Americans only consider us as a casual weekend fling. (Aguilar Zinser, 2003)
These comments caused an uproar in public and the government, since it was inferred that the ambassador himself considered Mexico to be the backyard of the US, earning a public admonishment from President Fox. This was coupled with alleged pressures from US Secretary of State Colin Powell to remove the ambassador from his post.\textsuperscript{60} Aguilar Zinser resigned in an open letter addressed to President Fox, where he demanded that the President not acquiesce to Washington but instead enact a foreign policy that was\textit{worthy} of Mexico (Aguilar Zinser, 2003). In this letter to President Fox, Aguilar Zinser declared, ‘My behaviour at the UNSC was unpleasant to the government of the US [...] You know that what is at stake is the country’s independence, credibility, prestige, and its capacity to negotiate’ (Aguilar Zinser, 2003).

5.4 Horizontal role contestation during Mexico’s participation in the UNSC

The domestic debate on Mexico’s actions within the UNSC was intense and took place through different channels. This case found that horizontal role contestations between the traditional and pragmatic role orientations existed in both chambers of Congress, the cabinet, business groups, and epistemic communities such as universities, think tanks, and other groups from civil society.

5.4.1 Congress

As seen in Chapter 3, Raunio illustrates how legislatures influence foreign policy outcomes in topics ranging from trade to peacekeeping missions (2014). Role theory in particular allows for the analyse of diverse cognitive entities within congresses and of how members of congress interpret their country’s situational context.

In this case, both chambers of Congress served as sites for vocalisation of the disagreements about which NRC the country should enact in the UNSC. The Mexican Congress contributed to role contestation through debates between the traditional and pragmatic foreign policy orientations.

\textsuperscript{60} The ambassador declared that he rejected a scripted apology declaration by personnel from the Office of the President.
Although the Senate is formally the entity that must oversee foreign policy, the Chamber of Deputies has gained ground in foreign policy debates (Rozental, 1999). This chapter examines several statements made by members of the lower house of Congress, especially in the Joint Congressional Commissions. Table 4 shows the composition of Congress by political party affiliation from September 1, 2000 to August 31, 2003.

Table 4: Composition of the Mexican Congress by party affiliation during the LVIII legislature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Senators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Revolutionary Party</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Action Party (President Fox’s party)</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party of the Democratic Revolution</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Party of Mexico</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 128</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of deputies by political party

---

112
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Revolutionary Party</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Action Party (President Fox’ party)</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party of the Democratic Revolution</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Party of Mexico</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Party</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party of the Nationalist Society</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Alliance Party</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergence for Democracy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Instituto Nacional Electoral

The involvement of Mexico in the UNSC revealed tensions between Castañeda and parties in the opposition. Castañeda argued that Mexico's interests were better safeguarded by assuring a closer relationship with Washington due to the new international and domestic context (Castañeda, 2002a; Castañeda, 2002b). However, the Congress supported the principles of the traditional orientation, framed in the Mexican constitution since 1988, which were present in the platforms of several political parties (Cámara de Senadores, 2002; Cámara de Diputados, 2002f; Cámara de Diputados, 2002g).
In his first congressional hearing after taking office as secretary of foreign affairs, Castañeda reiterated the need for Mexico to be involved in the construction of a new international architecture and the importance of using soft power tools:

> We don’t pretend to innovate simply as an end in itself, but to upgrade Mexico in its relation with the rest of the world […] Mexico is resolved to be an active participant, not only a passive observer, in the definition of the new international architecture. (Castañeda, 2001d, 219)

An intense debate on foreign policy followed this statement. On September 20, 2002, deputy Sanchez Lopez from the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) categorised Mexico’s foreign policy as being pro-American and even asserted that Mexico’s membership in the UNSC threatened national security: ‘Mexico’s membership in the UNSC is just for big powers to consider Mexico as an ally […] Castañeda should be removed as secretary of foreign affairs because his actions go against Mexico’s national security’ (Cámara de Diputados, 2002a). Deputy Eduardo Arnal from the PAN responded that both foreign policy orientations were not mutually exclusive, a line that was also taken on several occasions by officials of the Fox administration: ‘We should strive to combine the best of the old with a new foreign policy adequate for new times’ (Cámara de Diputados 2002c). Meanwhile, Marti Batres, the leader of the PRD group in the lower chamber of Congress, harshly criticised Mexico’s presence in the UNSC, equating it with a threat to national sovereignty: ‘Who benefits from the presence of Mexico in the UNSC? Mexico or the government of the United States? The Secretary of Foreign Affairs reproduces another country's foreign policy, that of our neighbour to the North’ (Cámara de Diputados, 2001b). On the other side of the debate, Deputy Navarrete Montes de Oca, from the PAN, insisted that elements from both foreign policy orientations could be merged: ‘The principles of foreign affairs in the constitution will still be the centre of our country’s position in the world. However, after seven decades, the evolution of international affairs makes the inclusion of new principles worthwhile’ (Cámara de Diputados, 2001b).

At the beginning of the War on Terror, Deputy Herrera y Bruquetas called attention to Castañeda’s submissive position to the US that supported Washington ‘without
limitations in the oppression of the people of Afghanistan’ (Cámara de Diputados, 2002a). In February and March 2003, the Chamber of Deputies convened meetings to discuss the orientation of Mexico’s vote in the UNSC regarding a possible attack on Iraq. In those debates, deputy Meixueiro González of the PRI defended the traditional orientation of foreign policy:

Traditional Mexican diplomacy has prestige. Voting in favour of the war on Iraq is against Mexico’s national interest. Mexico should abide by its constitutional principles, which are still valid […] Any vote of Mexico in the UNSC should be conducted by traditional principles of foreign policy. (Cámara de Senadores, 2002d)

Even lawmakers from the governing PAN, such as Senator Javier Corral, called on the executive to resist US pressures in the UNSC (Cámara de Senadores, 2002d).

After the invasion of Iraq began, Mexican congresspeople held a meeting with ambassador Aguilar Zinser during which the diplomat expressed that Mexico ‘would maintain the defence for peace and multilateralism in the council […] acting with a great sense of institutional responsibility’. It is noteworthy that lawmakers from all major political parties supported the performance of Aguilar Zinser, requesting of him that ‘Mexico’s role should be in favour of peace in the Middle East’. The National Action Party senators asked the ambassador to ‘seek dialogue and international understanding’. The leader of the PRD deputies, Marti Batres – the same lawmaker who more than a year earlier called Mexico’s presence in the UNSC a threat to national sovereignty – expressed his trust in the ambassador’s performance, stating he held a correct position in the council. He repeated that Mexico should never cede to international pressures and condemned the war. In his opinion, the US perturbed international order by unilaterally invading Iraq, generating complicated conditions for Mexico’s representation in the UNSC. Finally, Senator César Camacho from the PRI conditioned his party support to Aguilar Zinser on ‘applying a foreign policy based on constitutional principles that attends the Senate’s recommendations’ (Cámara de Diputados, 2002e).

The new foreign policy orientation did not have as many supporters as the traditional orientation in Congress. The traditionalist orientation was extensively embedded in Congress to the point that some lawmakers from the PAN – Fox’s party – demanded
that the government abide by the constitutional guidelines of non-intervention and peaceful resolution of conflicts (Bondi, 2004). However, this did not prevent Castañeda from promoting his foreign policy agenda, which most Congress members conceived of as an aggressive imposition on them. Most lawmakers perceived that the pragmatic orientation endangered Mexico by aligning the country's foreign policy with the US (Cámara de Diputados, 2002c, Cámara de Diputados, 2002d).

The resistance expressed by Congress to the establishment of the pragmatic foreign policy orientation in the UNSC contributed to domestic role contestation. It also showed the extent of the institutionalisation of the traditional orientation in party identity and political culture and the leverage of Congress in Mexico's transitional democratic system. This institutionalisation expanded the boundaries that the legislative branch had in the past by resisting the role entrepreneurship Castañeda displayed with his promotion of the pragmatic orientation of foreign policy.

5.4.2 Cabinet

Contestation of Mexico’s NRCs was also present in President Fox’s cabinet, which was deeply embroiled in miscommunications and conflicts (Pellicer, 2003; Sotomayor, 2008). Some sectors of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, Castañeda himself, the Secretariat of Treasury, and the Secretariat of Economic Affairs supported voting with the US as a gesture of solidarity with Mexico’s most important trade partner (González, 2006). On the other side of the debate were part of the diplomatic corps, the Mexican Armed Forces, and the secretary of the interior, Santiago Creel, who all privileged public opinion and supported the idea of trying to continue relations with Washington while voting against a resolution backed by the US (Herrera-Lasso, 2006; Rodríguez-Sumano, 2014).

Moreover, it can be noted that Secretary Castañeda fits the attributes of a role entrepreneur mentioned in Chapter 2, as he was actively promoting a particular interpretation of NRCs to try to convince other domestic players of their enactment in foreign policy. Castañeda, as a role entrepreneur, not only had visible conflicts with Congress but was also reported to have poor relations with the rest of the

---

61 Fox’s cabinet was often described by opposition politicians and analysts as being a Montessori Cabinet in the sense that every Secretariat did what they wanted to do.
cabinet, particularly with the secretary of economic affairs, Ernesto Derbez, due to differences in visions and priorities (Aziz-Nassif, 2007; Meléndez, 2003; Sanchez, 2005).\textsuperscript{62} Castañeda even faced the rebellion of members of the diplomatic corps who did not agree with his vision on foreign policy, prompting the resignation of one of his undersecretaries after the vote of Resolution 1422, which gave immunity to US citizens in the ICC (González, 2006).

Castañeda’s appraisal of making an implicit alliance with the US can be traced in two speeches. In the first speech, given on June 27, 2002, the Foreign Secretary stated, ‘These are times of transition, in Mexico and the rest of the world. The end of the Cold War has led to a new international order in which the USA occupies a position of undeniable hegemony’ (Castañeda, 2002c). Three months later, Castañeda told members of the Senate,

> Every country in the world leans towards the US for one reason or another and Mexico cannot be the exception […] There are only three countries who are not aligned with the US in the world, and you can look at how they are doing […] That’s the world we live in, what do you want me to do? (Castañeda cited in Preciado, 2005, 81)

In contrast, Aguilar Zinser considered US hegemony as a threat to Mexico’s foreign policy autonomy, following the traditional orientation's thinking. For instance, Aguilar Zinser stated in an interview in 2004 that supporting Washington would expose Mexico to terrorist attacks like those Spain and the UK were subject to in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq (El País, 2004).\textsuperscript{63}

Moreover, the bureaucratic coordination between the ambassador's office to the UN, the office of the President, and the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs was deficient as Castañeda and Aguilar Zinser were not on talking terms. There were even some instances where Castañeda himself reported that he was not aware of Mexico’s

\textsuperscript{62} For a detailed account of the bureaucratic organisation, structure, and influence of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, see Mexico: Change and Adaptation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Andrés Rozental (1999).

\textsuperscript{63} While it might be argued that Secretary Derbez seemed motivated to act based on interests rather than on a particular interpretation of NRCs, it is worth remembering that roles could be considered as sources of interest, since roles set limited options for foreign policy enactment (Thies, 2010). In this case, Derbez was making decisions based on Mexico’s position within a structure, which provided him with a framework for action.
position on some issues at the UNSC until he was informed about it in the media (Meléndez, 2003). In contrast, the office of the President had direct and constant communication with ambassador Aguilar Zinser.\textsuperscript{64} Castañeda’s attitude could partially be explained by his father’s personal experience as secretary of foreign affairs twenty years before. In his memoirs, Castañeda recalls his father’s involvement during Mexico’s previous participation in the UNSC (1980–81). As happened during the Fox administration, the President at the time nominated the UNSC ambassador without consulting his secretary of foreign affairs, leading to several coordination problems with Mexico’s diplomatic mission to the UN and the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs (Castañeda, 2014). It was precisely this situation that Castañeda aimed to avoid in the designation of Aguilar Zinser. In Castañeda’s autobiography, some passages could be regarded as Castañeda following the same path that his father followed as secretary of foreign affairs. Castañeda states that ‘The relation with Aguilar Zinser was made through the undersecretary of multilateral affairs […] My father had proceeded in the same way with his former friend, the ambassador of Mexico to the UNSC’ (2014, 105). Additionally, it was perceived that Castañeda wanted to play a protagonist role in the decisions made in the UNSC to use it as a platform for his presidential ambitions (Meléndez, 2003).\textsuperscript{65}

Having Aguilar Zinser in the post was an obstacle to Castañeda’s personal goals. According to Marín-Bosch, Castañeda’s former undersecretary for multilateral affairs, Castañeda began the administration with a significant influence in Fox’s cabinet. However, this influence gradually decreased due to Castañeda’s combative personality and his confrontational attitudes towards Congress, the press, other members of the Cabinet, and even with his subordinates (Proceso, 2003). The erosion of Castañeda’s influence in the cabinet eventually led to his resignation in January 2003 (Castañeda, 2014; Ugalde, 2004).

Another explanation for this bureaucratic conflict is the absence of President Fox’s leadership in foreign policy matters. Although Fox developed a relevant profile in presidential diplomacy, his cabinet lacked cohesion and a shared vision, which led to

\textsuperscript{64} Rozental (1999) explains that the Office of the President frequently exerts more influence than the Secretary of foreign affairs in foreign policy matters.

\textsuperscript{65} Castañeda attempted to run for President as an independent candidate in the 2006 elections.
tension between bureaucracies, particularly between the Secretariat of Economic Affairs and the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs (González, 2006). In the end, the resignation of Castañeda in early 2003 and his replacement by one of his main bureaucratic rivals, Luis Derbez, did not significantly change this situation. However, the promotion of the new foreign policy orientation lost support from even President Fox himself (Presidencia de la República, 2002b; Meléndez, 2003).

From a bureaucratic politics perspective, this case shows the competition between different bureaucracies to attain influence in foreign policy and achieve outcomes more beneficial to their interests, which is a vision put forward by Allison (1969). It also makes evident that the decision-making process involves conflict, confusion, and hesitations, as Allison and Zelikow observed in other bureaucracies (1999). In effect, strategic cultures and political narratives feed the conflict of role orientations. Several empirical studies in the foreign policy of Mexico, such as the ones made by Rozental (1999), Gámez (2001), and González (2006), showcase how inter-bureaucratic rivalries, institutional culture, and the rules of the game influence foreign policy outcomes in Mexico.

However, although the analysis of bureaucratic politics provides a valid alternative explanation of this case, primary sources show that these bureaucratic conflicts went beyond the mere pulling and hauling analysed by bureaucratic politics analysis. Following Jones’s (2017) work on bureaucratic politics through role theory, it is clear that different bureaucracies bore diverse versions of NRCs during Mexico’s participation in the UNSC. This diversity of perception contributed to the domestic contestation of NRCs and to the traditional orientation of foreign policy prevailing in the enactment of its interpretation.

From the beginning of the administration, President Fox and Secretary Castañeda aimed to implement a new foreign policy that would break from the traditional orientation and reflect Mexico's rightful place in the world. Secretary Castañeda acted as a role entrepreneur by attempting to implement his conception of the NRC Mexico should enact in foreign policy. Castañeda had a significant influence in the government, particularly on President Fox, and therefore he could have become a successful role entrepreneur. However, Castañeda was ill-suited for this task. For
instance, Breuning (2013) argues that role entrepreneurs frame NRCs in ways that are attractive to public opinion and build coalitions with other actors to introduce their preferred NRCs. Furthermore, Brummer and Thies (2014) and Kaarbo and Cantir (2016) assert that entrepreneurs are likelier to succeed if they possess institutional power and political skill. If Castañeda’s performance as an entrepreneur is evaluated through these attributes, the conclusion can be drawn that Castañeda was not a successful role entrepreneur as he lacked institutional power and he was responsible for provoking tensions with other members of the cabinet and with the legislative branch rather than building coalitions with them.

According to Allison and Zelikow (1999), bargaining advantages and action channels characterise the interaction between competing government bodies. Bargaining advantages refer to control of information, control of setting the agenda, persuasiveness with actors inside and outside the bureaucracy, and the ability to affect other player’s objectives (Allison and Halperin, 1972). By this account, Castañeda did enjoy some bargaining advantages at the beginning of Fox’s administration, such as control of setting the agenda; the idea of Mexico becoming a member of the UNSC was his, for example. He also had the ability to affect other player’s objectives, judging from the amount of influence he had in the Office of the President. However, the appointment of Aguilar Zinser as the country’s representative and the tense relations Castañeda had with him severely constrained Castañeda’s bargaining advantages, as he was marginalised from the channel of communication between the Office of the President and the Mexican mission at the UN. Aguilar Zinser worked semi-independently, and Castañeda was not able to persuade other players inside his bureaucracy.

Additionally, Jones (2017) states that role entrepreneurs typically use cues as bargaining advantages and that power dynamics shape the socialisation process of external expectations of roles. From the empirical sources cited before, Castañeda used his closeness to US officials as a bargaining advantage with President Fox and simultaneously tried to leverage tentative support for the invasion of Iraq in exchange for a comprehensive migration deal. The use of this cue from Washington did influence domestic debates, but in the opposite way Castañeda had intended, as
Aguilar Zinser, most of Congress, and public opinion interpreted this closeness as a threat to national sovereignty.

Additional elements that narrowed Castañeda’s influence were action channels. Action channels determine the room agents have to manoeuvre on a specific issue. These are delimited by rules of the game in bureaucratic politics (Allison and Zelikow, 1999). These action channels originate from the constitution, conventions, and political culture. In the case of Mexico, the rules of the game are set by the country’s rigid presidential system, which is particularly manifested in foreign policy issues, since the constitution gives the President a direct mandate in this subject. This rigid presidential system marginalised Castañeda’s position in the UNSC during an international crisis. Consequentially, action channels might explain why the Secretariat of Economy did not have as much influence as secondary literature suggested, since the UNSC is evidently outside their jurisdiction.

Fox’s lack of leadership also led to the prevailing conflicts in his cabinet not being managed effectively. The Fox administration attempted to solve domestic role contestation by merging elements from both foreign policy orientations, especially after the resignation of Castañeda. Around this time, speeches and documents stopped making frequent and sharp distinctions between role orientations and began to reconcile elements of ‘the traditional foreign policy with Mexico’s current needs’ (Derbez, 2003a).

### 5.4.3 Civil society

Business groups and intellectuals also contributed to role contestation. The emergence of new actors in public life helped extend the debate outside government circles to the general population (González, 2006). Business groups advocated for support of the US in the Iraq crisis within the security council, as they considered that doing so would lead to the consolidation of trade links between Mexico and the US (Proceso, 2003). Intellectuals and scholars were divided on the issue. While some did not even support Mexico’s presence in the UNSC – not to mention Mexico’s tentative support of Washington on Iraq – others held a more pragmatic position...

---

66 Wehner and Thies (2014), for example, found that President Salinas was remarkably capable of imposing his preferred NRC within the domestic political process.
Primary and secondary sources also reveal that Fox was open to hearing suggestions from intellectuals and scholars. For instance, Castañeda recalls that in the tensest moments of the Iraq crisis, Fox invited several intellectuals to the presidential residence to ask their impressions about the situation in Iraq and to enquire what their opinions were on how Mexico should vote in the council (2014). Although individuals in this group mostly identified with the traditional orientation of foreign policy, some possessed a more pragmatic outlook. In an interview, intellectual Enrique Krauze cautioned that although Mexico was right to stand against the war, Mexico’s representatives should avoid unnecessary confrontations with Washington at the UNSC, since doing so would probably provoke a backlash against Mexico with boycotts of Mexican products or animosity towards Mexican migrants in the US (Voa News, 2003). Novelist Carlos Fuentes praised Mexico’s position in the UNSC as a counterweight against the unipolar expressions of the US. According to Sepúlveda (2003), the overwhelming support of these individuals for the traditional orientation contributed to the change in foreign policy enactment.

5.5 Vertical role contestation in public opinion

Public opinion in this case study proved to be consistent with Foyle’s observations in the sense that the population was able to process information and formulate strategies to alter foreign policy outcomes (1997). Public opinion was a vital factor influencing the Fox administration’s decision during the Iraq crisis. This finding is consistent with research on the relation of public opinion and foreign policy. For instance, Kertzer (2018) found that public attitudes tend to be clustered around foreign policy orientations. The deeply ingrained principles of the traditional orientation in public opinion explain the public's support of the interpretations of traditionalists in this case.

Ortega (2006), Schiavon, and Velázquez (2010) agree that public opinion in the context of the war in Iraq was a key motivation for the Fox administration to reorient Mexican diplomacy closer to the traditional orientation of foreign policy. For instance, a book depicting the Fox administration written by Castañeda and Ruben Aguilar, Fox’s former spokesperson, lists three reasons for Mexico’s position in the
Iraq crisis within the UNSC. They argue that, first and foremost, President Fox was obsessed with opinion polls on the issue of Iraq, which he monitored constantly. Second, President Fox was not personally convinced by the arguments to invade Iraq. Lastly, Fox’s religious convictions were another factor he considered when resisting US pressures in the UNSC (2007).

Furthermore, both the executive and legislative branches used public opinion to support their positions regarding the Iraq crisis (Millán, 2003), and Mexico’s activity in the UNSC was covered extensively by the press corps (Thompson, 2001). In the context of the arrival of competitive elections in the era of democratic transition, the media had an unprecedented relevance in the country's history. An independent press played an important role in informing Mexican citizens about the events in Iraq, as 80% of the adult population in Mexico was interested in getting information about the Iraq crisis (see Mitofsky, 2003; Proceso, 2003). Additionally, newspaper editorials were overwhelmingly critical of Mexico's tentative support of an invasion of Iraq in the UNSC (Moctezuma, 2003; Millán, 2003; Martínez, 2003). Therefore, it is somewhat predictable that the percentage of the population that rejected the war increased from 55% to 73% between December 2002 and March 2003 (Consulta Mitofsky, 2003).

Secretary Derbez acknowledged the way a specific foreign policy issue had become a central topic in the national agenda in a speech where he argued that the cause for this sudden public interest was the adoption of the new foreign policy orientation:

> For the first time in many years, international politics has become an interesting topic for our citizens. The cause of that unusual attention is the new orientation that President Vicente Fox has given to Mexico's relations with the world. The Mexican society perceives a change with previous governments' postures, which has stimulated public debate – for the better – about the new foreign policy in the last year and a half. (Derbez, 2003a, 15)

This episode's temporal proximity to the midterm elections indicates that public opinion had more weight for the Fox administration than geographical proximity with the US. Although appealing to the public did not help the President’s party win congressional seats, it did increase the President’s popularity, as Fox’s approval
rating rose to 80% after he condemned the War in Iraq (Schiavon, 2004; Sirigu, 2015).

5.6 External role expectations

Mexico interacted with several actors through the use of cues and demands, and great powers attempted to influence Mexico’s behaviour within the UNSC. Moreover, Mexico also prescribed roles to other members of the UNSC to resist American and British attempts to pass a resolution that would approve an invasion of Iraq. This situation echoes findings made by Thies (2010) in his research on socialisation. External role expectations influenced the NRCs that Mexico enacted in the UNSC when the country decided not to support the invasion of Iraq. The decision to seek a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for the 2002–3 period was motivated by an international signalling strategy from the Fox administration. The new government wanted to explicitly indicate to the outer world that Mexico had changed its political regime (Sotomayor, 2008). This aim can be identified in Castañeda’s words: ‘Mexico's international strategy is characterised by its desire for renewal and change so that our foreign policy responds to the needs of a democratic Mexico in the context of an international system that is in constant transformation’ (2001a).

However, the performance of Mexico in the UNSC faced divergent and conflicting expectations of its NRCs from other states. On the one hand, the US, the UK, and Spain wanted Mexico to support the invasion of Iraq in the UNSC. For instance, the head of the Spanish government, Jose Maria Aznar, visited Mexico one month before the military operation in Iraq began on a trip widely considered to be an attempt to convince the Mexican president to support Bush’s war plans (Lopez de Lara, 2015). Likewise, Tony Blair and the UK ambassador to the UN, Jeremy Greenstock, also explicitly wanted Mexico to support a UN resolution authorising military operations in Iraq.

On the other hand, France established a partnership with Mexico and other countries, such as Germany and Russia, to resist US unipolar expressions. Chile and Pakistan relied on Mexico’s position to guide their positions in the UNSC, locating Mexico in an intermediate place within this UN body (Castañeda, 2014). The strongest association Mexico had was with Chile. Ricardo Lagos, the Chilean president, also faced pressures from the press and the Chilean Congress to resist the decisions of the
Bush administration regarding the war in Iraq (Bywaters, 2014). Mexico’s position was perceived by other countries, especially Chile, as necessary for defending international law. For instance, Chile’s ambassador to the UNSC, Gabriel Valdés, stated that Aguilar Zinser showed,

What Mexico’s position was, and we still always need that position. A country that could not but speak the truth, that could never betray its principles […] We knew that we had managed to prevent the United Nations from being used for an inadmissible and unacceptable purpose: a premeditated decision to go to war on the basis of false arguments. We did it in the representation of what we thought was our country's essential democratic identity: respect for international law, a vocation for peace, and a deep commitment to the United Nations. (Valdés, 2005)

Concerning France, Mexico saw this country’s position as an example to follow because it was considered the only member of the UNSC capable of constraining the hegemonic power of the US (Castañeda, 2014). In Fox’s visit to France in November 2002, the Mexican President highlighted the similar positions Mexico and France had in the UNSC. Before the French National Assembly, Fox stated, ‘The US is a great nation. A friend. A partner. However, it is imperative to persuade [the US] to again participate in the international system based on universal norms. Otherwise, that [international] system will no longer be valid’ (Presidencia de la República, 2002b).

Nevertheless, the most relevant and pressing expectation was that of the US. Mexico's position was hesitant and the communication it had with other members of the UNSC lacked clarity, particularly with the US.67 At the start of the nomination process to the UNSC, the Mexican government gave explicit cues to Washington denoting the desire for closer collaboration. This can be seen in presidential visits, close cooperation in trade and security issues, and the speeches covered earlier in this chapter.

---

67 According to Lopez de Lara (2015), uncertainty in the Mexican position prompted President Fox to ask his team to develop two speech drafts – one supporting the war and the other one condemning it – just before the invasion of Iraq.
In turn, the refusal of the Mexican delegation to offer explicit support to the British–American position in the security council created two schools of thought on the consequences it would entail for Mexico’s bilateral relationship with the US. On the one hand, Ambassador Tello characterises the country's participation in the council as a ‘suicide’ of the Mexican government, as doing so would lead to two years of confrontation with the US due to the different interests that the two countries possessed (Tello, 2001). Analyst Jorge Chabat (2010) also argues that the bilateral relationship deteriorated substantially. Meanwhile, Mena (2005) mentions that Mexico did not comply with US behaviour expectations, leading to the US misinterpreting Mexican political and economic openness and ignoring the country's domestic dimensions. Washington perceived Mexico as a security partner like Canada, which was a position Mexico could not take at the time.

There were concerns about possible indirect measures the US could implement to put pressure on Mexico. Developing countries in the Americas have sometimes found that taking action to the detriment of powerful countries’ interests can be costly (Calvert, 2016). The imagined indirect measures that the US could execute ranged from a public boycott of Mexican products, travel restrictions for tourist destinations, or the breakdown of cooperation in border issues (Sotomayor, 2008). However, this view has already been empirically challenged by Jorge Schiavon. Schiavon (2004) notes that structural elements of the bilateral relationship were not altered despite the profound differences between Mexico and the US in the security council. There was no significant disruption in the bilateral relation due to Mexico's strategic importance to Washington, especially given the growing interdependence between both countries. Although it is undeniable that there were frictions, these were merely symbolic and did not translate into concrete actions (Schiavon, 2004). Even more paradoxically, it could be argued that Mexico could resist US hegemony while cooperating with Washington.

It is clear that Mexico did not follow the expectations of greater political coordination from the US after Mexico’s political and economic transitions.
Commentators such as Henry Kissinger and Kenneth Pollock warned that Mexico would pay the consequences for not supporting the US. Moreover, Anthony Garza’s comments to the Mexican press can be recalled: ‘President Bush is not asking the Mexican government for a favour when requesting support for an eventual attack on Iraq even without the consent of the UN’ (El Universal, 2003). There are grounds to assert that Mexico misguided the US with explicit cues from the President and the Foreign Secretary stating that Mexico was going to display a pro-American foreign policy and was ready to support the US in the War on Terror. For example, this is evident when President Fox said 9/11 was an attack on ‘the aspirations of the Mexican people’ and when Secretary Castañeda declared that Mexico ‘will not haggle support’ to its friends.

In this case study, domestic role contestations had more weight than external role expectations. The effects of Mexican nationalism and the traditionalist foreign policy orientation that was deeply rooted in political leadership and public opinion showed that horizontal and vertical role contestation were an evident limit to the demands of the US. Moreover, although the War on Terror was a geopolitical priority for Washington, the underlying expectation of assuring efficient management over security, trade, and migration issues in the US’s relationship with Mexico prevailed over its expectations of Mexico’s NRC in the UNSC. However, there were direct consequences for Mexico’s lack of support in the UNSC. As shown, Ambassador Aguilar Zinser attributed his forced resignation to the pressures exerted by Colin Powell. He asserted that the American secretary of state repeatedly attempted to convince President Fox to remove him from his post, stating ‘The US did not understand that I was only representing Mexico’s pacifist position, but Washington personalised these differences’ (Ramos, 2003).

5.7 Mexico’s national role conceptions as a middle power

In this case study, Mexico enacted the following middle-power NRCs: good international citizen, supporter of multilateralism, and bridge-builder. Process-tracing was used to test the author’s hypothesis that role conflict between two foreign policy orientations, manifested in domestic role contestation and deviating expectations from other countries, led to Mexico’s inability to enact NRCs associated
with middle powers. In this case, Mexico had to manage domestic role contestations and external role expectations that intervened with its foreign policy goals in the UNSC. This process is illustrated in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3:** Evolution of NRCs in Chapter 5.

### Original NRCs

The *good international citizen and supporter of multilateralism* NRCs were part of the new foreign policy agenda of the Fox administration, which aimed for Mexico to be a greater participant in world affairs. It is in this context that Mexico nominated itself to be part of the UNSC.

### Role Conflict

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the beginning of the War on Terror meant that the US began to pressure UNSC members to support its military operations in Iraq. Mexico’s position was heavily debated domestically between advocates of both foreign policy orientations. The staunch defence of the traditional orientation and overwhelming public support rejected any support for the US.

### Role Enactment

The prevalence of the traditionalist orientation of foreign policy in this context made Mexico resist US pressures in the UNSC and enact the *bridge-builder* NRC with other countries with similar preferences in the UNSC, such as France, Chile, and Pakistan. Mexico’s *good international citizen and supporter of multilateralism* roles were acknowledged by third parties.

#### 5.7.1 Mexico’s *good international citizen* NRC

According to Thies and Sari (2018), this NRC could be considered an umbrella concept covering similar behaviours that middle powers have. The protection of the environment, a commitment to values such as human rights, advocacy for development, the promotion of democracy, and respect for international law are all associated with this NRC. Thies and Sari (2018) also observe that middle powers
tended to protect the status quo by protecting the international order, in contrast with emergent powers.

In interviews with scholars Natalia Saltalamacchia and Jorge Schiavon, both agreed that Vicente Fox’s government was eager to portray a *good international citizen* appearance and promote the pragmatic foreign policy orientation to internalise domestic reforms in human rights and democracy.

The interests of Mexico and the majority of the UNSC were to preserve international order and the status quo. Otherwise, Resolutions 1441 (holding Iraq in material breach of disarmament obligations) and 1483 (regarding the situation between Iraq and Kuwait in 2003) would never have been approved unanimously (Sotomayor, 2008). Additionally, speeches from President Fox, such as those given in the European parliament and at his second State of the Union address, highlight Mexico’s commitment to the safeguarding of peace and international security in the UNSC. Moreover, acknowledgment from other actors, such as the UN’s Chilean ambassador, of Mexico’s vocation for peace and deep commitment to the UN and international law is a testament to the enactment of this NRC.

Reviewing the diagnostic evidence gathered in this case, it can be inferred that the decision to constrain the US in the UNSC during the Iraq crisis had its origins as part of a *signalling* strategy used to convey to domestic and external audiences that Mexico was undergoing relevant changes in political and economic issues. Several speeches and statements made at the beginning of the Fox administration and the start of Mexico’s membership in the UNSC are evidence of this. Additionally, many documents allude to Mexico’s specific weight in the world, making a connection between the country’s attributes as a middle power and the foreign policy it ought to adopt. In summary, Mexico’s decision to join the UNSC was made based on regime change and the country’s material resources.
Table 5: Perception of Mexico’s good international citizen NRC during the Iraq crisis within the UNSC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional orientation</th>
<th>Pragmatic orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the proponents of this orientation, the very presence of Mexico in the UNSC was a threat to the country’s autonomy in foreign policy and contravened the principles of non-intervention in the Estrada doctrine. The Fox administration's explicit aspiration to build closer ties with Washington prompted considerable resistance from the traditional orientation. However, this view ameliorated when the Mexican government, specifically Aguilar Zinser, began to resist US pressures in the UNSC, stating that Mexico was only safeguarding international law.</td>
<td>According to this orientation, Mexico’s membership in the UNSC aimed to enhance its autonomy by allowing Mexico to be a direct participant in world political decisions. In this view, this NRC was manifested by active participation in international affairs rather than enforcing international law. The Fox administration seriously considered supporting Washington at the UNSC, but strong resistance from proponents of the traditional orientation and public opinion altered the government’s preferred interpretation of this NRC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proponents of the traditional orientation in former governments saw geopolitics and an understanding of history – sources of foreign policy behaviour – as reasons to avoid being part of the UNSC and elude a situation of confrontation or collaboration with the US. In this case, individuals espousing the traditional orientation wanted to avoid membership in the UNSC, as they thought that safeguarding national sovereignty was more important than actively participating in world affairs, even if that meant not displaying middle-power behaviour. However, it is interesting to note that members of Congress backing the traditional orientation could have voted against Aguilar Zinser’s confirmation and decided instead to abstain. Moreover, the laudatory words spoken by opposition lawmakers at a congressional hearing once Aguilar Zinser’s position against the invasion of Iraq had become clear can be regarded as a scheme to protect their traditional NRC when they saw that the
ambassador shared their same orientation and that membership in the UNSC was a reality they could no longer prevent.

In summary, role orientations in this NRC were antagonistic and led to anomalous behaviour in foreign policy, which the Fox administration attempted to solve by trying to merge interpretations from both orientations. This endeavour was partially successful considering that, although Mexico was recognised by other countries as a good international citizen, this NRC’s deployment was erratic and hesitant.

Additionally, Aguilar Zinser’s involvement, rather than any other government’s action, was key for other countries’ acknowledgement of Mexico enacting this NRC. As a result of intense domestic contestation of roles and external role expectations, role conflict held a sizable influence on the Fox government's decision to modify its initial position of support in the UNSC to a tentative US-led invasion. This observation demonstrates a strong causal relationship between the intervening mechanisms of role contestation and external role expectations and the outcome.

### 5.7.2 Mexico’s supporter of multilateralism NRC

This NRC can be operationalised in membership and active involvement (i.e., presenting initiatives and participating actively) in international organisations. The display of support for multilateral diplomacy found in legislative debates and government documents and the acknowledgment of this position by other parties in international politics (NGOs and national governments) are evidence of the success or failure of the enactment of this NRC.

President Fox believed that a balance could be achieved between two fundamental pillars: the consolidation of a strategic relationship with the US and the promotion of the country’s multilateral presence in international organisations. Although Mexico has historically considered multilateralism as a method for constraining US power (Saltalamachia, 2014), this has not always been constant. According to Covarrubias, internal conflicts impeded Mexico’s portrayal of a multilateral role that was convincing to external audiences in this case (interview, 2018).

President Fox's new government wanted other countries to acknowledge that Mexico had a higher status than it previously had in world politics, even to the point of
expressing an aspiration of being a permanent member of the UNSC in an eventual reform of the UN system.\textsuperscript{68} Mexico’s non-permanent membership of the UNSC responded directly to a goal expressed in the NDP and several speeches to achieve a middle-power status. On the other hand, at the beginning of Mexico’s membership in the UNSC, Congress perceived Mexico’s membership as benefiting the US, exerting significant pressure to the executive branch and forcing the government to reconsider its strategy of ‘bilateral multilateralism’. Evidence of the Fox administration’s transformation is Castañeda’s claim that,

Mexico promotes the establishment of an international agenda through the international regulation and the strength of its institutions [...] Today, as in the past, activism in multilateral affairs offers Mexico the possibility to be a counterweight – the only one which is credible and possible – to its vital but asymmetric relationship with the US. (Castañeda, 2001c, 51)

This statement contrasts sharply with Castañeda’s previous remarks supporting close collaboration with the US. Moreover, most external recognition of Mexico adopting a supporter of multilateralism NRC during the Iraq Crisis was linked to Aguilar Zinser’s performance in the UNSC. For instance, the former Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, considered Aguilar Zinser as ‘one of the strongest supporters of multilateral diplomacy’ during this crisis. The former French ambassador to the UN, Jean-Marc de La Sablière, similarly said that Aguilar Zinser was ‘a paladin of modern multilateralism’ (United Nations, 2005, 2). This situation echoes what was stated by Marín-Bosch regarding how Mexico’s contributions to multilateral diplomacy did not respond to a concrete foreign policy strategy but rather to the individual initiative of its diplomats (Marín-Bosch, 2008).

Furthermore, unlike the good international citizen NRC, there was no effort to merge interpretations in this NRC. The traditional interpretation took clear precedence over the pragmatic orientation. Close collaboration with the US was never reaffirmed in

\textsuperscript{68} The Mexican government invited 14 other countries to form a group of likeminded states in a possible UN reform. These countries were Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Spain, Japan, Kenya, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Singapore, and Sweden.
speeches or policy documents, effectively disappearing from the Fox administration's role repertoire.

Table 6: Mexico’s supporter of multilateralism NRC during the Iraq crisis within the UNSC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional orientation</th>
<th>Pragmatic orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Originally, advocates of this orientation did not support Mexico’s membership in the UNSC. Once within the council, proponents of this orientation attempted to constrain the hegemonic power of the US.</td>
<td>Proponents of this orientation promoted what was called <em>bilateral multilateralism</em> by Castañeda, which had the dual goal of participating in the ‘new world architecture’ while simultaneously collaborating with the US. This latter goal was altered to constrain the hegemonic power of the US.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.7.3 Mexico’s *bridge-builder* and *coalition builder* NRCs

While the Fox government attempted to enact the *bridge-builder* NRC, advocates of the traditional orientation backed the enactment of the *coalition-builder* NRC with countries that wanted to restrain the British–American intention of invading Iraq.

The *bridge-builder* NRC can be identified in Mexico's actions to build a consensus, highlighting the convergence of interests in international politics. Diplomatic summits, state visits, statements, and external recognition of Mexican efforts in this regard are offered as evidence of the enactment of this NRC. On the other hand, the *coalition-builder* NRC is operationalised by the management of regional alliances or the leadership of the country within international institutions with like-minded states to implement and execute an agenda.

Membership in the council allowed Mexico to exert a greater international presence. Mexico was one of the few countries that could serve as a bridge in an international environment of distrust and confrontation because of its multilateral activities and historic role as a bridge in the Americas and other developing countries such as
Pakistan (Sirigu, 2015). In the specific context of this case study, there are several instances where the Fox administration also conceived of itself as developing a bridge-builder NRC. For example, Fox himself highlighted this goal in an op-ed in the *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior* and delivered a speech at the 56th General Assembly of the UN asserting that Mexico aimed to be a bridge between regions and countries as part of its new active role in the consolidation of the new international system (Presidencia de la República, 2001e). Castañeda also aimed to take advantage of Mexico's geostrategic location in the international system to 'be a bridge country between different countries, cultural expressions, between the past and the future, between ideological conceptions’ (Castañeda, 2001a). Similar words as Castañeda were said at a meeting with the diplomatic corps. At a Senate hearing in September 2002, he declared that Mexico had the persuasion skills to be an effective bridge between regions due to the persuasion skills resulting from a genuinely democratic government (Castañeda, 2002d).

Nonetheless, supporters of the traditional orientation of foreign policy advocated for the enactment of the coalition-builder NRC instead. Ambassador Aguilar Zinser, with bureaucratic and congressional support, was viewed by the press as a fundamental element for bringing other countries in Mexico's position together, something that Fox tolerated because opinion polls supported the ambassador’s policies (Meléndez, 2003; Proceso, 2003). Aguilar Zinser made coalitions and weaved communication bridges among members of the UNSC that were opposed to the invasion or were still undecided (Ekaizer, 2005). Additionally, Javier Solana, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security, and Johannes Rau, President of Germany, asserted that for Europe, Mexico’s constructive work in the UNSC contributed to the recovery of a climate of consensus in the international body, facilitating bridge building (Aguilar Zinser, 2003). Although Mexico tried to implement a bridge-builder NRC in the security council, Covarrubias and Schiavon (interview, 2018) both agree that hesitations and a lack of clarity in Mexico’s participation in the security council impeded this NRC from being enacted more concisely. Moreover, although Aguilar Zinser built connections with the representatives from Chile, Pakistan, and Germany, these relations were meant to oppose the US rather than amend differences between two opposite sides of a debate.
Table 7: Mexico’s *bridge-builder* NRC during the Iraq crisis within the UNSC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional orientation</th>
<th>Pragmatic orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to this orientation, Mexico should take advantage</td>
<td>Proponents of the pragmatic orientation considered Mexico’s membership in the UNSC as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of its position within the UNSC to build alliances with</td>
<td>an opportunity to take advantage of its democratic legitimacy and geopolitical location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like-minded countries. Rather than bridging different</td>
<td>to serve as a bridge between the US and other countries in the UNSC. This position would</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positions, this orientation sought to achieve a balance of</td>
<td>have also given Mexico leverage power with the US in the tentative negotiation of a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power, which does not equate to serving a <em>bridge-builder</em></td>
<td>migration deal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRC but to serving a <em>coalition-building</em> NRC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Castañeda sought to have a bargaining position with Washington. For instance, Secretary Castañeda argues that at the 2002 APEC summit held in Mexico, he asked Secretary of State Colin Powell if Mexico could bridge the Bush administration and the French government. Secretary Powell did not reject the proposal, but Castañeda resigned two months later, effectively ending any attempts to enact this NRC. In this way, the traditional orientation sought not to build a bridge between the US and other countries in the UNSC but to build alliances with other countries to constrain American hegemonic power, effectively enacting a *coalition-builder* NRC instead.

### 5.8 Conclusion

This case study's main contribution to the understanding of role theory is to show how the mechanisms of domestic role contestation and external expectations intertwined in a relatively short period to influence the decision process of Mexico’s foreign policy. In addition, by using role theoretical analysis, this case study contributes to understanding the simultaneous interplay between domestic and external factors in the context of a new political regime and in the midst of an international crisis.
Vertical role contestation was a factor in the underlying mechanisms explained above. The case illustrates how the Fox administration considered the population’s overwhelming rejection of the American position during the Iraq crisis. The administration’s actions can be partly explained by the fact that the midterm elections were to take place just four months after the military operations in Iraq began and that Fox’s PAN desperately needed more seats in Congress to promote its domestic political agenda.

An additional cause for this outcome emanates from bureaucratic politics. Following Jones's (2017) guidelines for the analysis of bureaucratic politics from a role theoretical standpoint, it can be observed that Castañeda, as a role entrepreneur, had restricted bargaining power and narrow action channels that limited his margins of manoeuvre. This restricted bargaining power led to his downfall as secretary of foreign affairs in January 2003 and the imposition of the traditional orientation.

Thus, it becomes discernible that Mexico’s position was riddled with tensions and that the country found it difficult to reconcile highly divergent aims. As a consequence, this puzzling position is consistent with Karim’s (2018) guidelines for identifying role conflict in middle powers. Mexico received shifting role expectations from other states, such as the US, which ranged from Bush stating that ‘no other relation was as important to the US as the one it had with Mexico’ to Bush stating that there ‘would be some sense of discipline’ for Mexico for not supporting Washington during the Iraq crisis.

Interactions between domestic and external elements are visible in this chapter in the way external expectations influenced domestic role contestations in Mexico. Hostile demands, such as those made by President Bush and Ambassador Garza, supporting reprisals on Mexico if the country did not support the American position in the UNSC are examples of this interplay. These explicit external demands were counterproductive, since these expressions strengthened the nationalism embedded within the traditional orientation of foreign policy in Mexico. These hostile demands motivated actors espousing the traditional orientation of foreign policy to resist external expectations from the US. The accusations from Congress members that
Secretary Castañeda followed orders from the US to showcase this relation and its effects on foreign policy outcomes.

The solid position of the traditional orientation in the government and public opinion propelled this orientation to have their interpretations enacted in the suppoter of multilateralism and coalition-builder NRCs, and the only evidence of role merging between both orientations was found in the good international citizen NRC.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to visualise if the outcome of this case can be explained by contextual factors like public opinion, leadership style, vicinity with the US, and bureaucratic politics without the involvement of role expectations or domestic contestations. This case study included all of the empirical features mentioned above in the analysis but found that none can explain the outcome independently. For instance, an alternative explanation for the outcome of the case is bureaucratic politics. This case illustrates the competition between different bureaucracies to attain influence in foreign policy and achieve outcomes more beneficial to their interests, which is a vision put forward by Allison (1969). This chapter shows that the decision-making process was immersed in conflict, confusion, and hesitations, resembling what Allison and Zelikow observed in other bureaucracies (1999).

Several studies in the foreign policy of Mexico, such as the ones made by Rozental (1999), Gámez (2001), and González (2006), show how inter-bureaucratic rivalries, institutional culture, and the rules of the game influence foreign policy outcomes in Mexico. The use of strategic cultures and narratives is a contributing element to the conflict of foreign policy orientations, since different bureaucratic groups held different interpretations of NRCs during Mexico’s participation in the UNSC. However, these institutional cultures are unable to explain the outcome of the case independently. Conflict of foreign policy orientations, on the other hand, serves as a lens to explain the motivations behind events taking place in this case and does not necessarily exclude other contributing factors. For instance, even though public opinion shaped Fox’s position on Iraq, it cannot explain why the country decided to enact some NRCs to the detriment of others or why the merging of foreign policy orientations was attempted. The leadership personalities of President Fox and Secretary Castañeda did indeed affect the outcome of this case study, but this point
of view omits the numerous interplays between leadership personality and other elements that a role theory perspective can offer. Similarly, the geographical vicinity of the US could not on its own explain Mexico’s decisions in foreign policy, since the pressures of US officials on Mexico had an opposite effect to what mainstream theories claim.

In this sense, the dual relationship between role theory and other domestic optics is evident, as role theory’s conceptual framework provides explanatory power to this case by including several mid-range analyses connecting domestic and external dynamics.

Finally, it is beneficial to question, counterfactually, whether the outcome would have been the same if Castañeda had never been secretary of foreign affairs. Since Castañeda was one of the main architects of the new foreign policy in the Fox administration, it is easy to infer that the outcome of the case would have been different without him. However, Vicente Fox himself shared Castañeda’s vision of having a more active foreign policy as a signalling strategy of Mexico’s democratic transition. In addition, Mexico would have faced the same circumstances within the UNSC.
6. Chapter Six: Mexico’s involvement in the creation and performance of CELAC

6.1 Introduction
Mexico’s involvement in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) is explored in this chapter to search for evidence of the ways role conflict affected Mexico’s enactment of middle-power NRCs. In this case study, as a state that promoted the creation of CELAC, Mexico had aspirations to enact the following middle-power NRCs: seeker of regional leadership and bridge-builder. However, evidence found that the country switched from the bridge-builder to the coalition-builder NRC and that this was the only NRC Mexico enacted in this context.

Mexico’s current limited regional influence in Latin America challenges the perception of the country as a traditional middle power (Maihold, 2017). Despite its power attributes, Mexico remains an unengaged regional player in Latin America. Mexico’s involvement in the creation of CELAC was selected for this case study since it is believed that CELAC was the regional space where Mexico was more likely to deploy middle-power NRCs compared to other regional organisations. While other regional integration initiatives where Mexico is an active participant, such as the Pacific Alliance, the Mesoamerican project, and the Ibero-American Summit, may also offer evidence of Mexico’s use of middle-power NRCs, the value of focusing on CELAC is that it exclusively encompasses the Latin American region in its entirety. By including all 33 Latin American and Caribbean States, CELAC is a space where governments from all political spectrums are represented. As such, Mexico has had the opportunity to act as a seeker of regional leadership and as a bridge-builder between ideological positions. Other regional integration mechanisms, such as the Mesoamerican Project or the Pacific Alliance, are either limited in geographic scope or are a coalition of like-minded countries, limiting Mexico’s ability to engage in bridge-building or mediation NRCs.

The chapter examines the ways both the traditional and pragmatic foreign policy orientations interpreted the aforementioned middle-power NRCs. Primary sources, such as speeches and documents that proponents of both orientations made
throughout this case, can be regarded as diagnostic evidence of these interpretations. Subsequently, an analysis of the mechanisms involved in the case was made to infer their relationship with the outcome of this case. The analysis also illustrates whether each mechanism worked as theorised or if the actual observed manifestations of domestic role contestation and divergent role expectations differed from the author’s hypothesis. Soft balancing was used in this case as an intermediate theory, further contributing to the analysis processes seen in this chapter.

Initially, Mexico attempted to enact the *bridge-builder* NRC within CELAC. However, this case study found that the *bridge-builder* NRC was incompatible with the expectations of other players in Latin America. This role conflict resulted in a dysfunctional Mexican policy in CELAC that impeded the correct enactment of middle-power NRCs. Mexico managed this role conflict by joining the Pacific Alliance during the last months of the Calderón administration as an alternative organisation in which to assert its Latin American identity and to allow the country to be an active player in regional politics. Due to the Pacific Alliance being a group of four states characterised in CELAC as being close to Washington, Mexico could not be considered a regional leader or *bridge-builder* among ideological sides in this homogeneous regional group. Instead, *coalition-building* is the only middle-power NRC that Mexico enacted in this chapter.

In summary, the theoretical lens used in this case study is a novel approach to examining Mexico’s regional links and was able to produce interesting findings that other studies might have omitted.

A comprehensive timeline of critical events covered in this chapter is presented below.

**Table 8: Timeline of critical events of Chapter 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2006</td>
<td>The NDP and Sectoral Plan of the SRE explicitly state Mexico’s aim to strengthen ties with Latin America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2008</td>
<td>The Andean diplomatic crisis occurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Mexico becomes pro-tempore President of the Rio Group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2008</td>
<td>Coup d’état in Honduras.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2011</td>
<td>Creation of CELAC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2011</td>
<td>Proposals begin to appear to make CELAC a replacement of the OAS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2012</td>
<td>Mexico adheres to Pacific Alliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2012–2018</td>
<td>The Peña Nieto administration supports Mexico’s involvement of the Pacific Alliance instead of CELAC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Mexico in Latin America: Identity, regional influence, and diplomatic diversification

As stated in the introduction of this thesis, Mexico’s material capabilities fit remarkably well with the definition of a middle power. Nevertheless, its weak regional influence and the scarce diversification of its political interactions impede a clear identification of Mexico within this category of states (Pellicer, 2013). Mexico’s relationship with the US has been described as having a monopolising effect on Mexico’s diplomacy (Fernández de Castro, 2014). As a consequence, diversification strategies have constantly been proposed in academic, journalistic, and bureaucratic circles to balance the presence of the US and to safeguard the country’s autonomy in foreign affairs. Thus, promoting Latin American integration is considered the natural choice for these diversification strategies and is present in Mexico’s foreign policy rhetoric.\(^{69}\) Latin American integration has also been conceived of as a way to legitimise the revolutionary credentials of the governments that grew out of the Mexican revolution for most of the 20th century. However, the active promotion of Latin Americanism was replaced with a new partnership with North America when the Mexican government joined NAFTA in 1994.

\(^{69}\) Since the start of the century, the Mexican government has adopted the notion of Mexico as a country of multiple geopolitical belongings (Pellicer, 2013).
Although criticism of Mexico’s relative isolation from Latin America is associated with the country’s ‘turn to North America’, Mexico has rarely enjoyed close relations with Latin America. For example, trade with the Latin American region has seldom risen above 5% of Mexico’s total trade, which has consistently been concentrated in North America since the end of the 19th century (Vega, 2014). Political isolation from the region is also not exclusive to contemporary times. According to Sanahuja (2017), the country’s reluctance to consolidate integration mechanisms in Latin America is explained by the absence of threats and economic opportunities in this region when compared to the US. However, other authors, such as Benitez Manaut, link this lack of influence to the absence of a long-term, coherent, and consistent policy towards Latin America (2016).

6.3 Mexico’s efforts for regional integration
Regional integration has been a political aspiration for many Latin American countries since the era of independence movements in the early 19th century. The construction of a Latin American brotherhood as a common geographical entity is based on the cultural, religious, and linguistic affinity of this region.70

Contemporary efforts to create regional integration mechanisms began soon after World War II with the Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace held in Mexico City in 1945 (Domínguez, 2008). At this conference, all Latin American governments, Canada, and the US agreed to regard an attack on any state participating in the conference as an act of aggression against all the other signatories of the declaration. This pledge would later be formalised in 1947 in the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR), still in effect to this day.71 One year later, the Organisation of American States (OAS) was founded in Bogotá as a continental organisation to promote political dialogue with the unofficial aim of containing communism during the Cold War (Segovia, 2013). In this organisation, Mexico managed its bilateral relationship with the US through soft balancing strategies with other Latin American nations (Paul, 2004, 2005; Flemes and Wehner, 2006).

---

70 This project has sometimes been referred to as ‘Simon Bolivar’s dream’, after the liberator’s vision of a united Latin America.
71 Mexico became the first country to permanently retreat from the TIAR in 2004, as it considered the treaty to be obsolete. Another explanation is that the Mexican government wanted to avoid any military compromise in the context of the War on Terror.
2012; Covarrubias, 2013). For example, at the initiative of Mexico, the continental embargo against Cuba was lifted in 1975. However, the role of the OAS was diminished in the 1980s, as it showed a limited capacity to mediate the Central American civil wars of the 1980s. This inability to mediate radically diminished the political relevance of the OAS (Gaviria, 1995).

The OAS was also delegitimised by the perception that it enabled American imperialism. Therefore, Mexico’s relations with the rest of Latin America had to proceed outside the OAS framework. For example, Mexico exercised an active broker role during the civil wars that plagued Central America during the 1980s. This role began with the Lopez Portillo administration (1976–1982) and the joint communiqué with the French government on the civil war engulfing El Salvador. Mexico’s involvement in the civil wars in Central America continued with the De la Madrid administration (1982–1988) through the Contadora initiative. This regional and multilateral initiative was not viewed positively by the US, since Washington opposed the legitimate government of Nicaragua and the pro-communist rebel forces in El Salvador and Guatemala. However, it was well-received by other governments in the region.72

Chabat (2014) argues that Contadora can be seen as Mexico’s discovery of Latin America, as it showed the country could contain American pressures in the region by responding to a real threat of instability in its sphere of influence.73 Mexico’s participation in Contadora proved successful, as peace between parts in Central America was achieved in the 1990s with a series of documents signed in Mexico City. Contadora and its association of support eventually evolved into the Rio Group, the first political consultation group composed entirely and exclusively of Latin American countries and the predecessor of CELAC. However, the Rio Group has been criticised as being only a façade Mexico used to be regarded as having

---

72 Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil formed a support group for Contadora, which eventually evolved into the Group of Eight.

73 According to McAleese (2014), the Mexican government believed that if the civil wars in Central America continued, the US, Cuba, and the USSR would intervene more on a region directly ascribed within Mexico’s sphere of influence.
significant links with its Latin American counterparts after Contadora (Chabat, 2014). The Rio Group was also weakened by the dissemination of other regional integration mechanisms, such as MERCOSUR (Mercado Común del Sur) and UNASUR (Unión de Naciones Sudamericanas).

6.4 Mexico’s rapprochement with Latin America: The creation of CELAC

The complicated process of creating an organisation that incorporated all Latin American countries triggered the proliferation of regional integration mechanisms. These mechanisms followed deep ideological divisions, either supporting free trade and the Washington Consensus or advocating social agendas and protectionism.74 The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Mesoamerican Project, and the Pacific Alliance are examples of organisations that have been identified as espousing ideological projects. The erosion of Mexico's political clout in Latin America indicates that Mexican governments have struggled to adapt to this ideological divide. Moreover, as shall be seen later in this section, this ideological division obstructed the enactment of Mexico’s middle-power NRCs after CELAC was created.

Mexico’s Latin American footprint became blurred during the latter part of the 20th century and the early 21st century for two reasons. The first reason was Mexico’s explicit aspiration for a special relationship with the US. This aspiration was seen as having relegated the position of Latin America in Mexico’s foreign policy. The second reason was an ongoing confrontation with the governments of Cuba and Venezuela.75 For instance, at one point, Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez called President Fox a ‘puppet of the empire’ for promoting the Free Trade Area of the Americas (Guajardo, 2008, 293). This incident led to diplomatic relations between

---

74 The Washington Consensus was a series of policy prescriptions made by the International Monetary Fund to achieve macroeconomic stabilisation and economic openings for Latin American countries in the 1990s.

75 The Fox administration even had an unnecessary diplomatic friction with Chile, which enjoyed close relations with Mexico after the 2003 Iraq crisis in the UNSC. The cause of this attrition was the competition between Foreign Minister Derbez and his Chilean counterpart Insulza to head the OAS.
both countries being temporarily suspended. The two countries did not resume diplomatic relations until the end of 2005. In 2006, Venezuela left the Group of Three (G3), which was composed of Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela. These aforementioned situations affected the interactions of the Mexican government in Latin America, leaving Mexico increasingly marginalised and isolated from the subcontinent.

Felipe Calderón (2006–2012), Fox’s successor, based his presidential campaign on a ‘defined and active foreign policy promoting the human development of the Mexican people’ (Velázquez, 2010, 123). Calderón was sworn in as President after a heavily disputed election that part of the opposition claimed was fraudulent. In the middle of a crisis of legitimacy and probably as a measure to appease the left, Felipe Calderón prioritised the restoration and normalisation of relations with Latin America. The Calderón administration laid out this rapprochement with Latin America in a series of keynote documents highlighting the end goal of ‘having more world in Mexico and more Mexico in the world’ (Calderón, 2007; Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, 2007, 299). As stated in the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Affairs report on the involvement of Mexico in CELAC, the creation of CELAC was promoted by President Calderón expressly to assert Mexico’s leadership in Latin America. The creation of CELAC matches one of the five public policy axes present in the NDP of the Calderón administration (2006–2012), referring to the goals of having a ‘responsible foreign policy and to project Mexico in the international context’ (Presidencia de la República, 2007, 271). According to the NDP, Mexico’s foreign policy ought to be ‘clear and active, promoting human development of the nation in all aspects of social life, […] and based on the defence and active promotion of the national interest, which is to have an active foreign policy’ (Presidencia de la República, 2007, 293). The plan also calls for a political and economic presence in Latin America, which would assure spaces of dialogue and concentration in line with the country’s international height, evoking the Mexican government’s aspirations as a middle power.

76 In his memoirs, President Calderón states that when his administration began, Mexico was in deplorable relations with the two countries between which Mexico generally oscillates: the US and Cuba (Calderón, 2020).
Furthermore, in the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs’ stated goals during the 2006–12 administration, several lines of action are offered as explanations of Mexico’s promotion of CELAC. For instance, Objective III of the Secretariat’s policy program was to strengthen political and economic relations with Latin American and Caribbean countries. The promotion of Mexico’s active participation in regional mechanisms of dialogue and integration, the promotion of international fora, and regional consultations with countries are given as lines of action to achieve that objective (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2007).

The Mexican government attempted to increase the presence of the country in international politics by hosting high-level diplomatic summits, such as the COP (16th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) in November 2010 and the G20 summit in 2012. Mexico also actively participated in the UNSC during the 2009–2010 period and chaired the United Nations Human Rights Council from 2006–2007 (Beaton and Kennedy, 2016). This strategy was designed not only to situate Mexico in an ‘intermediate’ place in the international system but also to improve relations with leftist political forces inside the country, the support of which was needed in a divided Congress (Covarrubias, 2013). The Calderón administration hoped to improve relations with Latin American governments by favouring new cordial relations with leftist regimes in the region. Hence, Calderón’s first trip abroad as President was to Nicaragua and El Salvador (Cámara de Diputados, 2012).

Furthermore, the leadership style and cabinet cohesion of the Calderón administration proved to be different from its predecessor. President Calderón decided to centralise decision-making by promoting discipline within the cabinet through direct personal supervision of several diplomatic decisions. Patricia Espinosa, a career diplomat, was appointed secretary of foreign affairs to ensure direct control over foreign policy. Similarly, Secretary Espinosa managed the politicisation of several controversial diplomatic issues, such as relations with Cuba and Venezuela, which implied political attrition with opposition forces (González and Velázquez, 2013). In appealing to leftist governments in Latin America,
President Calderón ignored demands from his own PAN, which wanted to promote democracy and human rights in the region, and advocated for a more combative stance with the aforementioned countries rather than pursuing a regional leader NRC.  

Mexico’s position on regional integration also responded to Brazil’s increasing protagonist role in regional and international politics. Mexico’s leadership was aware of the negative reputation its country had in comparison with Brazil. For example, in an interview with the newspaper El País, President Calderón was asked what Mexico lacked to be considered an emerging country. Calderón responded as follows:

> What is clear to me is that there is a substantial difference between Brazil and Mexico. Every Brazilian, from the President to the common citizen, talks marvellous things about their country. In comparison, talking ill about Mexico is a speciality for the Mexicans. For instance, Rio de Janeiro has a homicide rate of about 83 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants against 14 in Mexico, and yet, Rio de Janeiro is hosting the World Cup and the Olympic Games [...] We have a very active international policy; we contribute to the best causes without claiming for us a permanent place in the Security Council. (Moreno, 2011)

Likewise, former Foreign Secretary Jorge Castañeda expressed his frustration that, to the world, Brazil is considered ‘a fairy-tale, whereas Mexico is viewed as a horror story’ (Castañeda, 2012).

Relations between Mexico and Brazil became increasingly tense due to the divergent ideological positions of their governments and the geopolitical rivalry both countries had in Latin America. This rivalry was aggravated by a personal antagonism between the ministers of foreign affairs of both countries during the Fox and Lula Da Silva governments (Covarrubias, 2014). During these years, Brazil started to display a greater regional and international position, which Mexico was unwilling to accept. For instance, Brazil backed several organisations that excluded Mexico, such as CALC (Cumbre de América Latina y el Caribe) and UNASUR. This exclusion

---

77 For instance, the president of the PAN, Manuel Espino, personally advocated for a firmer posture against the Cuban and Venezuelan regime. Espino later headed the Christian-Democrat Association of the Americas, a group encompassing the Christian democratic parties of the region.
severely eroded Mexico’s regional leadership role and limited Mexico’s influence and visibility as a middle power (Guajardo, 2008; Covarrubias Velasco, 2010). President Calderón acknowledged this situation by asserting that ‘the Brazilian government was extremely suspicious’ of Mexico (Calderón, 2020, 368). President Calderón stated that Celso Amorim and Antonio Patriota, Brazilian ministers of foreign affairs, did not miss an opportunity to say that Mexico ‘practically’ belonged to the US and that Latin America was only represented by South America, led by Brazil. ‘For this reason, we did everything possible to neutralise that position, and we always put Mexico at the forefront of Latin American policy’, the President declared in his memoirs (Calderón, 2020, 370).

Other countries also perceived Mexico’s isolation from Latin America. Since the establishment of NAFTA, several Latin American states have believed that Mexico exchanged the South for the North. This perception was reinforced when Mexico became a full member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1994. Chabat has described Mexico’s foreign policy as having a ‘nouveau riche’ syndrome (1993, 56), alienating its southern neighbours. Moreover, several analysts and diplomats have argued that by joining NAFTA, Mexico broke the rules of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) by granting the US preferences and advantages accorded to its ALADI partners (Sergio de Abreu e Lima Florêncio quoted by Palacios, 2005; Covarrubias, 2014).78

An additional element in Mexico’s rivalry with Brazil was the divergent ideological positions of both countries, an aspect that was also present between Mexico and several countries belonging to the pink wave in Latin America.79 According to Hakim (2002), Mexico and Brazil – the two Latin American ‘giants’ – represented two different ways of displaying greater international influence. Mexico exhibited its influence by promoting free trade and being a close ally of Washington, and Brazil showed its influence by having a close, protectionist economy and resisting

78 Signed in 1980, ALADI is a regional organisation for the promotion of free trade. Most, but not all, Latin American countries are part of ALADI.

79 Also called the turn to the left, the pink wave was the name given to the group of left-wing governments in Latin America, mainly those of Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Uruguay.
Washington’s hegemony. This difference was evident when several Mexican and Brazilian presidents worked towards the implementation of foreign policies that could enhance their countries’ influence in these two divergent ways (Soares de Lima and Hirst, 2006; Ruiz Sandoval, 2008; Soares de Lima, 2008; Covarrubias, 2010; Covarrubias, 2013; Velázquez Flores and Domínguez, 2013).

As stated by Covarrubias (2012), Luiselli (2006), and Flemes and Wehner (2012), the Mexican government resented the creation of UNASUR. Mexico was running out of spaces in which to interact with other countries in the vicinity, and this increasing isolation was described by Brazilian diplomats as proof that Mexico was a regional outsider (Gómez, 2015). Mexico’s reaction to Brazil’s rise was the deployment of soft balancing strategies through diplomatic means to restrain Brazil through international agreements. This soft balancing strategy was well received by the governments of Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Venezuela, which all sought to counterbalance Brazil's regional influence as well. The Mexican response to UNASUR and its regional marginalisation was the promotion of CELAC as a new regional group encompassing all Latin American countries to recover a platform where Mexico could display regional leadership and reconnect to its Latin American identity (Flemes and Wehner, 2012; Legler, 2013; Pellicer, 2013).

The Mexican government had two opportunities to promote this new regional group and to enact the NRCs of Mexico as a bridge-builder and as a seeker of regional leadership. Both of these opportunities came in the form of regional crises. The first opportunity was the 2008 Andean diplomatic crisis, and the second opportunity was the 2009 coup d’etat in Honduras.

The 2008 Andean diplomatic crisis was provoked by Colombia's military strike on FARC campsites inside Ecuador, which caused tensions between Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador.80 During this crisis, Calderón telephoned the presidents of Ecuador and Colombia on March 2, 2008 to ‘hear impressions from both presidents about the incident, offered Mexico’s support for the normalisation of relations among them and mediation between both Ecuador and Colombia (Presidencia de la

---

80 Three Mexican students who were accompanying the rebels were among the wounded in this attack.
Four days later, Calderón criticized the military incursion by Colombia, a country that was traditionally considered an ally of Mexico, for its violation of Ecuador’s sovereignty:

> We coincide in the rejection of any action that constitutes a violation of territorial sovereignty [...] we will spare no effort so that the Colombian and Ecuadorian governments normalize relations as soon as possible through dialogue and diplomatic channels. (Presidencia de la República, 2008a)

President Calderón also held phone conversations with President Fernández of the Dominican Republic and President Bachelet from Chile to discuss the situation and made the compromise to support dialogue between Colombia and Ecuador (Presidencia de la República, 2008a). President Calderón explicitly stated that he saw in this crisis an opportunity to foment Mexico’s leadership in the region:

> One afternoon I received a call from Leonel Fernández, President of the Dominican Republic. He urged me not only to attend the Rio Group summit but for Mexico to assume the leadership of the Rio Group, agreeing to succeed him in the pro tempore secretariat that, according to what he told me, no one with the capacity to lead and relaunch the Group wanted to accept. He [President Fernández] told me that he had asked President Lula the same thing. The latter had not only rejected the request but also came out to declare that the Rio Group was dead and that it would not attend the Santo Domingo meeting. [...] I saw in it the opportunity for Mexico to increase its relevance in the region, as well as to promote something in which I believed: Latin American integration. (Calderón, 2020, 369)

During the XX Rio Group Summit held in Santo Domingo on the 6th and 7th of March 2008, Calderón addressed his fellow heads of government by laying out Mexico’s position in the crisis and offering possible solutions. The President stated, ‘It seems that at this critical moment, the vocation of all the peoples and governments represented here is put to the test, specifically, by having dialogue and understanding to solve this condition that we are living in today’. The President also acknowledged the positions of Colombia and Ecuador:

> I want to recognise President Correa and President Uribe because it requires a lot of courage and much determination to speak here, face and testify before your grieving peers [...] It is very important that we are truly capable of
assuming a vision of the future and that an explicit will come from all the members of the Rio Group so that Latin America builds a new era of peace. Yes, with differences; Yes, with internal problems that come from the past and that it is difficult to solve immediately, but with a different will to the one that this week interrupts the path of our entire American continent. (Presidencia de la República, 2008a)

After mediation from several Latin American presidents at the summit, the leaders of the three countries in conflict publicly shook hands, paving the way for the normalisation of diplomatic relations. On the afternoon of the 7th of March, Mexico assumed the pro-tempore secretariat of the Rio Group, where President Calderón proposed the creation of a new regional entity that would integrate all of the Latin American and Caribbean states. This new organisation, the future CELAC, would favour consensus to locate the region on the international agenda by building bridges with other organisations in the world.

Calderón and the secretary of foreign affairs were not the only government entities that took an active role during the Andean diplomatic crisis. The Chamber of Deputies approved a unanimous resolution, proposed by the leaders of the eight congressional groups, exhorting Colombia and Ecuador to ‘find the diplomatic mechanisms and political dialogue to achieve an agreement to solve this conflict by peaceful means’ (Cámara de Diputados, 2008b). Moreover, the Chamber of Deputies supported Felipe Calderón’s idea that Mexico should become a mediator between Colombia and Ecuador (Cámara de Diputados, 2008b). However, horizontal role contestation was present, as some political parties from the opposition, such as the PRI, PRD, Nueva Alianza, and Convergencia, stated that Mexico should be more involved in the Latin American region and that the country ‘had left aside to become an ally of the US’ (Cámara de Diputados, 2008b). Deputy José Manuel del Río from the Convergencia party expressed that Mexico ‘was in the position to make an effort in maintaining peace among brother countries’. Deputy Juan Guerra of the PRD accused former President Vicente Fox of negatively affecting Mexico’s relationship with Latin America by causing attrition with Cuba and Venezuela. He added that ‘the time had come for Mexico to turn to Latin America, even more at this time where the Bush administration supported the Colombian government’ (Cámara de Diputados, 2008). Meanwhile, the Mexican Senate implored both countries to have peace.
negotiations and officially condemned Colombia’s military incursion into Ecuador’s territory.

After the crisis, Mexico took advantage of being president pro-tempore of the Rio Group and convened two extraordinary summits. Secretary Espinosa presented a regional organisation project – CELAC – in the first summit held in Salvador de Bahía. According to President Calderón, several delegations at this summit acknowledged Mexico’s leadership:

In all the speeches, they [the delegates] spoke of a truly historical event: the composition of the first formal political organization encompassing all Latin American and Caribbean countries since the beginning of our independent life. This was a genuine diplomatic victory for Mexico. (Calderón, 2020, 371)

The second CELAC summit was held on 29 June, 2009, in Nicaragua as a response to the Honduras coup d’état perpetrated the day before. In Honduras, the coup d’état was the second opportunity that Mexico had to enact its bridge-building and seeker of regional leadership NRCs. At first, the Calderón administration continued to recognise Manuel Zelaya, the deposed president of the Central American country. However, that attitude changed when Zelaya publicly supported Andrés Manuel López Obrador, Calderón’s main electoral rival in 2006, and opted for Brazil’s support over Mexico’s. When elections in Honduras were held some months later, Mexico chose to recognise the results, much to the criticism of several Latin American countries who considered the elections to be illegitimate.

Despite the unequal acceptance of Mexico’s involvement in the region, the Calderón administration continued to push for CELAC at the CALC summit in December of 2006. Calderón’s suggestions in this regard were included in the press release published at the end of the CALC summit. The proposal to create CELAC was finally accepted at the Rio Group’s dual summits held on the 22nd and 23rd of February 2010 and the II CALC summit held the following day. At these summits, Brazil insisted that the CALC should not be merged with the Rio Group to create this new regional organisation (Covarrubias, 2014). Despite this, CALC did merge into CELAC, which represented a diplomatic victory for Mexico, as it allowed the
country to be considered by other Latin American countries as Brazil’s equal in diplomatic skill.

The promotion of CELAC was encouraged by several political forces in Mexico. It could even be thought that the Mexican Senate was enthusiastic about CELAC, something rare with a foreign policy issue in Mexico. This attitude can be seen in the forum México en el Mundo, or Mexico in the World, organised by the Mexican Senate to discuss Mexico’s international relations, where the creation of CELAC was supported by all political forces (Senado de la República, 2015). This enthusiasm echoes an observation made by Ambassador Pellicer in the sense that whenever Mexico advances towards the rest of Latin America, ‘the reaction from all the political spectrum in Mexico is enthusiastic, independently of the tangible effects it has’ (2003).

The follow-up CALC meeting held in Caracas on the 2nd and 3rd of December 2011 allowed CELAC to replace the Rio Group (CELAC, 2011). President Calderón was the first speaker at this meeting, where he stressed the growing importance of Latin America in the world and Mexico’s role in convening CELAC for the ‘political, cultural, and social integration of the region’ (CELAC, 2011).

A part of the PAN was receptive to creating CELAC, since the Rio Group was seen as obsolete; however, PAN lawmakers wanted Mexico to emphasise the defence of democracy in the region (Interview Covarrubias, 2018). Instead, the Calderón administration proposed that the new organisation be open to all Latin American and Caribbean countries to serve as a bridge of communication with other actors. Secretary Patricia Espinosa visited Cuba and Venezuela, and high-profile ambassadors were nominated in those countries to help amend bilateral relations (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2010a). These actions showcase the administration’s interest in promoting Mexico’s NRC as a bridge-builder in the context of the creation of CELAC.

---

81 CELAC legally inherited the Rio Group and CALC diplomatic heritage.
82 This wing of the PAN wanted Mexico to be more involved in the Christian Democratic association of the Americas.
Through an institutional lens, CELAC was intended to be an organisation to consolidate Mexico’s presence in Latin America and the promotion of regional integration. In CELAC’s foundational document, it is mentioned that its goal was to,

[...] promote political concentration, the improvement of the position of Latin America in the international agenda, to promote the regional agenda in global forums, foment dialogue processes with other states, to promote the coordination between organisations and sub-regional institutions, and to solidify cooperation with the states that composed them. (Sistema Económico Latinoamericano y del Caribe, 2010, 4)

In addition, according to the Santiago declaration of 2014, CELAC is a ‘mechanism for dialogue and agreement that continues operating as a forum and a political actor to advance the political, economic, social, and cultural integration’. As President Calderón declared in the Caracas Summit of 2011, ‘We cannot remain disunited; We cannot succeed in the future based on our differences; Now it’s up to us to unite based on the fact that our similarities far outweigh our differences’ (CELAC, 2011, 22).

However, despite all the efforts invested in the creation of CELAC, the entity has faced several organisational weaknesses in meeting its goals. For instance, CELAC lacks permanent bureaucracies; it does not possess its legal personality or an agenda independent of those of its members, which greatly limits its effectiveness. Moreover, decision-making in CELAC occurs by consensus without adopting any formal voting scheme (Simon and Madrigal, 2014). This decision-making scheme made the approved texts in the declarations overly general and ambiguous, obstructing the enactment of Mexico’s NRCs. To tackle this situation, several countries, such as Bolivia and Venezuela, have proposed that the institutionalisation of CELAC be strengthened. For instance, former President Hugo Chavez called a vote to establish a permanent bureaucracy at the first CELAC summit (Procuraduría General de la República, 2014). Nevertheless, these attempts were thwarted by Brazilian and Mexican diplomats for different reasons. Brazil did not want CELAC to compete with UNASUR, and Mexico did not want CELAC to eclipse the OAS, which would cause unnecessary confrontations with the US (Kennedy and Beaton, 2017). This is evidence that, for Mexico, its relationship with the US took precedence over its potential NRC as a regional leader.
6.5 Unity in diversity: The performance of CELAC

One of the achievements of CELAC was the reduction of the number of summits held in the region, as CELAC merged CALC and the Rio Group, alleviating the crowded regional organisations in Latin America. The function of CELAC as a space for dialogue is centred on the work made at these summits and ministerial meetings (CELAC, 2012). Since there is no permanent secretariat, these summits and ministerial meetings are convened by the country that holds the president pro-tempore. Summits must then be approved by a troika composed of the previous and following president pro-tempore states and supported by national coordinators (Segovia, 2013). According to Simon and Madrigal (2014), national coordinators, troika, summits, and ministers' meetings still have a low organisational attainment. The stated cooperation goals of CELAC range from investments in energy, infrastructure, and development projects to challenging the Washington Consensus. However, CELAC has been more successful in serving as a ‘voice’ for states in the region through its declarations and special notices on international political, economic, and social matters. Nonetheless, the fact that CELAC was deliberately designed – by Mexico and other counties – and built as a weak organisation meant that the Calderón administration could not enact its middle-power NRCs within this organisation as the Mexican government originally intended. Mexico’s ability to enact the coalition-building and seeker of regional leader NRCs was significantly limited by CELAC’s polarised and conflicted decision-making process.

Paradoxically, CELAC reproduced the same weaknesses that it attempted to address in the Rio Group. For example, Yopo (1991) notes that the Rio Group also had a weak institutional framework that impeded the adoption of the regional entity's ambitious goals. According to Yopo, the Rio Group chose to favour representativeness over ability, a feature that CELAC appears to have replicated and that Mexican diplomats wanted to avoid when they advocated for creating CELAC.
Furthermore, CELAC was often portrayed as a regional entity to rival the OAS and replace it in Latin America. Venezuela was particularly vocal about replacing the OAS with CELAC, as Venezuela considered the OAS to be a ‘mechanism for interventionism and domination’ in Latin America (Weiffen, Wehner, and Nolte, 2013, 275). Chavez himself made the prediction that CELAC was going to replace an ‘old and worn-out OAS’, and Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega stated that the creation of CELAC constituted a death sentence for the Monroe doctrine (Wallis and Cawthorne, 2011). Secretary Espinosa replied to these statements, claiming that the OAS was a cooperation and dialogue mechanism that compromised Mexico ‘CELAC was not going to be an entity that would substitute or exclude the OAS’ (Sistema Económico Latinoamericano y del Caribe, 2011). From this situation, it is clear that CELAC was divided into two groups. On one side there were the Bolivarian states, such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, that had poor relations with the US and that perceived CELAC as a vehicle for confronting the hegemony of the US. On the other side, countries with more connections to the US, such as Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Peru, were not interested in directly confronting Washington and were not supportive of substituting the OAS for CELAC.

This conflict is the central point of the case study. While the creation of CELAC could have been an example of Mexico’s enactment of the regional leadership NRC, the various calls to substitute the OAS with CELAC placed Mexico in an uncomfortable position where the country could only satisfy expectations from either the US or Latin America. The Calderón administration did not insist on participating in CELAC after the debate on replacing the OAS took place. As a result of these deviating expectations within CELAC, the two middle-power NRCs could no longer be enacted. The Mexican government formally adhered to the Pacific Alliance in June 2012 as an alternative Latin American organisation to CELAC. Since the issue of CELAC serving as a replacement for the OAS is the inflection point in this case study, it is important to ask how Mexico’s involvement within CELAC might have evolved if the ALBA countries had not advocated for replacing the OAS. First, the Mexican government wanted to avoid a situation that would severely clash with Washington’s foreign policy expectations when Mexico City needed the cooperation
of the US government in its struggle against drug cartels. Since the tentative replacement of the OAS created such a clash, it is fair to assume that Mexico would have continued to play an active role in CELAC if there had been no element that could constitute a threat to its relations with Washington. However, the issue of the replacement of the OAS was a consequence of anti-American positions from the ALBA countries. It can be argued that other issues would eventually have been proposed by these countries that would have made Mexico prefer its relationship with the US over its enactment of middle-power NRCs through CELAC. Moreover, the perception of ALBA countries that Mexico was too close to the US orbit would still have been an obstacle to Mexico’s enactment of its NRCs.

6.6 Mexico’s partial retreat from CELAC and the creation of the Pacific Alliance

Paul (2004), Flemes and Wehner (2012), and Covarrubias (2013) write how countries in South America aimed to incorporate Mexico into regional politics to balance the presence of a preponderant Brazil. This counterbalance was derived from soft balance mechanisms, such as the Pacific Alliance with Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Mexico. This speaks to the external expectations from these countries that could not be socialised appropriately within CELAC due to its institutional weakness and regional polarisation and having Brazil as a member. It can also be argued that the Pacific Alliance met Washington’s expectations, since this organisation did not hold any revisionist discourses. In addition, the Mexican government could still proclaim to be actively engaged in the Latin American region by participating in the Pacific Alliance.

After the Caracas summit of February 2011, it became evident that polarisation was going to be an obstacle for CELAC’s initiatives. This polarisation can be seen in President Calderón’s memoirs:

The concern and tension over the degree of demagoguery of our colleagues were especially evident during the [CELAC] summits. The least of it was the tedious process of listening to endless speeches: even if a maximum of 10 minutes was granted per speech, some took up to an hour. The empathy we had among other presidents, of a more liberal and democratic nature, was evident. And, naturally, we began to conceive another type of regional economic alliance, as well as a political one. […] At the end of one of the
multiple summits, we agreed to invite a group of Pacific countries, specifically Chile, Peru, and Colombia, to discuss a deeper agreement. That would be the beginning of the Pacific Alliance. (Calderón, 2020, 375)

On the other hand, the Pacific Alliance was considered an alliance of US-friendly countries that worked outside CELAC to promote free trade among its members due to CELAC’s inability to promote their views of regional integration (De la Barra and Dello Buono, 2012). The idea of the Pacific Alliance was proposed in April 2011 when the presidents from Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Mexico issued the Lima Declaration, which intended to increase the free flow of people, goods, capital, and services among the member states and to promote commercial integration with the Asia–Pacific region. Support for CELAC in Mexico lost momentum due to backing for the Pacific Alliance received at the end of the Calderón administration, as CELAC seemed to have become gridlocked while the Pacific Alliance enjoyed relatively early success. Ironically, the Calderón administration, which was instrumental in creating CELAC, had a short-lived eagerness for participating in this organisation due to the level of polarisation. At the end of the Calderón administration, in October 2012, Mexico formally entered the Transpacific Strategic Agreement of Economic Agreement (TPP), which promised to be one of the world's most dynamic agreements and which the Pacific Alliance complemented (Velázquez and Domínguez, 2013). Pastrana (2016) posits that, unlike CELAC, the Pacific Alliance represented Mexico's genuine return to the Latin American region, especially by giving the country ‘a foot’ in South America and an effective counterbalance to Brazil.

Support of the Pacific Alliance, to the detriment of CELAC, was exacerbated by the Mexican government when the Peña Nieto administration began in 2012.

6.7 Mexico’s continuing partial retreat from CELAC during the Peña Nieto administration

Mexico’s uninterested attitude – materially and ideationally – towards CELAC was further intensified during the Peña Nieto administration (2012–2018). As a candidate, Peña Nieto argued that Mexico’s presence in the world had become ‘blurred’ and compared this situation with Brazil’s emergence. Peña Nieto proposed to recover Mexico's leadership as an emerging power by participating in multilateral
initiatives and acting as an intermediary in times of international crises (Peña Nieto, 2012, 140). The Peña Nieto campaign proposed seven actions for achieving the goal of making Mexico a global actor. These seven actions were as follows:

1) Better integration with the North American region; 2) Strengthening cooperation with Central America and the Caribbean; 3) Recovering effective interlocution with South America; 4) Consolidate Mexico as a Latin American cultural power; 5) Consolidate an alliance with the Asia-Pacific region; 6) The promotion of effective multilateralism and; 7) Boosting the relationship with the European Union. (Peña Nieto, 2012, 142)

For Peña Nieto’s campaign, the purpose of this strategy was to ‘bring more opportunities and better living conditions for Mexicans and influence the decisions that define the direction of international relations’ (Peña Nieto, 2012, 143). Peña Nieto won the presidential elections for the 2012–2018 term, ending the PAN’s 12-year regime and returning the PRI to the presidency. It is safe to assume that the winning candidate concluded that Mexico’s leadership in Latin America needed to be recovered. As President-elect, Peña Nieto’s first trip abroad included a visit to Guatemala, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and Peru (Meléndez, 2012). According to Sipse (2012), this trip demonstrated the willingness to exercise a leadership role in the region. The Peña Nieto administration laid down Mexico’s foreign policy goals in the 2012–2018 NDP. In this document, the main objective for Mexico’s foreign policy was to achieve a ‘Mexico with global responsibility […], to expand and strengthen the country's presence in the world with the use of multilateral forums and a wide range of free trade agreements’ (Presidencia de la República, 2012, 108). The plan also envisioned the consolidation of Mexico as an interlocutor to South and North America and highlighted the critical place of Latin America in Mexico’s foreign policy by stating that ‘Latin America and the Caribbean constitute the main geopolitical influence space in Mexico’ (Gobierno de la República, Mexico, 2012, 54). However, the document does not mention CELAC or what specific efforts were meant to be implemented towards Latin America. In this way, it can be determined that the new government perceived Mexico's situation in terms similar to the previous Calderón administration. Peña Nieto believed that Mexico ought to have more presence in the world and significantly more influence in Latin America. This
goal of recovering the interlocution with Latin America was stated in several official documents in the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and the NDP. From these texts, we can assume that the new administration continued to advocate for the enactment of the regional leadership and bridge-building NRCs to engage with Latin America. However, these conceptions did not correspond to actual foreign policy enactments. At this stage, it was clear that CELAC could not become a substitute for the OAS due to its poor institutional design. Its role became limited to a forum for global representation in geopolitical crises, such as the war in Syria, and in other regions, such as China and the EU. At the beginning of the Peña Nieto administration, Mexico did not display any concrete action to anchor its interests within CELAC. An example of the marginal position CELAC had for the Mexican government was the absence of President Peña Nieto at the CELAC presidential summits in 2015 and 2017 (Franzoni, 2017). However, Peña Nieto attended the Summit of Heads of State of CELAC held in Havana, Cuba, in January 2014. At that summit, Peña Nieto held a one-hour meeting with Fidel Castro in what could be considered a move to improve relations with Cuba and legitimise his administration with the Mexican left.

Strong evidence to support the claim that the Peña Nieto government continued to prefer the Pacific Alliance to the detriment of CELAC came with the congressional hearing that Luis Videgaray, the secretary of foreign affairs, had in February 2017. In his opening remarks, the secretary of foreign affairs established two new foreign policy goals in response to President Trump's arrival in the White House. The first goal was to diversify Mexico’s foreign relations ‘beyond North America’; the second was the creation of new objectives and guidelines in managing the bilateral relation with Washington during the Trump administration. Regarding the first goal, Mexico diversifying its international affairs, Secretary Videgaray stated that,

Mexico is, always has been, and always will be a Latin American country. As such, we must undertake not only rhetorically, not only in political dialogue, but also strengthen our ties of economic cooperation, trade, and investment with Latin America. During the current administration, the most successful integration effort has been the Pacific Alliance, without a doubt. This is an alliance that we should promote and solidify as an instrument of political dialogue and cooperation and genuine integration between four Latin
Secretary Videgaray did not even mention CELAC as a mechanism to diversify Mexico’s relations, but directly alluded to the Pacific Alliance as unquestionably the most successful organisation for promoting Mexico’s interests in the region. Only after Senator Dolores Padierna from the opposition PRD questioned President Peña Nieto's absence from the CELAC summit in 2017 did Secretary Videgaray mention CELAC. His words showed a stark contrast between the Pacific Alliance’s success and the frustrating ideological obstruction within the CELAC summits. Secretary Videgaray claimed that,

The President cancelled his participation in CELAC at the last moment because it was a meeting that was not fulfilling its purposes: Other presidents did not attend, some of them also cancelled [their participation] in the last hours before the Summit of Heads of State and Government; The presidents of Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica did not attend for a reason: The Summit was not achieving the consensus that it would have to achieve, particularly Mexico did not endorse some expressions that would have been aggressions against other Latin American nations. We believe that CELAC should never be an instrument for deepening divisions in Latin America. On the contrary, CELAC should be an instrument to consolidate the unity of the Latin American and Caribbean peoples. (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2017)

In this sense, it could be noted that the Mexican government found Latin American divisions too deep to bridge, limiting the enactment of its NRCs within CELAC. Since the secretary was considered the most influential person during the administration and the President’s right-hand man, his comments can be regarded as reflecting the Mexican government's position (El País, 2017). The government not only categorically preferred the Pacific Alliance to CELAC as the vehicle to engage with Latin America, but it can also be argued that Mexico’s middle-power NRCs changed, as it was no longer seeking a leadership position in Latin America as a whole but ‘integration’ with only three other countries.
With the adoption of the Pacific Alliance, Peña Nieto’s foreign policy was heavily focused on economic concerns, and issues related to this organisation were carried out mostly by the Secretariat of Economic Affairs rather than the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs. Mexico's support of the Pacific Alliance to the detriment of CELAC is consistent with the country's economic policy and with the initial objectives of the Peña Nieto government: the transformation of Mexico into an emerging power and an actor with global responsibility. This policy change is also consistent with the doctrines of former Mexican governments, which believed that the expansion of free trade agreements was needed to overcome national economic conditions, a central tenet of the pragmatic orientation of foreign policy (Andreas, 1996; Flores et al., 2018; Neto and Malamud, 2015; Ramírez, 2006; Waldkirch, 2010). Hence, it is evident that during Peña Nieto’s administration, CELAC lost importance in Mexico’s foreign policy, even when it could have been used as an effective counterbalance to decisions made by the Trump administration. Instead, CELAC remained limited as a discursive resource and a framework for inter-regional dialogue. In contrast, the Pacific Alliance was seen as much more successful than CELAC as a vehicle to engage with Latin America.

6.8 Horizontal role contestation
Horizontal role contestation makes an important contrast with the previous chapter due to several factors, such as the absence of an international crisis, presidential leadership, and the similar interpretations of NRCs that both the executive and legislative branches shared. These elements are analysed in the following subsections.

6.8.1 Congress
The involvement of Congress in this chapter was remarkably different from the previous case study. Legislatures in the administrations of both President Calderón and Peña Nieto did not have the same influence in this case as with Mexico’s involvement in the UNSC.

This case study shows how the role of congress in Mexican foreign policy shifts according to contextual features framing foreign policy processes. For instance, Congress responded to the different leadership styles of Presidents Calderón and Peña
Nieto and also worked to protect the interpretations of the traditional foreign policy orientation. Congress supported President Calderón’s proposal to achieve greater integration with Latin America, which Congress, as a stronghold of the traditional orientation, supported. Only when the Calderón administration deviated from the initial objective did Congress show signs of resisting the executive’s policies. Only one lawmaker, senator Dolores Padierna of the opposition PRD, expressed a consistent position in parliamentary debates and congressional hearings regarding Mexico’s participation in CELAC.83 Not even lawmakers who were members of the Committees of International Relations in either house of Congress participated consistently in this subject. Remarks about CELAC tended to be occasional and were mostly framed with the perception that Mexico had lost leadership and presence in Latin America. As such, Congress supported the initial, middle-power NRCs that the Calderón government attempted to pursue, such as the seeker of regional leadership and bridge-builder NRCs, and was not opposed when these NRCs were altered to follow a coalition-builder NRC in the Pacific Alliance. It seems that this case replicated the words of Pellicer, who argued that all political forces were eager to support any policy that meant approaching the rest of Latin America, independent of its nature or outcome (2003).

When the Calderón administration announced its intention of creating CELAC, the Mexican Senate welcomed the initiative with relative enthusiasm. Only some members of the ruling PAN wanted Mexico to lead a coalition of Christian Democratic governments in Latin America instead of focusing on CELAC (Pellicer, 2012). These voices were not explicitly articulated during Congress debates, but were otherwise known in press coverage and other secondary sources (Buitre, 2015). The Senate was also amicable to the creation of the Pacific Alliance, even though the ethos of this organisation was free trade, a contentious issue for some parties of the left.

During the Peña Nieto administration, only some lawmakers criticised the country’s apparent abandonment of CELAC within the LXII legislature (2012–2015) and the

---

83 The senator would later change her party allegiance and join the Labour Party.
LXIII legislature (2015–2018). There was not a systematic, organised contestation of the country’s retreat from CELAC. Senator Padierna promoted a declaration from the Senate urging the government’s executive branch to strengthen its rapprochement with Latin America and recognise the importance of the first CELAC summit in 2013. In this declaration, which was supported by both the PAN and the PRI, Senator Padierna stated that it was important for the Pacific Alliance countries to participate in CELAC, given that they are more linked with the US-axis (Senado de la República, 2013). This was the first time the Pacific Alliance was described as leaning towards Washington in the Mexican Congress.

Senator Padierna also recognised the merit of President Calderón and other Latin American presidents in creating CELAC. The Senator also supported President Peña’s remarks at the first CELAC summit, when he characterised Mexico as a country that sought more integration with the Latin American region through CELAC (Senado de la República, 2013). These remarks contrasted with Secretary Meade’s first congressional hearing, in which he did not list CELAC as a priority for the Mexican government (Sistema de Información Legislativa, 2013).

However, Padierna’s supportive stance towards the government changed two years later. In an interview, Senator Padierna criticised the contradiction between the statements made when the President demanded that CELAC ‘be more ambitious’ in achieving deeper integration while the Peña Nieto administration itself had a timid attitude to CELAC (Senado de la República, 2015). For Senator Padierna, Peña Nieto’s absence at CELAC’s summits negatively affected Mexico’s influence in the Latin American region: ‘Mexico is losing the leadership it had for many years towards Latin America and it has been losing it for over 30 years now’. For her part, senator Mariana Gómez del Campo of the PAN justified Mexico’s partial retreat from CELAC, citing the ideological division present in the subcontinent (Senado de la República, 2015).

In 2017, the secretary of foreign affairs, Luis Videgaray, was questioned by the Senate on the country’s partial retreat from CELAC and its neglect towards South

---

84 José Antonio Meade was the Peña administration’s first secretary of foreign affairs.
America. The secretary declared that CELAC ‘was not achieving the consensus that it was expected to achieve’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2017). Senator Padierna criticised this posture, stating that by neglecting CELAC, the Peña Nieto government was opting not to annoy the Trump administration (Senado de la República, 2017). Senator Pineda Guchi of the PRI defended the President by saying that the Peña Nieto administration was active in CELAC (Senado de la República, 2017).

As can be attested to in parliamentary debates, only Senator Padierna held a consistent opinion in the Mexican congress regarding CELAC. Her position was critical of the government, as she perceived the Peña Nieto administration to be retreating from CELAC to appease the Trump administration during the negotiations of the US–Mexico–Canada free trade deal (USMCA), which replaced NAFTA. As only her position remained critical during the Peña administration, the place of Congress in horizontal role contestation was negligible.

### 6.8.2 Bureaucracies

The cabinets of President Calderón and President Peña Nieto were vastly different from each other. Peña Nieto did not exert direct control over his cabinet members, perpetuating the rivalry between the Secretariat of Economic Affairs and the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs. Another distinctive element of the Peña Nieto administration was that his appointments for the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs had a singular profile that remarkably followed the pragmatic orientation in foreign affairs.\(^{85}\) For instance, two out of the three secretaries of foreign affairs during the Peña government had PhDs in Economics from prestigious universities in the US and were also Secretaries of the Treasury at some point. None of the heads of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs had significant experience in foreign policy matters. As a result, the Peña Nieto administration followed a deeply pragmatic orientation in foreign policy affairs by prioritising economic concerns over political ones.

\(^{85}\) This profile, however, did not put an end to the conflict between the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat of Economic Affairs, as there were issues that overlapped in the jurisdictions of both secretariats and caused conflicts between them. This overlap happened with issues related to NAFTA, the TPP, and the Pacific Alliance.
This profile influenced the design and implementation of Mexican foreign policy. This can be seen in the proposals to make Mexico a logistical platform for trade between the Americas, and in the preference given to the Pacific Alliance over CELAC. This pragmatic profile was also extended to other officials working in the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs. For example, the undersecretary of foreign affairs for Latin America did not mention CELAC during her participation in the México en el Mundo forum (Senado de la República, 2015). During her speech in this forum, Vanesa Rubio described Mexico’s involvement in the region in terms of foreign investments, development, migration, and mobility. The speech made by Secretary Meade did not mention CELAC but expressed that ‘even though more coordination is needed in Latin America, extremisms impede that’, which was a direct reference to CELAC (Senado de la República, 2015). However, Secretary Meade did invoke the importance of the MIKTA group and the Pacific Alliance for Mexico.

Presidential leadership and bureaucratic politics are directly involved in this case study. Several primary and secondary sources point to the direct involvement of President Calderón in the creation of CELAC. For instance, González and Velázquez (2012; 2013) and the white book of CELAC’s creation in 2011 claim that the idea of creating CELAC came from the President, who instructed the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs to work towards the creation of the organisation. In contrast, President Peña Nieto was the opposite, delegating decisions relating to CELAC to the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, as he did not have direct involvement in foreign policy issues. The participation of Calderón in the creation of CELAC resembles that of a role entrepreneur. As President, Calderón had more freedom to instil his preferred NRC in foreign policy than a secretary of state would have, since he did not experience any resistance in bureaucracies due to his hierarchical position. Moreover, since his initiative was an attempt to advance towards Latin America, his agenda did not receive significant domestic contestation in the pro-Latin American congress. Nevertheless, despite the institutional and political leadership of President Calderón, he was not a successful role entrepreneur due to external constraints.

Furthermore, cabinet dynamics were another factor that affected the decision-making process in foreign policy. Whereas the Calderón government had a secretary of foreign affairs who was a professional diplomat and remained in the post throughout
the administration, Peña Nieto had three secretaries with no previous experience in foreign affairs. However, Mexico’s waning support for CELAC was not a direct result of bureaucratic politics, since decisions relating to CELAC were not a consequence of the pulling and hauling between bureaucracies, as these decisions were handled exclusively by the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2012). Furthermore, during the Peña Nieto administration, both of these secretaries overwhelmingly espoused the pragmatic orientation of foreign policy.

An alternative explanation for the abandonment of CELAC by Mexico is that it resulted from the transition of government. Mexican administrations tend to discontinue or rebrand their predecessors’ trans-government projects to make them their own policies (Ai Camp, 2012). This situation could explain why Peña Nieto dropped CELAC and opted for the Pacific Alliance as the preferred vehicle to engage with the Latin American region. However, it should be noted that the Pacific Alliance was created in the last months of the Calderón administration when it was clear that polarisation was going to be an obstacle to the stated objective of Mexico fomenting regional integration with CELAC. The Peña Nieto administration still preferred the Pacific Alliance over CELAC, not because the administration sought to differentiate itself from Calderón but due to strong external constraints. Examples of these constraints include the deep polarisation reigning within CELAC and the calls to substitute the OAS with CELAC, a situation that can be verified by official statements, such as congressional hearings.

6.9 Vertical role contestation

Vertical role contestation is focused on debates about the roles a country ought to implement in foreign policy between the elites and the masses. In this particular instance, there was no marked distinction between the elites and the masses regarding Mexico’s NRCs and their attitudes towards CELAC. According to data from the survey *Mexico, las Américas y el Mundo*, leaders and the general public considered Latin America as the region Mexico should pay more attention to. This perception, however, in no way constituted a mandate. For instance, in 2010, 29% of the public and 36% of the leadership considered Latin America as the most important
region for Mexican interests, whereas in 2016, those percentages were only 32% and 33%, respectively. Regarding whether Mexico should seek to have a leadership status in Latin America, in 2010, 35% of the public supported the idea of Mexico having a leadership role in the region, while 47% of leaders advocated for the adoption of this role. Six years later, 39% of the public and 49% of leaders supported Mexico’s leadership. This evolution is visualised in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Evolution of public support for Mexico’s leadership role in Latin America.**

As can be seen, there is a considerable disparity between the public and the elite's perception of whether Mexico should enact a leadership role in Latin America, with leaders consistently advocating for this role more than the public. However, it should be noted that support for this role is never overwhelming. In leaders, it rarely crosses the 50% threshold, and in the public, this support is limited to approximately one-third of respondents who in all editions preferred the notion of Mexico participating in Latin America without seeking a leadership status. Therefore, there was not a public mandate in Mexico for a regional leader NRC in Latin America.

---

86 Jenkins-Smith, Mitchell, and Herron (2004) discovered how views from the public have been structured by underlying orientations in foreign policy. The Mexican public’s distaste for regional
An additional point of inquiry is if CELAC was seen as a way to achieve a regional leadership NRC for the respondents who wanted Mexico to become a regional leader. *Mexico, Las Américas y el Mundo* offers evidence that very few people knew about the existence of CELAC. In 2012, only 26% of leaders accurately knew the meaning of CELAC’s acronym; in 2014, this was 25%, and in 2016, it was only 19%. On a favourability ranking of international organisations, using a scale from zero to 100, the general public gave CELAC a score of 53 and the Pacific Alliance a score of 52. These rankings meant that both are the least favoured international organisations of ordinary citizens on a scale where MERCOSUR (score of 53), the OAS (score of 57), the IMF (score of 58), NAFTA (score of 60), and the UN (score 67) are present. For leaders, CELAC and the Pacific Alliance are among the organisations with less favourability, with scores of 67 and 70, respectively.

It is evident that there was weak support from both the general public and leaders for CELAC, although – as the editors from the survey hypothesise – this might be due to a lack of knowledge of these organisations and not the result of an active aversion to these entities. The absence of evidence from the public of active resistance to CELAC seems to confirm the hypothesis that there is a general absence of interest in CELAC, which might have enabled the Peña Nieto government to neglect this organisation.

It is evident that CELAC was not seen as a means for Mexico to achieve the regional leader NRC in Latin America. However, the Pacific Alliance also showed low levels of support in both survey categories and was not neglected by the Peña Nieto administration. This situation indicates that, other than enabling Mexico's partial retreat from CELAC, vertical role contestation did not play a significant part in Mexico’s involvement in the creation of and subsequent retreat from this organisation.

leadership may be explained by the deeply rooted traditional orientation of foreign policy – which advocates for isolationism – in Mexican society.

87 The questionnaire designed for the general public did not ask respondents if they knew the meaning of CELAC’s acronym.
6.10 External role expectations

External role expectations – expressed in socialisation acts within CELAC summits – were the pivotal factor that constrained Mexico’s attempted enactment of its middle-power NRCs through CELAC. Both President Calderón and President Peña Nieto attempted to enact the NRCs of seeker of regional leadership and bridge-builder in an ideologically divided region. Mexico defined these NRCs in official documents, speeches, and the establishment of CELAC, where other Latin American leaders acknowledged President Calderón's contributions.

There was no significant domestic contestation of these NRCs within Mexico. Bureaucratic infighting was negligible, and the role of Congress as a place to contest NRCs was marginal. The most important elements in these domestic dimensions were presidential leadership and decision-making processes. However, these elements cannot independently explain why Mexico could not properly enact its middle-power NRCs through CELAC. The fact that Peña Nieto was not personally involved in foreign policy affairs the same way that President Calderón was and the different profiles of the secretaries of foreign affairs in his administration were not elements that affected the enactment of these roles in particular. These elements responded to the ways bureaucracies and the political leadership managed opinions and information on foreign policy as a whole, not only on the particular issue of Mexico’s links to Latin America. Additionally, the Pacific Alliance was created before the Peña Nieto administration came to power.

Role conflicts in the form of domestic role contestation and external role expectations were the main mechanisms that intervened between the Mexican government’s expressed foreign policy goals and the actual enactment of NRCs in foreign policy. This case was a clear example of the ways conflicting role expectations constrained the Mexican government’s NRCs. With CELAC, Mexico attempted to find a place of influence in Latin America. Nevertheless, interactions with some countries in the region, namely ALBA members and Brazil, rejected Mexico’s role location process. Therefore, the interaction between Mexico and important countries in Latin America was not congruent with the expectations they had regarding CELAC. Mexico managed this role conflict by participating in the creation of the Pacific Alliance, a group where all members' expectations were
compatible and where their interactions were successful and coherent. However, as the Pacific Alliance is a group of only four like-minded countries in a region of 33 states, Mexico could not be considered to have enacted the *seeker of regional leadership* NRC or the *bridge-builder* NRC. Only the *coalition-builder* NRC could be considered to have been enacted in the context of Mexico’s interactions with Latin America through the Pacific Alliance.

Furthermore, CELAC was subject to two counterbalancing acts, which were another factor that led to the failed integration of Mexico’s interests within CELAC. For Mexico, the creation of CELAC, as with any other regional integration group, was considered a counterbalancing act to limit the influence of the US. On the other hand, for South American countries, CELAC was considered a counterbalance to an increasing Brazilian influence. Several authors, such as Seabra (2012) and Flemes and Wehner (2012), point to countries like Argentina, Colombia, Chile, and Venezuela to balance the presence of neighbouring Brazil by promoting Mexican participation in the region. Likewise, Mexico’s partial retreat from CELAC can be explained by other important players’ expectations of its foreign policy, such as those of the US and the OAS. This retreat can be attested to in the Caracas summit of 2011, when ALBA countries began to propose the consolidation of CELAC into a permanent organisation that would replace the OAS and defy American influence in the region. Mexico did not want to unnecessarily jeopardise its vital relationship with the US by creating a parallel organisation to the OAS.

The benefits of using soft balancing as a middle-range theory in this case study are evident, as it brought clarity to the original purposes of CELAC, which sought to ensure an equilibrium in which no single entity had a predominant position over the other. The Mexican congress welcomed CELAC, as it was seen as a way to engage with Latin America and counteract Washington's overwhelming influence. Likewise, CELAC was considered by many South American countries as a way to include Mexico in the regional agenda, where it would constrain Brazilian influence.
6.11 Mexico’s national role conceptions as a middle power

In this case, Mexico, as a state that promoted the creation of CELAC, had the potential to enact the following NRCs: *seeker of regional leadership* and *bridge-builder*.

Process-tracing was used to analyse the intervening mechanisms involved in the causes and outcomes of Mexico’s involvement in the creation of CELAC and explore how this involvement relates to Mexico attaining middle-power NRCs in foreign policy. In the context of this case study, process-tracing was used to test the author’s hypothesis that role conflict between two different orientations’ interpretations of NRCs and deviating expectations of Mexico’s NRCs from different countries led to anomalous behaviour in foreign policy and an inability to display NRCs associated with middle powers. This process is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5:** Evolution of NRCs in Chapter 6.

---

**Original NRCs**

The *seeker of regional leadership* and *bridge-builder* NRCs were designed by the executive branch and supported by Congress. These NRCs were encouraged by social cues from Latin American countries that sought to soft balance Brazil and from domestic demands to become closer to Latin America.

**Role Conflict**

Political polarisation in Latin America and the perception that Mexico was aligned with Washington constrained the enactment of these NRCs. Mexico’s categorical refusal to allow the creation of a regional organisation that would replace the OAS weakened the organisation and the enactment of both of Mexico’s NRCs as a middle power.

**Role Enactment**

Due to external expectations expressed through socialisation acts, such as CELAC summits, Mexico was forced to retreat from CELAC and look to the Pacific Alliance as an alternative vehicle to approach Latin America. However, due to differences in the reach and nature of the organisation, Mexico was forced to drop its original NRCs and enacted the *coalition-builder* NRC instead.
### 6.11.1 Mexico’s seeker of regional leadership NRC

Measuring regional leadership is critical for evaluating a state’s impact as a middle power. According to Yilmaz (2017), a regional power is a state that projects influence in a specific region to shape its regional agenda for other countries in the area. In this thesis, the *seeker of regional leadership* NRC is operationalised by using explicit statements in official documents denoting the Mexican government's aspiration to be a regional leader in Latin America. This is compared with the acceptance or rejection of this aspiration by other states in the region to evaluate the actual impact of Mexico’s enactment of the NRC.

Reviewing the diagnostic evidence gathered in this case, it is clear from the keywords and speech acts made by public officials that one of the goals Mexico sought when it supported the creation of CELAC was to achieve a leadership role in the region. This objective is also explicitly stated in official documents, such as NDPs, the *White Book* on CELAC’s creation, and the sectoral plan of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

Other states in Latin America were receptive of Mexico’s initiative to create CELAC and also accepted Mexico’s influence to counterbalance Brazil's presence in South America. However, the ALBA countries did not welcome some of Mexico’s initiatives, such as implementing a tariff-reduction programme, and objected to Mexico’s aspiration to keep CELAC without a permanent bureaucracy and headquarters. Although Mexico had the potential to be regarded as a regional leader, especially after Brazil conceded to merging CALC into CELAC, Mexico’s leadership was not recognised in CELAC due to conflicting role expectations from significant others. Expectations from the US were publicly not against the creation of CELAC. There is no evidence suggesting that Washington implemented any serious attempts at thwarting the institution's creation. However, as several secondary sources, such as Kennedy and Beaton (2017) and Wallis and Cawthorne (2011), point out, Mexico believed that supporting a stronger institutionalisation of CELAC would provoke a conflict with its northern neighbour. Thus, external role expectations were self-imposed by Mexico in this case.
The sequence of events presented in this case allows us to confirm Mexico’s reluctance to consolidate CELAC regarding the adoption of Mexico’s NRCs. As can be confirmed by primary sources, Mexico aimed to develop a *seeker of regional leadership* NRC. This NRC was not contested consistently by proponents of the traditional or the pragmatic orientation of foreign policy, since the President’s party in Congress, which had pragmatic views, did not publicly object to the President’s policy. The opposition, on their part, supported the traditional policy of seeking to diversify Mexico’s foreign policy with stronger ties with the Latin American region. An illustration of the position of both orientations is presented in the table below.

**Table 9: Perceptions of Mexico’s seeker of regional leadership NRC during the creation of CELAC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional orientation</th>
<th>Pragmatic orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For proponents of this orientation, the government's decision to promote the creation of CELAC was the right one, since relations with Latin America were going to be improved (González, 2011). However, Mexico’s retreat from CELAC, beginning at the end of the Calderón administration, was contested. Some senators demanded that the government of Mexico strengthen CELAC to have more interactions with Latin America and serve as a bridge with ALBA countries but not necessarily to enact a <em>seeker of regional leadership</em> NRC.</td>
<td>For this orientation, regional leadership is not an essential goal for Mexican foreign policy (Covarrubias, 2008). However, the idea of diversification is acceptable when done with like-minded countries on issues relating to the defence of democracy, human rights, and free trade promotion. In this sense, the Pacific Alliance was a far more attractive organisation than CELAC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Domestic contestation was not a defining factor in Mexico’s decision to promote CELAC and partially retreat from the organisation. However, the absence of domestic contestation is also an important factor. It is likely that a widespread lack of interest from political actors and the population in foreign affairs and specifically in Latin American organisations served as an enabling factor in Mexico’s retreat from CELAC.

6.11.2 Mexico’s NRC as a bridge-builder or coalition-builder

To Karim (2008), a bridge-builder NRC is enacted when a country implements policies to build consensus, highlighting the convergence of interests in international politics. Statements and the external recognition of Mexican efforts are offered as evidence of the enactment of this NRC. As Maihold (2017) argues, the image of a ‘bridge nation’ was widely promoted during the presidency of Vicente Fox (2000–2006) without being acknowledged by other international players. Calderón did not insist on displaying Mexico as a ‘two-way bridge nation’, refusing to play an intermediate role between industrialised donor countries and the rest of the developing world. The bridge-builder NRC is not necessarily consistent with Mexico’s goals. Although it is compatible with the goal of achieving more international influence, it generates political costs and does not have a significant quantity of followers, resulting in regional coalitions with low levels of commitment.

One of the reasons behind Calderón’s decision to motivate the creation of CELAC was to rebuild Mexico’s relations with Latin American states – specifically ALBA group countries – which were damaged during the previous administration. In addition to CELAC, the Calderón administration deployed high-level representatives to serve as ambassadors to Venezuela and Cuba and resisted pressures from his party, the PAN, to strengthen relations with conservative governments in the region. It could be argued, then, that one of Mexico’s objectives in the creation of CELAC was to act as a bridge-builder; this goal was supported by all political forces in the country and was encouraged by most countries in the region, which were eager to counterbalance the presence of Brazil. However, CELAC’s weak decision-making structure – which Mexico contributed to – and a distaste for a confrontation with the
OAS and the US meant that Mexico avoided enacting any meaningful bridging role. Instead, the Mexican state preferred to enact a coalition-builder NRC with the Pacific Alliance. Unlike the bridge-builder NRC, the coalition-builder NRC is operationalised by the management of regional alliances by Mexico or the country's leadership within international institutions with like-minded states to implement and execute an agenda. This distinction between NRCs and their interpretation by Mexico’s foreign policy orientations is illustrated in the table below.

**Table 10: Interpretation of the coalition-builder NRC during the creation of CELAC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional orientation</th>
<th>Pragmatic orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to the traditional orientation, Mexico should aim to build coalitions with</td>
<td>Coalition-building, to the pragmatic orientation, is understood as making coalitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other developing countries, especially if the purpose is to constrain the power of the</td>
<td>with like-minded countries. Scholars such as Maihold (2017) have written about how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US. Mexico attempted to achieve this through multilateral organisations, such as the OAS</td>
<td>recent Mexican governments have made coalitions with states with similar characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and the UN. The creation of CELAC was welcomed by the traditional orientation.</td>
<td>to Mexico, such as MIKTA or MINT, to increase the country’s influence in international</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>politics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bridge-builder NRC should not be confused with being a mediator, as this latter role involves a more formal exercise usually involving two sides in a conflict. Enacting the bridge-builder NRC could be done outside of formal structures and usually involves more than two parties. In the context of this case study, both foreign policy orientations considered the bridge-builder NRC to be undesirable, as shown in the following table.
Table 11: Interpretation of Mexico’s bridge-builder NRC during the creation of CELAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional orientation</th>
<th>Pragmatic orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To the traditional orientation of foreign policy, the principles of the Estrada doctrine and Mexico’s deeply rooted Latin Americanist self-identity are not conducive to this NRC’s enactment. Moreover, the closeness of Mexico with the US impeded the acknowledgement by other countries of Mexico’s validity in enacting this NRC.</td>
<td>The original idea of a bridge, to the pragmatic orientation, was a logistical and trade connection between North and South America and between Europe and Asia, as stated by Secretary Videgaray during the Peña administration (Videgaray, 2017). The concept of a bridge as a connection between two political ideologies is not something that the pragmatic orientation considered relevant, unlike the coalition-builder NRC, which the pragmatic orientation supported, as it focused on issues of trade and economies of scale and was a complement to NAFTA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.12 Conclusion

This case found that the decision to create CELAC was based on several motivations. One of these motivations was to rebuild relations with Latin American countries after the confrontations that the Fox administration had with the governments of Cuba and Venezuela. When President Calderón assumed power in 2006 after a contested electoral victory, he intended to amend relations with Latin American countries but also aimed to contain the rise of Brazil in the region and sought to have good relations with opposition political parties that supported a rapprochement with Latin America. The analysis made in this case study produced new understandings of how domestic role contestations and external role expectations served to justify the creation of CELAC to enact the seeker of regional leadership and bridge-builder NRCs.
There was no visible domestic contestation to these NRCs in Congress, bureaucracies, or public opinion, since the political opposition in Congress supported rapprochement with Latin America, and the party in government – which advocated for a pragmatic engagement – was supportive towards a presidential policy. Calderón’s involvement in the matter and his decision to grant the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs widespread control over issues regarding CELAC assured that bureaucratic infighting did not occur. Furthermore, Mexico’s involvement in CELAC was welcomed by external expectations from other Latin American countries that sought to soft balance Brazil’s presence in the region and were, therefore, supportive of Mexico’s initiative.

With the creation of CELAC in 2011, the first limitations to the middle-power NRCs that Mexico was attempting to enact became visible. Political polarisation in the subcontinent became deeper than the Mexican government had anticipated, and the bridge-builder NRC became difficult to enact. The perception that Mexico was aligned with Washington and Mexico’s refusal to allow CELAC to replace the OAS led to Mexico’s retreat from active participation in CELAC, and the two NRCs that were to be enacted through this regional organisation were withdrawn. In this way, conflict of role interpretations between foreign policy orientations served as an intervening variable connecting domestic role contestation and external role expectations with the outcome of Mexico’s foreign policy behaviour.

The way Mexico managed this role conflict was by joining the Pacific Alliance during the last months of the Calderón administration as an alternative for asserting its Latin American identity. The Peña Nieto government supported the Pacific Alliance, as its original focus was mostly centred on free trade issues, which was coherent with the government’s adherence to the pragmatic foreign policy orientation. Due to the Pacific Alliance being a group of four states characterised in CELAC as being close to Washington, Mexico could not be considered a regional leader or a bridge-builder among ideological sides in this homogeneous regional group. Instead, coalition-building is the only middle-power NRC that Mexico enacted. This is the foreign policy outcome and the dependent variable in this case study.
Several alternative arguments, such as presidential leadership styles, public opinion, bureaucratic politics, and other elements pertaining to domestic politics in Mexico, may offer an explanation of the outcome of this case study. For instance, presidential leadership style had a relevant influence on policy-making processes at the time CELAC was created. The initial promotion of CELAC’s creation came from President Calderón, for example. Moreover, it can be seen that the personal involvement of Presidents Calderón and Peña Nieto in foreign policy issues was starkly different. However, Peña Nieto worked with the same regional polarisation Calderón faced during his administration, which acted as an external constraint, reducing the margins of manoeuvre for both administrations. In issues regarding public opinion, most of the population was indifferent to CELAC, as a significant portion of the country was not aware of its existence and did not know about attempts by the Mexican government to engage with Latin America. Thus, public opinion had no discernible impact on the case study’s outcome.

Another reason for Mexico’s inconsistent involvement in CELAC was the energy and resources that management of the relation with the US took in Mexico's foreign policy and the need to avoid overly antagonising Washington. As Kennedy and Beaton (2017) write, Mexico's main concern in CELAC was that its newly found cooperation with Latin America would not jeopardise the special relationship with its northern neighbour, which meant having an active involvement in the OAS. This was evident in Mexico's social interactions, such as hosting the 47th OAS general assembly in Mexico City during 2017 while being absent at high-profile CELAC meetings, clearly demonstrating that Mexico did not want CELAC to replace the OAS within the region. In this case, Mexico preferred to be a bilateral partner of the US rather than a regional leader due to the intensity of interactions with the US in comparison with the rest of Latin America. Although interactions with Latin America convey a potent symbolism for the Mexican state, interactions with the US are considerably more intense and meaningful due to the need to manage urgent intermestic issues, such as migration, trade, and security.

Another factor contributing to the outcome in this chapter was bureaucratic segmentation. During the Calderón administration, the secretary of foreign affairs
was a professional diplomat and remained at her post throughout the duration of the administration. President Peña Nieto, in contrast, had three secretaries with no previous experience in foreign affairs. However, Mexico’s waning support for CELAC was not a direct result of bureaucratic politics, as decisions relating to CELAC were not a result of pulling and hauling between the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of Economy, since they were handled exclusively by the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2012).

Furthermore, during the Peña Nieto administration, these three secretaries overwhelmingly espoused the pragmatic orientation of foreign policy, producing no bureaucratic infighting at the higher levels of the cabinet.

Finally, the transition of government is another alternative explanation for Mexico’s retreat from CELAC. A common practice for the Mexican administration is to discontinue or cancel their predecessors’ trans-government projects (Ai Camp, 2012). Some explanations might argue that President Peña Nieto retreated from CELAC and favoured participation within the Pacific Alliance to engage with the Latin American region. Nevertheless, the Pacific Alliance was created in the last months of the Calderón administration, when it was clear that regional polarisation was going to be an obstacle to Mexico’s stated objective to foment regional integration within CELAC. The Peña Nieto administration preferred to promote Mexico’s regional leadership in Latin America through the Pacific Alliance rather than CELAC not because the Peña Nieto administration sought to differentiate itself from the previous government but due to strong external constraints. These constraints were the deep polarisation reigning within CELAC and calls from ALBA countries to substitute the OAS with CELAC.

After reviewing the diagnostic evidence in this case study, it can be argued that the hypothesis of this research was confirmed. There was an incompatibility between deviating expectations and conflicting domestic interpretations of what Mexico ought to do in Latin America. Latin American governments, mainly those of ALBA countries, had role prescriptions for Mexico that conflicted with role prescriptions from the US when these countries wanted to make CELAC an alternative to the OAS. Thus, expectations clearly established limits on the range of roles Mexico could pursue. It made little sense for the Mexican government to propose creating a
regional organisation that reproduced the same weaknesses Mexico criticised in the Rio Group and then retreat from active participation in this organisation. When one observes statements made by the Mexican government that CELAC would assert Mexico’s active leadership in Latin America and compares such statements to the actual outcome of the case, it is evident that some mechanisms intervened to alter the Mexican government’s desired outcome (Presidencia de la República, 2007; CELAC, 2011). Role conflict – that is, the deviating external expectations of the antagonist positions of the ALBA countries and Washington – provide a logical explanation of how these mechanisms operate.

The abandonment of the regional leader NRC and the modification of the bridge-builder NRC to a coalition-builder NRC occurred in the aftermath of the 2011 Caracas summit. At this summit, it became evident that polarisation between the ALBA countries and the countries aligned with Washington was going to be an obstacle for CELAC’s goal of regional integration.

Mexico’s changing goals are evidenced in official documents after this summit. For instance, in the initial report from the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, Mexico’s idea of CELAC was ‘to promote political concentration […], and coordination between organisations and sub-regional intuitions and to solidify cooperation with the states that composed them’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2010a, 248). With this conception, Mexico aimed to have ‘a political projection and an economic presence that assures spaces of dialogue and concentration in line with the country's international height’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2010a, 249). Official documents from the same Secretariat years later advocated instead for a ‘light and flexible structure that will not generate bureaucracies’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2010b, 10), in which ‘dialogue, regional cooperation, and the fight against hunger and poverty’ would be promoted (Presidencia de la República, 2012). In comparison, Mexico’s role prescriptions for other countries within CELAC were inconsistent. The promotion of ‘better economic integration’, an element of the pragmatic foreign policy orientation, did not appeal to countries such as Venezuela, Nicaragua, or Bolivia (De La Barra and Dello Buono, 2012, Presidencia de la República, 2015). This situation resembles that found by
Ozdamar (2014) in his study of the NRCs in Turkish foreign policy, where the domestic success of one foreign policy orientation did not influence a change in foreign policy behaviour, since the role enactment also depended on other countries accepting the interpretations of the successful orientation.

In summary, CELAC represents an effort from Mexico to validate itself as a Latin American country. It also denotes a bargaining process between the country’s self-definition, its duties to its social position as part of Latin America, and its most immediate material needs and interests with the US.
Chapter Seven: Adoption of liberal values in Mexico’s foreign policy

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores Mexico’s adoption of liberal values in foreign policy to identify the middle-power NRCs the Mexican government exhibited through the end of the 1980s until 2011. The timeframe of this chapter begins in the middle of the 1980s. At this time, the country's economic and political system underwent considerable transformations, which influenced the adoption of liberal values in foreign policy platforms. This case study found that role domestic contestation between foreign policy orientations and deviating external role expectations affected Mexico’s enactment of middle-power NRCs.

This chapter is different from the previous empirical chapters for two reasons. First, the Mexican government was originally not the main advocate for the inclusion of liberal values in foreign policy. Second, this case shows how domestic actors propelled external entities into forcing the Mexican government to change its foreign policy behaviour.

Moreover, it is important to differentiate between the strengthening of democratic institutions in Mexico and the presence of liberal values in foreign policy platforms. Although evidence is available that external expectations were influential in changing Mexico’s foreign policy discourse, this is not immediately apparent with the country's domestic democratisation process, which had a solid domestic drive. The analytical focus of this case study is Mexico’s foreign policy adoption of liberal values and its relation with middle-power NRCs, rather than external pressures for Mexico to democratise and respect human rights (HR) in its domestic administration.

Liberal values are defined in this chapter as the defence of HR and the promotion of democracy. These two elements were emphatically promoted by western democracies after the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s (Jahn, 2018). Mexico’s adoption of liberal values in its foreign policy was selected for this case study since this topic is a visible example of the evolution of the domestic contestation between
the pragmatic and traditional orientations of foreign policy and its interplay with external expectations from NGOs and states.

In this case study, I argue that the evolution of Mexico’s adoption of liberal values in its foreign policy can be explained through role conflict. Mexico managed this role conflict in domestic role contestation by accepting role prescriptions from external and domestic players, which gradually changed its stance towards liberal values. Using role theoretical tools, this case study contributes to understanding foreign policy change regarding middle-power behaviour in a particular niche area. The results of this case study contrast with alternative explanations of the outcome, such as the lock-in theory developed by Andrew Moravcsik.

Throughout a process that spanned three decades, several Mexican administrations adopted liberal values due to internal and external pressures. Mexico evolved from a country that opposed the universality of liberal values to a state that perceived itself as a democratic country that championed HR in international politics.

Some critical junctures of this case, such as the aftermath of the Cold War and the electoral transition of the year 2000, had more significance than other instances analysed in this chapter. While external role expectations were the driving force for the evolution of foreign policy behaviour in Mexico during the mid-1980s and 1990s, the Mexican government initially resisted these expectations and only gradually accepted them. Domestic role contestations were more prevalent from the electoral transition in the year 2000 onward. This is because liberal values were mostly confined to internal politics during the 1980s and 1990s and were rarely contested due to the Mexican government’s semi-authoritarian nature. Liberal values became an element of domestic role contestation in foreign policy after the year 2000, when Mexico adopted these liberal values in foreign policy discourses. At the end of this process, the pragmatic foreign policy orientation prevailed over the traditional orientation in enacting its interpretations of the middle-power NRCs concerning liberal values. In a cumulative process, the acknowledgement by other countries of Mexico’s adoption of liberal values in foreign policy led to the successful enactment of the middle-power NRCs’ support of multilateralism, coalition-builder, and good
international citizen. A comprehensive timeline of critical events covered in this chapter is presented below.

Table 12: Timeline of critical events of Chapter 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>The Group of Eight is formed, promoting the formation of consolidated democracies in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985 and 1986</td>
<td>After fraudulent local elections, civil society in Mexico appeals for the IACHR to intervene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988–1990</td>
<td>The Panama Crisis encourages Mexico to take clearer positions in liberal values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>The National Commission of Human Rights is established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Mexico recognises the universality of HR in the Vienna Declaration of Human Rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>International electoral observers are allowed to participate in Mexican elections for the first time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Aguas Blancas Massacre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Acteal Massacre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997–2000</td>
<td>Negotiations for a trade deal with the EU include a ‘democratic clause’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998–2003</td>
<td>Diplomatic confrontation with Cuba over the record of HR on the island.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Mexico signs the Inter-American democratic charter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004–2011</td>
<td>The National Program of Human Rights is created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Mexico’s mediator NRC in the Colombian conflict war is rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Mexico’s mediator NRC in the Honduras coup is rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Respect, protection, and promotion of HR is added as a constitutional guideline in foreign policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2 Mexico’s historical engagement with liberal values in foreign policy

The evolution of domestic and international practices concerning liberal values converged in the 1980s to gradually modify Mexico’s foreign policy. As covered in Chapter 4, the defence of HR and the promotion of democracy have nominally been part of the country's normative framework since its early history. However, Mexico retreated from active participation in multilateral organisations during much of the post-war period, since the government advocated for the principles of the traditional orientations, which were the juridical equality of states and non-intervention. Instead, Mexico actively invoked respect for HR and democracy in specific events, such as the Spanish Civil War or the military coups that plagued Latin America during the Cold War. This position was instrumental in gaining domestic legitimacy and acquiring leftist credentials for Mexico’s authoritarian regime, which had limited international interactions. In addition, external expectations of Mexico’s roles concerning liberal values were almost non-existent. Even in the aftermath of the Tlatelolco massacre of 1968, Mexico did not face significant criticism from outside parties, as the country was not extensively scrutinised in HR and democracy issues by the international community until the 1980s (Sikkink, 1993).

Elements from domestic politics are more prevalent in this chapter due to the nature of the international regime of HR and democracy, which increasingly scrutinised the domestic conditions of liberal values in several countries. Unlike Mexico's aspirations to enact a regional leader NRC through CELAC or be a supporter of multilateralism at the UNSC, external expectations were focused at first not on foreign policy NRCs but on the conditions of HR and democracy within Mexico. Only from the Zedillo administration onward were external role expectations focused mostly on foreign policy. In this way, domestic changes are intimately related to foreign policy behaviour in this chapter.

7.3 The 1980s as a turning point in Mexico’s relation with liberal values

The empirical section of this case study begins in the 1980s. The 1980s were an inflection point for Mexico, when international and domestic interactions began to directly affect HR and democracy issues in the country’s foreign policy. The aftermath of the 1982 debt crisis triggered a process of incremental interactions with
the rest of the world, specifically with the North American market. Furthermore, the visibility of drug-related crimes – such as the assassinations of journalist Manuel Buendía in 1984 and Enrique Camarena, an undercover agent from the DEA, in 1985 – brought international attention to HR in Mexico.

7.4 The emergence of civil society and the new role of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

Throughout the 1985–1999 period, Mexico showed evidence of having enacted only the *good international citizen* NRC by joining the Inter-American system. During this period, democracy increasingly became a visible issue in Mexico’s international agenda. In 1985 and 1986, the ruling PRI, along with the local government, illegally intervened in local elections in the state of Chihuahua (Krauze, 1986; Aziz, 1987). The evident electoral fraud committed by the PRI and the government triggered an organised response from social organisations in the state, which undertook civil disobedience and massive protests, gathering the attention of international media outlets. Eventually, these citizen groups brought the issue of the violation of their political rights in these elections to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of the OAS (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 1990). This was the first time a Mexican electoral issue was brought forward for examination by an international body, marking an important precedent in the ways domestic issues were openly evaluated by external institutions and tearing down the wall that isolated Mexico from the exterior in matters concerning democracy (Aguayo, 2010). This episode ignited a process where international and domestic demands interacted to reproduce new behaviours in foreign policy and where the Mexican government gradually decreased its resistance to these external and domestic demands.

The explicit criticism of Mexico’s behaviour by an international body provoked an important reaction from the Mexican government to the role prescription of the IACHR. The Mexican government perceived the involvement of the commission as

---

88 This episode is known as ‘El verano caliente’ by civil organisations or the ‘patriotic fraud’ by government officials.
interventionist. Moreover, the government was aware that this case illustrated the
tensions between Mexico’s official position of upholding liberal values in
international regimes and Mexico’s actual internal regime.

The resolutions from the IACHR in case 9768, involving the electoral fraud in the
state of Chihuahua, concluded that the Mexican government had acted against the
political rights of its citizens by violating articles 1.1, 2, 4, and 25 of the American
Convention on Human Rights (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights,
1990). This unprecedented resolution prompted a furious response from several
actors in the Mexican government who accused the IACHR of breaching Mexico’s
sovereignty. The Mexican government invoked the self-determination principle of
the traditional orientation of foreign policy, stating that the IACHR,

[...] does not have the competence to examine petitions regarding collective
rights that the State is progressively obliged to achieve for its inhabitants [...] Any
pronouncement by the Commission on the authenticity of an electoral
process would constitute an act of intervention, as defined in Article 18 of the
Charter, that the second paragraph of Article I of the Charter itself prohibits
the Organization of American States [...] If any given state agrees to submit
the election of its political organs to an international body, it would cease to
be a sovereign state. (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 1990)

The IACHR, in turn, replied in an ‘energetic and insistent way’ that it was well
within its jurisdiction to judge the electoral affairs of its member states (Inter-
American Commission on Human Rights, 1990). More importantly, the IACHR
recommended that the Mexican government guarantee the ‘rights and liberties
recognised by the American Convention on HR’ (Inter-American Commission on
Human Rights, 1990). To this, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Fernando Solana
responded that,

While all member states pledged to promote representative democracy,
ideological plurality, and protection of international human rights law in the
OAS Charter, imposing solutions from outside is unacceptable since not only
the principle of non-intervention gets in the way but it is socially impossible
to achieve. Democracy cannot emanate from the domination of one country

89 The American Convention on Human Rights, also known as Pact of San José, was adopted in 1969. Both the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights oversee the compliance of the articles of the Convention.
by another […] Democracy has to be built within each community, being born and nurtured in the idiosyncrasy, history, and traditions of each nation. (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1989, 104)

For his part, Antonio de Icaza, the Mexican representative in the OAS, declared that the IACHR had ‘no competence to rule on the authenticity or legitimacy of an electoral process’. Luis Ortiz Monasterio, the director-general of human rights of the secretary of interior, warned that the IACHR ruling was a danger to the ‘existence of that organism because it could cause some member states to abandon it’, making a thinly-veiled threat that Mexico was considering withdrawing from the institution (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1990d, 66).

These previous statements directly contradicted earlier positions of the Mexican government towards the IACHR. For example, just some months before the electoral fraud of 1985 and 1986, Secretary of Foreign Affairs César Sepúlveda praised the work of the IACHR by stating that the work of the commission was pivotal in the democritisation process of several Latin American countries. Moreover, Secretary Sepúlveda said,

It is feasible to observe that the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights has entered one of its best periods: its authority is taken into account by other organs of the OAS and by its member states; it maintains highly productive work with regards to international human rights and humanitarian law organizations; its work in the protection and promotion of Human Rights in the Americas is effective and well-received; it is also possible to assign it a role in the restoration of representative democracy in various countries of our hemisphere and in discrediting military dictatorships. The trajectory of this body is thus ascending, and is at the point of having earned general respect and trust. (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1986, 36)

Furthermore, during the XIX ordinary period of the general assembly of the OAS, held in November 1989, Mexico proposed the inclusion of HR and the consolidation of democracy in the OAS agenda. ‘Only with the combination of external resources and economic modernisation would it be possible to reinitiate growth, refoster development, and preserve democracy’, Secretary Solana declared (Secretaría de
Relaciones Exteriores, 1990a, 79). These laudatory words on the work of the IACHR were not replicated after case 9768, relating to the electoral fraud in 1986.

Case 9768 of the IACHR not only prompted Mexico’s foreign policy to be more defensive, but this case was also the first of several instances where other countries, IGOs, and NGOs openly criticised the Mexican state in HR and democracy issues. These involvements influenced Mexico's foreign policy by exerting important role prescriptions for the country to adopt in foreign policy platforms. This episode also prompted other domestic players to turn to the IACHR and other international bodies to mediate in Mexico's electoral and HR violations. For example, after the IACHR ruling of case 9768, the opposition PRD presented a report on violations of electoral rights and HR in the state of Guerrero, and the OAS also condemned electoral violations in other states of Mexico (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1990a; Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1991a).

The OAS ruling also triggered domestic role contestation in Mexico. Prominent Mexican scholars, such as Manuel Becerra and Luis Díaz Müller, criticised the position of the Mexican government by stating that,

> The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has all the power to judge and criticise the violation of political rights in Mexico […] The Mexican government should refrain from participating in international organisations defending human rights if it is not willing to comply with the statutes of the treaties it signed and committed to respecting. (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1991b, 66)

Meanwhile, Romeo Flores Caballero, the secretary of international affairs of the PRI, responded by saying that the IACHR ruling was ‘irresponsible’ and reiterated that no organisation had the legitimacy to intervene in political matters in any country of Latin America (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1991b, 69).

These statements demonstrate the interplay of external expectations with domestic dimensions in Mexico and the increasing introduction of liberal values into Mexico's foreign policy. In this way, the Mexican government rejected foreign interventions in domestic affairs and highlighted its non-interventionist principle in the traditional

---

90 Fernando Solana assumed the position of secretary of foreign affairs in the new government of Carlos Salinas from 1988, taking the post from César Sepúlveda.
orientation of foreign policy. Mexico’s involvement in the OAS with regards to liberal values increased with the American invasion of Panama in 1989.

### 7.5 The Panama Crisis and the Mexican government’s search for legitimacy

After Mexico’s involvement in the Central American conflicts with the Contadora process, the country needed to uphold liberal values within regional organisations to be perceived as a middle power enacting a regional leadership NRC. As explained in Chapter 4, Mexico’s involvement in the Central American region was an outcome of Mexico’s contradictions in foreign policy, which officially defended non-intervention but acted otherwise. Years later, Mexico faced the paradoxical decision to respect democratic processes as a rule of entry for participation in regional organisations such as the Group of Eight, a group that Mexico promoted the creation of. Thus, the tension between Mexico’s public defence of democratic principles in foreign policy platforms and its adherence to the traditional principle of non-intervention was an outcome of Mexico’s own making that affected its international standing as a middle power.

The first crisis that the Group of Eight faced showcased this tension. In 1988, most Group of Eight members decided to indefinitely suspend Panama, claiming that the Noriega regime breached the fundamental principle of the enforcement of democracy. After ceding to external expectations, Mexico supported Panama’s suspension from the organisation due to the high costs that not supporting the suspension of Panama on the grounds of violations of democracy would entail domestically (Roett, 1991). Mexico conceded to international role demands in exchange for the legitimacy that membership in this group offered. This episode highlighted the importance of external expectations in adopting NRCs in foreign policy when liberal values in international interactions were increasingly relevant.

The contradictory position of Mexico supporting Panama’s suspension while simultaneously producing statements defending non-intervention resulted from the increasingly unsustainable foreign policy discourse of the traditional orientation.

---

91 The Group of Eight was the heir to the Contadora process and predecessor of the Rio Group.
This firm and public refusal to pass judgment on internal events, especially liberal values, contrasts with the pragmatic response from the Mexican government to external events. This pragmatism is evident in an early morning telephone call made by President George H. W. Bush to President Salinas on December 20, 1989. The declassified transcript of this communication by the Panamanian media and the University of Washington details how Bush notified Salinas of the ongoing American military intervention in Panama to topple the Noriega regime. To this, the Mexican President stated that his government had ‘spoken repeatedly against Mr. Noriega. Nevertheless, this action goes against our principles. We would have hoped that diplomacy would have worked. We will apply the Estrada doctrine on recognition’. When President Bush asked what the Estrada doctrine implied, Salinas answered, ‘It does not make any difference who is in power. We recognise anyone’ (University of Washington, 2019).92

Even though Salinas privately shared his position against the Noriega regime with President Bush, the lack of recognition from his government of the new Panamanian government led by Guillermo Endara contravened the position taken in this private communication. Several Mexican officials stated their rejection of the American intervention and avoided recognition of the new Endara government. For instance, Sergio González Gálvez, the undersecretary of foreign affairs, pointed out that ‘coercive measures’ in democracy promotions were not acceptable. Meanwhile, Carmen Moreno, director of regional organisations of the secretary of foreign affairs, declared that the OAS becoming an instrument for the exportation of democracy to other countries could not be accepted (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1990b, 59).

Secretary Solana, for his part, stated that ‘democracy should not be exported or imposed. [Democracy] is a historical and cultural product that each nation is free to formulate’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1990b, 61). Likewise, President Salinas strongly condemned the US invasion of Panama in a public statement, and the Mexican ambassador to the UN, Jorge Montaño, asserted that the Panamanian

---

92 Factually, with the Estrada Doctrine, Mexico neither recognises nor refuses to recognise national governments but limits itself to sending or recalling diplomatic representatives.
government lacked legal validity (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1990b, 64). At this point, it is important to highlight that there was no visible domestic role contestation in this episode, since opposition parties also condemned the American intervention in the Mexican Congress (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1990c).

The new Panamanian President, Guillermo Endara, quickly responded to the statements from the Mexican government by declaring that his government did not need to be legitimised by Mexico, since,

> The government of Panama is legitimised by its people; it is legitimised by ballot boxes [...] We do not want the legitimation of a government like Mexico, because it is a government that comes from pure electoral tricks from the PRI.93 (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1990d, 60)

Additionally, Endara remarked on the absence of Mexico’s criticisms of the previous regime: ‘During the 21 years of dictatorship by Noriega, when did this Mexican foreign minister request the convening of free elections? When did he [Fernando Solana] denounce the military dictatorship? (Endara cited in Chabat, 1991, 11). Furthermore, Panamanian foreign minister, Julio Linares, declared that ‘the Mexican government seemed to feel better about General Manuel Antonio Noriega’s military regime, than with the democratic authorities headed by Guillermo Endara’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1990d, 60).

This incident illustrates the contradiction between the application of the non-interventionist principle in the Estrada doctrine and speech acts made by Mexican officials. The portrayal of Mexico as a defender of democracy in speeches of policymakers like Secretary Solana contrasts with Mexico’s foreign policy behaviour. This contrast led to external players, such as Panama, regarding Mexico’s opinion as invalid, affecting the perception of Mexico’s middle-power behaviour. The Panamanian government’s statements also demonstrate the start of the

93 This remark on electoral tricks was given after the details of the report of the IACHR on the electoral frauds of 1985 and 1986 were made public on May 17, 1990.
The preponderant role of external expectations in Mexico’s adoption of liberal values in foreign policy.

7.6 The end of the Cold War and the international turn to liberalism in the 1990s

The end of the Cold War inaugurated a new era of promotion of liberal values by Western democracies. The new post-Cold War environment meant that Mexico faced considerably more scrutiny and external pressures than it had from the IACHR in the late 1980s. This inflection point explains the inclusion of liberal values in the external expectations that the Mexican government faced in the early 1990s. Secretary Solana acknowledged this perception of change in the international system, stating that ‘The Cold War is over. The bipolar balance is over. Authentic democratizing processes are being consolidated in some parts of the planet, especially in Latin America’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1989, 70).

As covered in the previous section, most of the role expectations related to liberal values that Mexico faced were articulated within the Inter-American system. This was evident in June 1991, when most OAS members agreed to adopt procedures to guarantee the promotion and defence of representative democracy on the continent at the XXII General Assembly of the OAS. In what was known as the ‘spirit of Santiago’, the OAS ultimately approved resolution 1080, which called for an immediate emergency meeting to be held between all members to reach a collective decision in response to any sudden or irregular interruption of the democratic process in member states (Organisation of American States, 1991).

The reaction of Mexico to resolution 1080 was defensive. At the beginning of the General Assembly of the OAS, Secretary Solana proposed that the OAS should instead,

[…] direct its efforts in other areas such as economic stagnation, polarization, social injustice, and extreme poverty affecting the continent, since these are the real cause of the social instability and the fragility of the democratic project. (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1991d, 36)
Just some months before, Santiago Oñate Laborde, Mexico’s representative to the OAS, rejected any notion that this organisation should become involved in democracy promotion and called on the OAS to ‘avoid becoming a supranational tribunal’ on these issues (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1991c, 67). However, despite the initial resistance from the Mexican government, Mexico agreed to support sanctions against non-democratic regimes and to support the defence and promotion of democratic regimes and HR, an action that was unthinkable just years before (Chabat, 2013).

Furthermore, external expectations from actors other than states were gradually becoming more visible. For example, criticism from the international press and NGOs such, as Human Rights Watch, on Mexico’s lack of endorsement of liberal values was intense (Human Rights Watch, 1992). External expectations of Mexico’s role in HR, combined with increased pressure from domestic political entities, succeeded in allowing, for the first time, foreign electoral observers to participate in Mexican elections in 1993. This event demolished another wall in Mexico’s sovereign non-interference discourse within the traditional orientation of foreign policy.

Another piece of evidence of the presence of expectations in Mexico’s interaction with liberal values in this period is the 1993 United Nations Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna. At the beginning of the conference, the Mexican delegation vehemently opposed HR as universal values, but after considerable pressure from Western democracies, the delegation supported the Vienna declaration, which adopted a common standard understanding of HR (United Nations, 1993).

However, the Mexican government also showed signs of resistance to the accumulation of external expectations of liberal values by defending the principles of the traditional orientation of foreign policy. The NDP of President Salinas, for example, directly set the improvement of Mexico’s image as a foreign policy goal and focused on the ‘anticipation of events that could negatively affect Mexico’s image to prevent any harm to the country’s perception abroad’ (Presidencia de la

---

94According to Sikkink (1993) and the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs (2011a), in 1984, there were only four HR NGOs in Mexico. By 1993, there were over 200, and in 2011, there were 2691.
The aspiration to prevent any harm to the administration’s reputation alluded to the sharp criticism made by NGOs and some editorials in American newspapers (Gámez, 2001). As Secretary Solana stated, ‘Never did the international press give so much attention to Mexico’ than in the period immediately after the end of the Cold War (Solana, 1995, 109).

However, criticism of Mexico’s position on liberal values was practically non-existent from the US government, as the Reagan and Bush administrations were adamant about protecting the PRI regime. For instance, the Reagan administration gave a hurried congratulatory message to the dubious electoral triumph of Carlos Salinas in the 1988 federal elections (Whalen, 1990). Additionally, Bush never criticised the Salinas government on HR issues, probably not wanting to undermine NAFTA negotiations.

Secretary Solana systematically defended the principles of the traditional orientation in this period, delivering a relevant speech where he directly denounced the promotion of liberal values in some countries’ foreign policy platforms after the Cold War. In this speech, Solana criticised,

[… the pretensions of some industrialised countries that intend to universalise the absolutism of ideas […] Just as international changes offer great opportunities, it also presents risks for which we must be particularly alert such as the exportation of democratic systems, designed and legitimised from abroad. […] In the defence of our independence, we must also be alert to the claims of ideological hegemony and to attempts to universalize a democratic model for exportation, which would become a substitute for the autonomous political will of voters in countries with vast differences in terms of history. (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1990e, 92)

By delivering this speech, Secretary Solana responded to the ongoing pressures that emerged in the international system at the end of the Cold War. Moreover, Solana reaffirmed the position of Mexico as a sovereign, non-interventionist country.

This protectionist rhetoric from government officials directly reacted to the expectations of international actors who prescribed the roles Mexico ought to
implement regarding liberal values. President Salinas himself stated, in his second State of the Union address, ‘Our democracy is sovereign […] One does not imitate nor subordinate oneself to foreign criteria. Discussion on our democracy knows no bounds and has only one decisive judge: The Mexican people’ (Presidencia de la República, 1990, 54). Likewise, a month later, Solana declared that the problems of democracy would have to be ‘solved by Mexicans, not by the importation of specialised observers from Atlanta or Milwaukee who tell us how to do things’ (Solana cited in Chabat, 1991, 14).

Salinas’ last year in office was marked by the Zapatista uprising, an armed indigenous insurgency in the state of Chiapas that responded, in part, to the NAFTA treaty that would enter into effect on January 1. The presidential campaign that year was also immersed in violence when Luis Donaldo Colosio, the PRI candidate, was assassinated in March. Ernesto Zedillo, a former secretary of education and Colosio’s former campaign manager, took over as the presidential nominee and eventually won the presidential elections that year. The Zedillo administration drastically changed Mexico’s diplomatic position on liberal values.

7.7 The gradual inclusion of liberal values in foreign policy platforms during the Zedillo administration

Zedillo’s government began chaotically as the 1994 economic crisis unfolded, and his first years in office were therefore focused on engaging economic concerns. In terms of foreign policy, President Zedillo's administration continued to resist external prescriptions of roles, as previous administrations had done. However, during the Zedillo presidency, the pragmatic orientation of foreign policy was strengthened, further weakening the traditional orientation's nationalistic discourse.

The turning point in Mexico’s attitudes towards liberal values during the Zedillo administration was the 1995 Aguas Blancas massacre in the state of Guerrero. This event, where local authorities killed 17 farmers, sparked significant protests within and outside the country. These pressures led the Zedillo administration to invite international observers from the IACHR and the European Parliament when the country was closed to international scrutiny (Velasco-Pufleau, 2017).
Other processes were set in motion after the 1995 Aguas Blancas massacre. For instance, the Zedillo government put forward a policy of granting concessions to external expectations on these issues and finally recognised the validity of international standards of HR and democracy (Anaya, 2009). Mexico’s increasing acceptance of liberal values within its foreign policy platform was especially evident in 1996 when, for the first time, the Mexican government invited the IACHR to evaluate the HR situation *in situ* and to offer documentation on the matter. This shift in attitude was a stark contrast to previous government positions (Covarrubias, 1999; Covarrubias and Saltalamacchia, 2011). An additional effect of external role expectations and domestic role contestations was observable when Rosario Green, Zedillo’s second secretary of foreign affairs, stated that the Mexican government’s initiative to invite the IACHR stemmed from a ‘new attitude’ from the Zedillo government concerning liberal values (Green, 1997). This statement marked a clear contrast between the Zedillo administration and the positions of previous Mexican governments and helped enact the *good international citizen* NRC. The combination of these massacres heightened attention from external actors whose pressure shifted Mexico’s foreign policy away from being a personal policy preference of the Mexican president.

During the Zedillo government, the country gradually admitted the validity of international NGOs on issues regarding liberal values. The gradual enactment of middle-power NRCs, such as the *good international citizen*, responded to Mexico’s new sense of self, which was the result of demands from and meaningful interactions with external actors. For instance, in 1997, NGOs and states started to articulate straightforward role prescriptions for the Mexican government in the field of liberal values. For example, a commission from the European Parliament met with President Zedillo to express their concerns about the state of HR in Mexico (Delegation for relations with the countries of Central America, 1997). Furthermore, on a state visit made to France in October 1997, the French Prime Minister, Laurent Fabius Durante, reminded Zedillo that respect for HR was a *sacred value* for France (Proceso, 1997). In that same visit to France, the Mexican President met with representatives of
international NGOs as equal counterparts (Maza, 2009). This meeting represented a significant turn for the Mexican government, which went from not recognising that external actors, especially NGOs, had legitimacy to conduct surveillance in Mexico or make demands of the Mexican government, to considering their concerns as valid.

This meeting was also the first time an international entity criticised a Mexican president in person at an international meeting. Joseph Fino, the secretary-general of Actions of Christians Against Torture, pressured the Mexican government to put UN recommendations against torture into practice. Jean Khan, of Libertés, stated that Mexico was one of the countries in Latin America where HR were most vulnerable and directly criticised Zedillo for not addressing this situation properly (Proceso, 1997).

The Mexican delegation considered the NGOs’ tone to be aggressive and asserted that while the HR situation in the country was far from perfect, it was not the same as was depicted by these organisations. French newspapers, such as Liberation and Le Monde, also criticised the Mexican government for the country’s HR record during Zedillo’s visit to France.

The visibility of HR in the country grew exponentially two months later when another massacre took place, perpetrated by a paramilitary group linked to the PRI in Acteal, a community of the state of Chiapas. The widespread international scrutiny resulting from this massacre, along with domestic and international pressures, caused the Mexican government to take important measures and make concessions that considerably modified its foreign policy NRCs. For instance, the IACHR criticised the Mexican government’s lack of security guarantees; the government disregarded this at first but backtracked later due to strong condemnation inside and outside the country. After several intense declarations criticising the massacres, the Zedillo administration stated that it was going to cooperate with NGOs fully, and all the information on the massacres would be given to international organisations (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1998, 233).

95 Earlier that year, Zedillo was heavily criticised for failing to meet with the secretary-general of Amnesty International. According to Covarrubias (2008), this was because Zedillo did not consider NGOs to be valid elements of contact for a Head of State at that moment.
Following the Acteal massacre, the Presidency of the EU strongly condemned the massacre, and the European Parliament invited several Mexican NGOs and victims of HR abuses to a public hearing in Brussels (Velasco-Pufleau, 2017). Other external role expectations came with the special envoy of the US to Mexico, Thomas McLarty, who stated in a congressional hearing that ‘Washington was worried about the evolution of the crisis in Chiapas’ (US Congress, 1998, 131). After these external role prescriptions, Secretary Green went from unequivocally rejecting ‘any kind of interference from foreign governments or NGOs in domestic issues’ to admitting there was a ‘horrific massacre that has affected our foreign policy’ (Cevallos, 1998). Moreover, Secretary Green reiterated that Mexico was ‘willing to have a dialogue on the country's international compromises’ (Cevallos, 1998). These empirical observations correspond to what scholars, such as Keck and Sikkink (1999), have found on the links between actors in civil societies and international organisations in issues such as HR.

After these clear external expectations and behavioural prescriptions from other governments, the Mexican government finally accepted the jurisdiction of the IACHR. Moreover, in the year 2000, Mexico signed the protocol of the ICC, which enabled the arrest and trial of any Mexican citizen on charges of genocide and other crimes against humanity (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2002b). Another illustrative example of Mexico’s reaction to these prescriptions took place when the government established a commission on the guidelines of the 42 international instruments of HR that the country was ‘compelled’ to follow in October 1997 (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1997). This was the first time the Mexican government had established systematic guidelines for domestic legislation to include international HR norms and it constituted the first steps towards the subsequent state reform of HR in 2011, which reformed foreign policy parameters. These actions represented a radical change from the traditional orientation of foreign policy, based on the defence of national sovereignty and non-intervention, that was so vehemently invoked just some years before. These events also demonstrate that, more than the personal preferences and leadership style of President Zedillo, role conflict caused by external expectations and domestic responses was the main driver in adopting liberal values in foreign policy. These external expectations and domestic responses explain
why Zedillo at first dismissed the role prescriptions of NGOs like Amnesty International only to acknowledge them after these domestic and external pressures became too strong to ignore.

Meanwhile, the Mexican government attempted to justify its involvement in the international regime of liberal values through the lens of the traditional orientation of foreign policy. According to Rosario Green, Mexico’s secretary of foreign affairs, Mexico’s rationale for adopting international protocols and the recognition of international courts was a response to the need to defend itself against accusations made by other parties. In the former minister's words, ‘These [international organisations] constituted a space to settle our differences, present our evidence in such a way that we are not judged in absentia’ (Green, 1998a, 327).

Even more surprising was that after Mexico’s firm resistance to the ‘interventionism’ of the IACHR, Mexico ratified the mandatory jurisdiction of the IACHR on HR issues in the country in December 1998 (Diario Oficial de la Federación, 1998). According to Secretary Green, by acknowledging the authority of the IACHR,

\[
\text{Mexico confirms its commitment to one of the fundamental tasks of the OAS: the promotion and protection of human rights. As a State that is a party to regional legal instruments of human rights, Mexico not only broadly supports the OAS performance in this sphere but collaborates with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and seeks to strengthen its relationship with this organism. (Green, 1998b, 275)}
\]

Other Mexican diplomats, such as Ambassador José Alfredo Galván, stated that ‘the OAS is the only international organisation with an explicit mandate to promote and consolidate democracy’, in which ‘support and technical advice was appreciated’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1998, 250). These statements demonstrate the important shift in Mexico’s attitudes towards liberal values.

Another illustrative instance was the inclusion of the democratic clause in the negotiations to establish a free trade agreement between the EU and the Mexican government in 1997. At the time, the democratic clause was an innovative requirement by the EU for a general agreement with another country. It established that the country wishing to trade with states in the EU should meet basic standards
for the safeguarding of a democratic system and the protection of HR (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2000). In the case of the global agreement between the EU and Mexico, Article 1 specified that ‘Respect for democratic principles and fundamental human rights, proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, underpins the domestic and external policies of both Parties and constitutes an essential element of this Agreement’ (Official Journal of the European Communities, 2000, 46). The European Parliament stated that, in the case of Mexico, the democratic clause would ‘enable Parliament to continue exerting its influence to ensure that Mexico completes, as soon as possible, the process underway of its transition to full democracy’ (European Parliament, 1998, 7). This statement is a clear manifestation of external role expectations of Mexico’s adoption of liberal values.

At first, Mexico described the inclusion of the democratic clause in the negotiations as inadmissible and interventionist, since the EU wanted to include respect for democratic principles and HR as a concern of both foreign and domestic policy. The Mexican negotiators attempted to alter the original writing of the clause to no avail, and the Mexican government eventually accepted these conditions (Szumanski and Marthoz, 2010).

The fact that Mexico accepted the democratic clause was a seismic change from previous policy. Mexico had accepted that the respect for democratic principles and fundamental HR proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would underpin its domestic and foreign policies. This concession is evidence that the country was willing to enact the NRC of a good international citizen and that it was receptive to role prescription from the EU. According to Secretary Rosario Green, it was Mexico that took the initiative to include a reference to HR and democracy-related issues in its foreign policy, because the Zedillo administration wished to portray the image of a ‘democratic Mexico’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1999, 294). Ambassador Armendariz, the Mexican representative in the EU, 96

96 Although it is a remarkable speech act, the democratic clause is a political statement with legally binding instruments to ensure enforcement of the content of the article. The democratic clause was not contested in Mexico, since it was supported by both the government and the opposition. The agreement also paved the way for dialogue between civil society in Mexico and EU governing bodies.
concluded that the clause was not an external pressure on national sovereignty, since the defence of HR was already a fundamental goal of the Mexican state. Meanwhile, Sergio González Gálvez, Mexico’s undersecretary of multilateral affairs, echoed these statements by saying that Mexico had previously acquired international commitments by joining the IACHR, which made Mexico and the EU’s interests compatible in this regard (Covarrubias, 2001, 70).

The negotiation process of the EU–Mexico general agreement and Mexico’s adoption of the jurisdiction of the ICC and the IACHR can be seen as a firm indication that the government was accepting the validity of liberal values. This change of attitude served to reinforce the democratic credentials of the Zedillo government domestically and externally, which was one of the central objectives of his administration after the Aguas Blancas and Acteal massacres took place (Kaufman and Rubio, 1998).

Mexico solved role conflict by adopting role prescriptions from other countries. In this way, Mexico expected to be considered another member of the ‘club of Western democracies’, since the defence of liberal values was regarded as a prerequisite to enter this informal group (Anaya, 2013; Zomosa, 2005). Mexico’s adhesion to the APEC in 1993 and the OECD in 1994 illustrated the Mexican government’s clear will to be an active player in the new international structure built after the Cold War. Through interactions with Western democracies, Mexico interpreted a new international environment after the Cold War and reassessed its social position, displaying itself as a modern country. This reassessment allowed the country to make changes to its foreign policy.

Whether the adoption of liberal values in foreign policy responded more to domestic demands or external expectations is a subject of debate. Although it is undeniable that the international system provided a favourable scenario for the Mexican government’s acceptance of the defence of democracy and HR as legitimate issues in foreign policy, it is clear there was no imposition from external expectations. Mexico went through a dual transition in economic and political affairs from the 1980s, which enabled the gradual adoption of liberal values in foreign policy. Additionally, the international agenda on HR issues gave non-state actors ample opportunity to act. Intergovernmental institutions, such as the OAS and NGOs, openly began to criticise
the domestic situation of HR in Mexico. However, it was political groups within Mexico that brought concerns about HR and the defence of democracy to the IACHR and paved the way for more intervention from external bodies, which eventually changed Mexican foreign policy. This was seen in the aftermath of the 1986 electoral fraud in northern Mexico, when opposition parties brought the issue of the defence of democracy to the institutions of the Inter-American system. International norms became internalised in Mexico through interactions with other states, IGOs, and NGOs. However, the Mexican government had the agency to accept these expectations, and there is also evidence to suggest that it sought to consolidate its new identity as a democratic country. By doing this, the country became compatible, during increasing interactions, with Western liberal democracies (Bondí, 2004).97

Furthermore, external expectations of Mexico’s NRCs as good international citizen and supporter of multilateralism emanated from different actors. For example, the adoption of liberal values in Mexico's foreign policy was not a point of reference in the country's most significant relationship, which was with the US.98 As previously mentioned, the US government was frequently accused of protecting the Mexican government in its HR and democracy record, and the US minimised the reports of NGOs like Amnesty International on the situation in Mexico (Covarrubias, 2008).

Mexico’s domestic role contestation was minimal during the late 1990s, since the government did not systematically resist demands from the opposition and NGOs for the adoption of liberal values in foreign policy (Covarrubias, 2008). Moreover, it is interesting to note that inter-bureaucratic rivalry was absent in these debates, as the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs was in complete control of the adoption of liberal values. For instance, the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs was in charge of negotiating the General Agreement with the EU, a role in which the Secretariat was commonly

97 Following Keck and Sikkink’s (1998) research, it can be said that Mexican NGOs formed a network of support with other organisations, converging different social and cultural norms that would later support the integration of Mexico into international norms in liberal values.

98 Presidents Carter and Reagan heavily pressured Argentina, Chile and Central America to adopt HR standards, but did not do the same with Mexico.
Some resistance to the adoption of liberal values was noticeable in the speeches made by Salinas, Solana, and other government officials. Salinas and Solana resorted to the principles of self-determination and non-intervention of the traditional orientation whenever external bodies called for the Mexican government to adopt international protocols and treaties. However, opposition from the Mexican government vanished after that, probably because the government realised that it would earn more than it would lose by accepting international norms on HR and democracy. The legitimacy earned in international politics enhanced Mexico’s autonomy in foreign policy by allowing the country to be compatible with the expectations of Western democracies. By not accepting social cues from domestic elements and external prescriptions regarding liberal values, the Mexican government would have alienated its political opposition and had to risk the precarious political and social stability in the country. Not accepting external prescriptions would also have jeopardised Mexico’s standing in the world at a time when Mexico was opening itself internationally.

Until that moment, Mexico had only shown evidence of having enacted the good international citizen NRC. In speeches and editorials, several secretaries of foreign affairs, such as José Angel Gurría and Rosario Green, voiced their willingness to enact other NRCs, such as bridge-builder or supporter of multilateralism. However, these statements were not complemented by consistent policies. For example, Mexico did not adopt HR and democracy as core issues of its foreign policy during multilateral summits or in international organisations, which is a basic prerequisite of enacting the supporter of multilateralism NRC. Likewise, Mexico did not enact the bridge-builder NRC because it did not attempt to build consensus among international players or link hemispheric regions around liberal values.100 The

---

100 In an interview, Schiavon and Gonzalez stated that more than portraying a bridge-builder NRC in liberal values, Mexico developed a platform to work with other countries in multilateral organisations. This appraisal is consistent with the supporter of multilateralism NRC and is not considered to be
Mexican government was more focused on balancing internal audiences and accommodating external demands in this area. Consequently, Mexico limited itself to using foreign policy to signal a change in the situation of liberal values within the country's domestic realm.

Only with the new administration's arrival did Mexico adopt liberal values as a core principle of its foreign policy. Mexico’s process of democratisation led to a transition of power in the year 2000, which meant that the defence of democracy and HR acquired a new meaning. Mexico went from merely adopting liberal values in foreign policy to being an active promoter of these values worldwide. This promotion allowed the country to embrace the pragmatic orientation over the traditional orientation of foreign policy.

7.8 The democratic transition and the Fox administration

The transition of power in the year 2000 was a watershed moment in the way the defence and promotion of HR and democracy were included in foreign policy platforms. The inclusion of HR and democracy was the major foreign policy shift during the Fox administration (Bondí, 2004; Covarrubias, 2008). For instance, the NDP for the Fox administration (2000–2006) directly alluded to liberal values as central beliefs in the administration's new foreign policy. The foreign policy section of the NDP states that,

Currently, there is no legitimate political system that does not rest mainly on democratic arrangements. These democratic arrangements between states allow the establishment of stronger and more transparent relationships with other countries, reflecting the interests and aspirations of the populations of the different countries that make up the international system. Likewise, democratic governments have a legitimacy that gives greater strength to their positions in the international arena. [...] For all these reasons, it will be a fundamental part of Mexico's foreign policy to promote democracy. However, majority rule is only legitimate and stable if it respects the minorities and individuals. That is why Mexico must also strengthen the promotion and protection of universal human rights, ensuring the full application of international instruments and the harmonization of our internal

compatible with the bridge-builder NRC, which relies more on the linkage between two different positions than on collaborating with peers in an international organisation.
legislation with international obligations. In this sense, it is important to note that Mexico does not belong to some of the most important international instruments for protecting human rights or international humanitarian law. Not belonging to these instruments perpetuates the incomplete and insufficient legal regime on the matter and damages the country’s image abroad. (Presidencia de la República, 2001, 59-60)

With this official position in the NDP, Mexico linked its new status as a democratic country to external expectations regarding legitimacy and, therefore, to the possibility of playing an improved role within the international community. Moreover, the Fox government’s NDP had five guiding points for foreign policy, three of them related to liberal values. The NDP stated the following:

Responding to those needs derived from changes in the domestic and external environments, the work of the government in foreign policy matters from the 2000-2006 period will be articulated around five strategic objectives: First, Mexico should promote and strengthen human rights as fundamental bases of the new international system; Second, we should strengthen our ability to protect and defend the rights of all Mexicans abroad. (Presidencia de la República, 2001, 60)

By advocating for liberal values in foreign policy and its new self-perception as a pluralistic country, the new Mexican regime sought to portray a new identity as a democratic country to its international peers. The government pursued the establishment of liberal values as a fundamental part of the domestic legal framework. Jorge Castañeda, President Fox’s first secretary of foreign affairs, stated that for Mexico to strengthen its ties with other countries, it would have to adhere to certain principles,

[…] that we consider universal and adopt values that we profess. This imposes on us the obligation to act concurrently in our internal regime [...]. The upgrade of our country’s international commitments in the field of human rights promotes the full adoption of those rights in Mexico, which are universal and absolute values. (Castañeda, 2002f)
In this way, an important motivation for Mexico’s behaviour was to display its new self-perception as a democratic country with strong associations with other states that also upheld liberal values. Therefore, the country explicitly portrayed a *good international citizen* NRC and acknowledged the social cues prescribed by Mexico’s peers. This acknowledgement meant that other international players started to perceive Mexico as a country enacting the NRC of the *good international citizen*. For example, in the aftermath of Fox’s election, the European Commission issued a press release that went beyond protocolarian good wishes for the upcoming government. The press release highlighted that the election ‘confirmed the consolidation and maturity of democracy in Mexico’ and commended President Zedillo for his ‘democratic conviction and commitment’ in recognising the electoral defeat of his party (European Commission, 2000). One year later, during President Fox’s visit to Washington, President Bush also remarked upon the democratic commitment of Mexico:

[…] both our governments share a great project, a fully democratic Western Hemisphere that grows in prosperity and trades in freedom […] friends bring out the best in each other. Today, Mexico and the US are bringing out the best in each other – in commerce, in culture, and our shared commitment to democratic values. (The White House, 2001b)

Mexico’s adherence to democracy was also perceived by NGOs like the National Endowment for Democracy, which conferred Vicente Fox its annual Democracy Award for ‘the crowning achievement of a broad-based civic movement that has been reforming Mexico’s political system for much of the past decade (National Endowment for Democracy, 2001).\(^1\)

Castañeda wanted to take advantage of Mexico’s new perception, the so-called *democratic bonus*, to advance Mexico’s new and active middle-power status in international politics. This democratic bonus ‘exploited the legitimacy that the

---

\(^1\) Starr (1998) writes of how Mexican democratisation led countries like the US to assume that Mexico would adopt a liberal foreign policy. However, as Smith (1998) notes, democratisation encouraged political parties to rely on a nationalist, anti-American, and anti-liberal populist rhetoric in electoral campaigns to court votes.
elections of the year 2000 had given Mexico in the international arena’ (Castañeda, 2000, 158; Castañeda, 2001a, 43). The democratic bonus was reinforced by President Fox at the General Assembly of the United Nations when he stated that Mexico firmly implemented ‘the defence and promotion of human rights and democracy, every time and everywhere, starting from its own territory’ (Presidencia de la República, 2001e).

From the beginning of the Fox administration, the Mexican government explicitly emphasised the central position of liberal values in domestic and foreign policy. The government also reiterated its commitment to harmonising international and domestic legislation in this regard. For instance, one of President Fox’s first actions in government was to sign an agreement for technical cooperation with Mary Robinson, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR). By signing this cooperation agreement, Mexico was the first country in the world to request the establishment of an office of the High Commissioner during times of peace (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2001b). Furthermore, Jorge Castañeda stated in an op-ed that Mexico acknowledged human rights as ‘universal and indivisible values’ in the country’s foreign policy (Castañeda, 2001f).

Concrete actions accompanied the rhetoric displaying Mexico’s good international citizen NRC. Throughout the Fox presidency, Mexico signed several protocols and memorandums regarding HR and democracy. For instance, a commission was established to study the feasibility of state reform during the new government, which underlined that Mexico had a duty to integrate, within its normative system, the international HR commitments it had signed (Muñoz Ledo, 2002). This commission gradually gained more force throughout the years and formed the basis of the subsequent state reform of HR in 2011.

Furthermore, in 2001, a new Undersecretariat of Human Rights and Democracy was created in the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs. Mariclaire Acosta, a specialist on HR issues and a former member of the leftist PRD, was named head of the new bureaucratic department (González, 2008). The creation of this undersecretariat was
a sign that a new foreign policy agenda was being implemented that directly broke with many principles of the traditional orientation of foreign policy in Mexico, such as non-interference and self-determination. The creation of this undersecretariat and the incorporation of liberal values into foreign policy discourses are examples of how roles became institutionalised in domestic political structures, echoing findings made by scholars like Hirata (2016).

However, the creation of the undersecretariat created tensions with some Mexican diplomats who, according to Undersecretary Acosta, viewed the narrative of liberal values in multilateral organisations as a manifestation of American imperialism (Sirigu, 2015). These tensions highlighted the domestic role contestations in the cabinet among the different interpretations held by both the traditional and pragmatic orientations.

In addition, undersecretary Acosta stated that Mexico had asked the international community for support in implementing Mexico’s ‘transition to democracy and then to anchor and fortify this transition’ (Acosta, 2003, 31). This statement acknowledges the role of external expectations in Mexico’s democratisation process. Moreover, undersecretary Acosta argued that due to the fragmented nature of Mexican politics, civil society would have to rely on international assistance to maintain the government’s focus on liberal values (Bondí, 2004).

Additionally, the Fox administration extradited former Argentinian military officer Ricardo Cavallo to Spain for his role in Argentina’s military dictatorship. This action set a precedent in international law by being the first time a country extradited an individual accused by another state for crimes committed in a third state (Schweimler, 2003).

Likewise, the Mexican government adhered to and participated in several protocols and summits regarding HR and democracy. For example, the government signed the Quebec Declaration, which was aimed at ‘strengthening representative democracy, promoting good governance and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms’ (Organisation of American States 2001a). The Mexican government was also one of the main writers of the Inter-American Democratic Charter (Castañeda, 2001). In its first article, the charter states that ‘The peoples of the Americas have a right to
democracy and their governments should promote and defend it’ (Organisation of American States, 2001b). Furthermore, the charter establishes that member countries would collectively assess any ‘unconstitutional interruption that seriously impairs the democratic order in a member state’ in the OAS to decide on a potential suspension from the organisation. This article, echoing the first provision of the Group of Eight, was invoked for the first time in April 2002 by Vicente Fox during the coup d’état against Hugo Chavez (Presidencia de la República, 2002d). The President had also previously praised the defence of HR and the promotion of democracy as ‘the only form of government that guarantees the development of the peoples’ during his speech at the 56th session of the UN General Assembly (Presidencia de la República, 2001e). These actions helped consolidate external recognition of Mexico’s good international citizen and supporter of multilateralism NRCs and the enactment of the interpretations of the pragmatic orientation of foreign policy.

Jorge Castañeda was the sole promoter for the inclusion of liberal values in the new foreign policy orientation. As seen in Chapter 5, Castañeda actively endorsed a new foreign policy that would be active, multilateral, and pro-American and break from the traditional orientation of foreign policy. In the words of Castañeda,

> Putting an end to an authoritarian regime has a double effect; it implies becoming a democracy, and at the same time it means that we have to leave the isolationism that has kept the country artificially separated from the international community. (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2002a, 12)

### 7.9 Confrontation with Cuba over Mexico’s promotion of liberal values

Mexico’s relationship with Cuba was one of the most drastic changes to result from the adoption of liberal values into Mexico’s foreign policy. The diplomatic confrontations with Cuba illustrate the conflicting demands Mexico received in this case. The expectations of entities like the EU, the US, and other Western democracies and IGOs contrasted with the expectations of countries like Cuba, Venezuela, and other Latin American countries.

The traditional closeness between Mexico and Cuba began to deteriorate during the Zedillo administration when Fidel Castro criticised Mexico’s accession to NAFTA and the OECD. Castro also publicly lamented Mexico’s distaste for Latin America
and obsession with belonging in the ‘rich countries club’ (Proceso, 1998; Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1999, 184; Proceso, 2002b). These remarks led to both countries recalling their ambassadors, and the crisis ended when Castro apologised to ‘the Mexican people’ for these remarks. Moreover, Zedillo demanded a timeframe for Cuban democratisation from Castro in 1999, and officials from his government met with Cuban dissidents in the same year (see Dillon, 1998). This series of diplomatic confrontations marked the end of the implicit agreement between both countries not to intervene in each other’s domestic affairs, as seen in Chapter 4.

While firmly embracing the good international citizen NRC in regard to liberal values, the Fox administration appointed Ricardo Pascoe Pierce, a prominent left-wing intellectual, as Mexico’s ambassador to Cuba to amend the deteriorated relations with the island. This attempt was, however, futile. In April 2001, Mexico voted in favour of a yearly motion by the UN Commission of Human Rights (UNCHR) to condemn Cuba’s HR situation (UNCHR, 2001). This was the first time Mexico had voted in favour of this kind of resolution within the UNCHR, as the traditional orientation of foreign policy considered this an act of intervention in another country’s domestic affairs. This condemnatory vote was also one of the first instances of Mexico deliberately prescribing roles to another country regarding liberal values.

This vote provoked severe resistance from political actors inside Mexico, who contested the pragmatic foreign policy orientation’s interpretation of the good international citizen NRC. For example, both chambers of the Mexican Congress rejected any Mexican vote that condemned Cuba during the 57th session of the UNCHR (Cámara de Diputados, 2001b; Cámara de Senadores, 2001). The Cuban minister of foreign affairs, Perez Roque, immediately reacted to this vote by stating that Castañeda was the architect of the vote at the UNHRC and that Mexico’s secretary of foreign affairs ‘was pressured by the US to do so. He [Castañeda] is in awe of American power and is known for his political disloyalties’ (de Lara, 2013). Several congresspeople in Mexico asserted that the promotion of liberal values in
foreign policy was being applied with ‘selectivity’ in Cuba's case, which they considered a ‘friendly nation’ to Mexico (Cámara de Diputados, 2001a). 102

The central role of the Congress was not limited to the crisis with Cuba. The Mexican Congress had a new, invigorated role in Mexico’s democratisation process. This new role was displayed in Fox’s inaugural address: ‘In this new era of the democratic exercise, the President will propose, and the Congress will provide. This is the new power reality in Mexico’ (Presidencia de la República, 2000, 38). 103 The Foreign Relations Committee of the Mexican Senate was particularly active in defending the traditional orientation of foreign policy, especially regarding the country’s vote in the UNHRC (Becerril, 2001). 104 The defence of the traditional orientation stemmed from the perception that Mexico’s autonomy was threatened by following the role prescriptions of the US, which wanted Mexico’s support for regime change in Cuba (Becerril, 2001). The government justified Mexico’s vote as responding to the equal treatment of states, a principle of the traditional orientation of foreign policy.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Pascoe claimed that the orientation of Mexico’s vote at the UNHRC could facilitate the role of Mexico as a mediator between Cuba and the US. This notion was supported by Senator Rosario Green, who explicitly stated that Mexico could link the North and South American regions due to its position as a developing country embracing liberal values in foreign policy (Green, 2004). However, this mediator NRC was never acknowledged by the involved parties.

In anticipation of the next condemnatory vote at the UNHRC, to be held in April 2002, the Cuban regime invited 132 Mexican lawmakers to Havana in January of that year. The official purpose of the trip was to introduce the Mexican Congress

---

102 The Fox administration voted in support of the overwhelming majority of the resolutions regarding HR issues in specific countries within the UNHRC. With its vote, Mexico condemned Russia, Iraq, Iran, Belarus, Zimbabwe, North Korea, Israel, and Libya, among others (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2001).

103 The relation between Congress and the executive branch was tense most of the time. In terms of foreign policy issues, lawmakers denied requests by officials of the Fox administration to travel abroad in 90% of cases.

104 Sirigu (2015) found that HR alone was invoked in most of the debates of the chamber of deputies from 2000 to 2002, although these issues overwhelmingly involved domestic policy rather than foreign policy.
members to the realities and benefits of the Cuban model in terms of democracy and HR (Ojeda, 2007). The Fox government considered this invitation to be an unacceptable interference in domestic affairs. One month after this incident, a scheduled visit to Cuba was made by Fox, where he met with a group of dissidents of the Castro regime, an action that was based on Mexico’s adoption of liberal values and that Cuba considered to be ‘non-friendly behaviour’. 105

This conflict of external demands resonated within the domestic contestation of Mexico’s NRCs, since many policymakers and a large part of the public held favourable views towards Cuba. This conflict also affected Mexico’s middle-power standing, since any visible disagreement with the Castro regime jeopardised the acceptance of Mexico’s middle-power NRCs by other countries. The Cuban government still commanded a significant influence in the region, which constrained Mexico’s seeker of regional leadership NRC.

7.10 Inconsistent domestic role contestations and external role expectations

Mexico’s legislative branch severely criticised the Mexican government’s position with Cuba. The Congress condemned Castañeda’s policies as excessively partisan and characterised them as following personal rather than national interests (Cámara de Diputados, 2002; 2002c; 2002g). 106 On one occasion, congressman Martí Batres accused Mexico’s policy on Cuba of being overly restricted. Moreover, during a debate in the lower house of Congress, Batres said,

If Mexico intends to be the guardian of human rights, it should demand respect for the human rights of the Mexican citizens that are in the US […] Only the US benefits from the distance between Cuba and Mexico, as the US seeks to isolate Cuba. (Cámara de Diputados, 2002a; Cámara de Diputados, 2002e)

105 This was not the first time the Fox administration had listened to the concerns of Cuban political dissidents. These receptions started in 2000 with the help of Aguilar Zinser (Cámara de Senadores, 2000).

106 Andrés Rozental argues that the deterioration of the bilateral relations between Mexico and Cuba was also the result of the personal antagonism between Castañeda and Fidel Castro (see Rozental, 2006).
This statement emphasises the difference between the various role expectations of Mexico. Congressman Batres also moved to approve a motion for the lower chamber of Congress to consider the foreign policy of the executive branch as not being a, 

[...] foreign policy with state vision. Its international relations and its position with Cuba do not correspond to the constitutional principles of the Mexican constitution, they do not have the support of the Congress, and it weakens the position of Mexico in the world. (Cámara de Diputados, 2002e)\textsuperscript{107}

Domestic role contestation is visible in this regard, and it is compatible with the hypothesis of the thesis, which states that a conflict of interpretation of middle-power NRCs led to an inconsistent deployment of these NRCs to support a middle-power status.

Meanwhile, external expectations of Mexico’s roles continued to be manifested. For instance, Secretary of State Colin Powell expressed his approval of Mexico’s actions by stating that the Fox government ‘reacted appropriately’ to Cuba's diplomatic crisis (Tuckman, 2004). Powell’s remarks caused discomfort in Mexico's public opinion, which opposed any comments or policies that could be construed as benefiting the US agenda to the detriment of the country’s ties with Latin America (Velázquez, 2008b)\textsuperscript{108}. For Mexico, Cuba represented a symbol of the Latin American struggle against American hegemony and a useful counterweight to the US (Davidow, 2003).

In this context, both the US and Cuba possessed the attributes to be considered significant others to Mexico for different reasons. Both served as socialising agents for the country; Cuba served as a reference of a Latin American vocation for the Mexican left when the pink wave was prevalent in the subcontinent. The US, on the other hand, served as the main socialising agent for Mexico in the OECD countries. Both countries influenced Mexico’s behaviour through tangible and intangible means and were frequently invoked in domestic political platforms.

\textsuperscript{107} This case was not isolated. The LVIII and the LIX legislature proscribed most of the individuals working in the executive branch from travelling abroad, but as Velázquez (2008b) observed, out of 72 initiatives for constitutional reform in foreign policy, only two – both related to limiting the powers of the executive branch – were approved.

\textsuperscript{108} The Fox administration did have other bilateral diplomatic crises with Argentina and Venezuela, but these stemmed from Mexico’s promotion of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), not from adherence to liberal values.
Domestic contestation over the interpretation of Mexico’s NRCs was palpable when pressure for Castañeda to be dismissed as secretary of foreign affairs began to mount. The promotion of liberal values was a central point in the foreign policy agenda of his successor, Luis Derbez. Secretary Derbez established six foreign policy goals during his tenure, and the promotion and defence of HR and democracy was considered the number one priority (Reforma, 2003). However, the new secretary of foreign affairs deployed a more discrete profile to amend some of the relations that were damaged during Castañeda’s tenure in the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, the management of HR and democracy was transferred from the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs to the Secretariat of Interior, dismantling the Undersecretariat for Human Rights and Democracy (Aguayo, 2010). Instead of insisting on promoting liberal values through bilateral channels, Derbez decided to focus on Mexico’s admission to the ICC and create the National Programme of Human Rights.109 The National Programme had the inclusion of respect for HR and democracy as a constitutional guideline for foreign policy among its goals (Presidencia de la República, 2004).

Neither Castañeda nor Derbez faced horizontal role contestation from other cabinet members, unlike the case in Chapter 5. However, Castañeda promoted his policies in a way that was perceived as being too aggressive or selective by national and international actors, negatively affecting Mexico’s attempted enactments of middle-power NRCs. The democratic bonus that legitimised the Fox government in domestic and foreign circles helped propel HR and democracy as priorities in foreign policy.

With its new-found identity as a democratic country, other actors began to have an important influence on the design of Mexico’s foreign policy. For instance, Congress, political parties, and the media were increasingly influential in foreign policy and began to play a part in fomenting domestic role contestation. During this era, innovative mechanisms were also implemented to democratise foreign policy decision-making. For example, the Chamber of Deputies approved a new law that

109 The ratification of the statute of Rome confronted the Fox administration with a considerable part of the opposition, particularly the PRI, which wanted to avoid any foreign entanglement to protect the country’s sovereignty and which advocated for the adoption of a case-by-case mechanism instead. The statute of Rome was not ratified until December 2002 (Bondí, 2004).
made a significant part of the government’s information and documents accessible to the public (Cámara de Diputados, 2002). The Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, for its part, agreed to consider direct participation from common citizens, scholars, and NGOs in the design of foreign policy (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2006). These participatory arrangements became relevant in the constitutional reform to HR that took place years later.

During the second half of the Fox administration, the Mexican government offered the Colombian President, Álvaro Uribe, Mexico’s mediation between the Colombian government, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the ELN. President Uribe accepted the mediation of Mexico and President Fox appointed two Mexican ambassadors, Andrés Rozental and Andrés Valencia, to negotiate with these rebel forces (Senado de la República, 2004; Covarrubias, 2016). Meanwhile, the ELN published a press statement that said, ‘We are willing to establish direct communication with the Mexican government to get to know the proposals of President Fox to achieve peace in Colombia’ (Senado de la República, 2004).

This instance might have been visible evidence of the successful enactment of the mediator NRC in Mexico’s promotion of liberal values. However, President Álvaro Uribe ultimately favoured the mediation of the US instead (Rozental, 2004). In addition, the ELN rejected Mexico’s role as a mediator in a press release a year later in April 2005, when it condemned Mexico’s vote against Cuba in the UNHRC. Mexico’s failed mediation efforts in Colombia are yet more evidence that Mexico’s promotion of liberal values was not fully accepted by external actors in Latin America, greatly constraining the enactment of Mexico’s middle-power NRCs.

By this time, Mexico’s electoral campaign for the presidential elections of 2006 was in progress. The candidate who ultimately won the elections, Felipe Calderón from the PAN, assessed Mexico’s loss of regional influence as an outcome of the Fox administration’s mistaken foreign policy. Nevertheless, Calderón continued to support the defence of liberal values as a foreign policy priority. With his electoral platform, Calderón aimed to promote liberal values from the perspective of the pragmatic orientation of foreign policy. However, he was careful to avoid any potential conflict with Latin American countries. For instance, in his electoral
platform, Calderón stressed that Mexico had a ‘Latin American vocation’ and advocated that the country should ‘actively promote human rights and democracy in the national and international context’ within an ‘active and responsible foreign policy’ (Partido Acción Nacional, 2006). In another document titled ‘Mexico’s challenge: General guidelines for public policy’, Calderón insisted that it was ‘necessary to reflect Mexico’s compromise in a more active foreign policy favouring the universal values of human rights and democracy’. In this document, he also stated that foreign policy should be ‘an instrument to improve the quality of life of Mexican citizens to consolidate democracy and take advantage of the opportunities in an increasingly competing world […]. Mexico’s national interests should sustain a new Mexican democracy that interacts with a more humane attitude privileging people, not economic entities’ (Calderón, 2006).

7.11 Continuity in the promotion of liberal values during the Calderón administration

Felipe Calderón was elected President on July 2, 2006, in a heavily disputed and legally contested election. Nonetheless, Calderón took office on December 1st. In the context of domestic polarisation and a legitimacy crisis, the Calderón administration sought to avoid any diplomatic confrontations, particularly with Latin American countries. Consequently, the promotion of liberal values became an issue that was pursued through multilateral channels rather than a contentious topic in bilateral relations. During the Calderón administration, Mexico worked closely with other countries to advance an HR-based agenda in multilateral bodies, adding coalition-builder as a middle-power NRC that other countries recognised.

Official documents, such as the first report of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, outlined the recovery of Mexico’s regional leadership as a priority. This report asserts that Mexico will search for ‘spaces of dialogue and cooperation with the main regional actors and deepen our strategic alliances […] to reposition Mexico in its rightful place in the world and the region’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2007, 7).
In addition, president Calderón himself included the defence of HR and the promotion of democracy in foreign policy in the NDP (Velázquez and Domínguez, 2013). Moreover, the NDP had ‘contribution to the international community to widen the validity of democratic values, fundamental freedoms, and human rights’ as its second general foreign policy objective. The document links active participation in multilateral organisations to achieving this goal by listing the following strategies: a) participating in forums relating to peace, development, HR, and international security; b) increasing Mexico’s participation in regional organisations promoting human development; and c) promoting international law, multilateral institutions, and the peaceful resolution of disputes (Presidencia de la República, 2007, 57).

These objectives responded to Mexico's perceived need to occupy a space in international politics that ‘reflected its economic, cultural, geopolitical, and demographic importance’, linking Mexico’s behaviour as a promoter of liberal values to its middlepowermanship (Presidencia de la República, 2007, 82).

Furthermore, the specific policy plan of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs established the following objectives that the administration would actively pursue: the ‘insertion of Mexico in the place it rightfully belongs to on the international stage; and to actively participate in the efforts of the international community to safeguard democratic values, human rights and sustainable development’ (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2007a). These rhetorical expressions offer evidence of the Mexican state's explicit goal to pursue an active middle-power foreign policy and its intentions to enact the good international citizen NRC that would insert Mexico into the place where it ‘rightfully belongs’ on the international stage.

The confrontations that arose during the Fox administration with Cuba and Venezuela eroded Mexico’s influence in the region and deepened political polarisation within the country. As a consequence, the promotion of democracy and the protection of HR happened through multilateral channels instead of being a bilateral source of confrontation. Additionally, by amending relations with Cuba and Venezuela's leftist governments, Calderón aimed to gain legitimacy with his government’s opposition (González and Velázquez, 2013).
Meanwhile, Mexican senators conditioned the ratification of diplomatic appointments on the enactment of the interpretations of middle-power NRCs from the traditional orientation in foreign policy. During her first congressional hearing, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Patricia Espinosa attempted to solve role conflict between both orientations by reconciling the interpretations of the *good international citizen* and the *seeker of regional leadership* NRCs. Secretary Espinosa pledged to uphold the principles of the traditional orientation and also stated that Mexico’s diplomacy ‘supported the validity of democratic values and human rights’ while ‘recovering the spaces for dialogue in the region’ (Roman, 2007). This role-merging was appraised positively by lawmakers from the opposition, which supported the normalisation of relations with Cuba and Venezuela.\(^{110}\)

As stated in Chapter 6, Calderón held a drastically different leadership style from President Fox. The Calderón cabinet was cohesive and the President was notably more involved in the decision-making process. The secretary of foreign affairs was a professional diplomat with a low profile and no ideological affinities (Velázquez, 2010). These domestic factors facilitated the administration’s goal of promoting liberal values while avoiding frontal confrontations with countries in the vicinity. The continuation of this policy also received substantial support from the public across all political ideologies. In the *Mexico y el Mundo* survey, 85% of respondents from the elite and 86% of the public believed that it was ‘very important’ or ‘somewhat important’ to promote HR as a foreign policy goal (CIDE-COMEXI, 2006).

Moreover, 67% of leaders and 66% of the public approved of Mexico’s effort to improve the condition of HR in Cuba, but the majority preferred that this be done through multilateral rather than bilateral channels. The preference for the promotion of HR through multilateral means was reiterated in the question ‘What do you think Mexico ought to do if a certain country does not respect human rights?’ In response to this question, 48% of the public believed that Mexico should defend HR through multilateral organisations, 28% opted not to interfere, and 18% preferred that Mexico

\(^{110}\) Although it was not expressed vocally, it became apparent that the most conservative sectors inside the ruling PAN were dissatisfied that Calderón did not continue the Fox administration’s combative stance towards Cuba and Venezuela (González, 2008).
break diplomatic relations with the hypothetical country (CIDE-COMEXI, 2006). These survey results showed that a majority of citizens supported the promotion of liberal values in foreign policy. However, there was evidence of resistance to the promotion of these values through bilateral relations rather than multilateral means, because 76% of the population preferred to encourage these values through multilateral organisations rather than bilateral issues. Additionally, the results demonstrated the public’s endorsement of the pragmatic foreign policy orientation’s interpretation of the *good international citizen* and *supporter of multilateralism* NRCs.

In light of this, Mexico promoted a motion in the UNCHR to change the voting system for condemning individual states, helping Mexico avoid future confrontations with Cuba. Countries in the commission would now only vote for specific countries to accept the observations of the council without any resolutions condemning them. Although this reform was not intended exclusively for Cuba, Cuba’s foreign minister acknowledged that Mexico ‘had removed an important obstacle to normalise bilateral relations’ (La Jornada, 2007).

However, Mexico’s rapprochement with Cuba was to be tested when Orlando Zapata, a prisoner of conscience of the Cuban regime, died, and the health of another prisoner, Guillermo Farinas, deteriorated. The Secretariat of Foreign Affairs created a press release exhorting Cuba to protect the dignity of its prisoners but recognised that Mexico could not be a judge in the matter, as it also faced ‘great challenges’ regarding the issue of HR (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2007b). The strategy worked, as relations with Cuba were no longer strained in the way they were during Fox’s administration.

Another episode of conflict between the traditional and new foreign policy orientations in Mexico was the 2009 coup d’état against President Manuel Zelaya in Honduras. The government of Mexico reacted immediately in condemning the coup, probably because it considered the coup as an opportunity to enact *mediator* and *good international citizen* NRCs by being involved in the defence of democracy in Honduras. For example, Mexico withdrew its ambassador from Honduras and invoked the Inter-American Democratic Charter in the OAS (Secretaría de...
Relaciones Exteriores, 2009). Secretary Espinosa received her Honduran counterpart the day after the coup, and President Zelaya was received with full honours in Mexico some weeks later. However, Mexico’s attempts at mediating the conflict in Honduras were rejected by the country's de-facto government (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2009). To further Mexico’s inability to enact its middle-power NRCs, Zelaya disrespected Mexico’s efforts by favouring Brazil and Costa Rica’s involvement in the incident.

Nonetheless, the Honduran coup influenced Mexico’s efforts in building CELAC. The Calderón administration did not invite Honduras to join the Summit of Unity in Cancun when the creation of CELAC was announced in 2010 and proposed the inclusion of a democratic clause within CELAC to sanction situations like those that took place in Honduras (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2011a; Covarrubias, 2013). By proposing the inclusion of a democratic clause within CELAC, Mexico was recreating the democratic charter of the OAS in the regional organisation it was helping to create. This indicates the Calderón administration’s clear commitment to the interpretation of the new foreign policy orientation and the enactment of the good international citizen and supporter of multilateralism NRCs.

The enactment of these NRCs was also evident in other multilateral organisations, such as the UNHRC, which Mexico was elected president of for 2006 and 2007.\footnote{111} As President of the UNHRC, Mexico contributed to the elaboration of the rules and procedures of its institutional framework (Anaya, 2013). During this time, Mexico worked closely with other countries to advance an HR-based agenda in this multilateral body, adding coalition-builder as another middle-power NRC that other countries recognised. For instance, Mexico and Colombia presented an initiative to create a working group to address discrimination against women, which was adopted by more than 70 states in the UN. Mexico also worked with Guatemala on the issue of indigenous rights, with New Zealand on the issue of people with disabilities, and with Turkey on the right to birth registry (Padilla and Fernández, 2012).\footnote{112} Moreover,

\footnote{111} The HR Commission of the UN was transformed into a Council in 2006. \footnote{112} In an interview, Covarrubias stated that Mexico worked as a ‘hinge’ country in multilateral negotiations on HR by working with developed and developing countries on specific issues. This can explain why Mexico could work with states that are vastly different from each other, such as New Zealand and Turkey, helping enact its coalition-building NRC.
Calderón sought to place Mexican citizens within specialised bodies in the UN and the OAS, strengthening the country’s presence in debates about liberal values and highlighting the importance of these debates in the multilateral diplomacy in Mexico (Anaya, 2013).

7.12 The 2011 constitutional reform

In 2008, Calderón regained the National Program of Human Rights developed by the Fox administration. This program mandated the inclusion of an HR perspective in all public policies and presented a vision of what the state of HR in Mexico should be by 2025 (OHCHR, 2008). This program had specific objectives and strategies to arrive at that vision. For example, Specific Objective 3.3 of the program alludes to the modification of Article 89, Clause X, of the constitution to include the protection of HR as an official foreign policy guideline (Presidencia de la República, 2008b). The inclusion of this perspective in the constitution located the interpretations of both foreign policy orientations on the same legal level.

Several scholars, NGOs, and common citizens became involved in the National Programme of Human Rights to promote an ambitious and wide-ranging state reform on HR.\textsuperscript{113} The Office of the High Commissioner of the UN on Human Rights (OHCUNHR) took the initiative to promote this reform. Starting in 2003, with the support of the OHCUNHR, dozens of scholars and NGOs began to work with all political parties represented in Congress to develop a consensus around a proposal for a constitutional amendment. After signing an agreement with the Congress in December 2006, which served the purpose of collaborating in the gradual harmonisation of international HR norms with national laws, the OHCUNHR organised several interdisciplinary discussions among many NGOs and scholars specialising in HR. Additionally, the OHCUNHR facilitated the development of structured proposals for a constitutional amendment of HR in Mexico (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2011b; OHCUNHR, 2008). This wide-ranging effort had two

\textsuperscript{113} A reform of this magnitude was never attempted during the Fox administration because it was believed that support for it across the political spectrum was unattainable (Guevara, 2004). Furthermore, an overarching reform project that did not exclusively focus on amending Article 89, but encompassed 10 further articles, made it easier for this article to be amended.
goals: to include international legislation on HR within the Mexican constitution and to introduce some rights that had not yet been recognised in the Mexican constitution (Senado de la República, 2014). In 2011, the intense lobbying efforts led by the OHCUNHR came to fruition when the Mexican Congress unanimously approved one of the most significant constitutional amendments in its history.

This amendment was an essential culmination of Mexico’s evolution towards promoting liberal values in foreign policy. In total, 11 articles were amended. Among many issues, the reform made public servants responsible for promoting and guaranteeing the HR of all people inside Mexico’s borders. It made the inclusion of HR perspectives mandatory in all government programs, and it introduced HR in school curricula. In terms of its international dimension, the reform elevated international treaties to the same hierarchical level as the constitution itself, and it made Mexico one of the last Latin American countries to include international HR norms within its constitution (Senado de la República, 2014).

Nevertheless, the most crucial aspect in the international dimension of this wide-ranging reform was the inclusion of the ‘respect, protection, and promotion of human rights’ as a guiding principle in foreign policy. The addition of the promotion of HR as a constitutional mandate in foreign policy can be regarded as an achievement of the pragmatic foreign orientation within the domestic contestation of foreign policy in Mexico. Twenty-three years after the principles of the traditional orientation were included in 1988, the pragmatic foreign policy orientation interpretations of the NRCs were also incorporated. This episode showcased Mexico’s changing self-perception in the international arena and the evolution of the interpretation of its NRCs. During this time, Mexico gradually embraced liberal values through a dual process of domestic role contestations and external role expectations, as the country adopted new norms of behaviour by taking role prescriptions from states and NGOs alike. However, Mexico also had agency in embracing these values. Civil society

\footnote{The reform recognises the HR of foreigners within the country, for example.}
\footnote{This process resembles the ways Keck and Sikkink (1999) examined how transnational advocacy networks exert leverage over the state by going beyond the individual abilities of NGOs to influence state practices directly.}
\footnote{These articles are 1, 3, 11, 15, 18, 29, 33, 89, 97, 102, and 105.}
began to have a more relevant role in demanding the internalisation of international HR norms and respect for democracy. Domestic actors also urged that liberal values be included as foreign policy guidelines in the constitution. Mexico’s new self-perception as a democratic country was an essential component in the way it wanted to portray itself to Western democracies, rather than being an exclusive outcome of role prescriptions by other actors. The eventual addition of respect for HR as a constitutional guideline was a milestone after years of resistance from policymakers defending the traditional orientation of foreign policy.117

7.13 Interpretation of the middle-power NRCs relating to liberal values according to foreign policy orientations

In this case study, Mexico had the opportunity to enact the following middle-power NRCs: good international citizen, supporter of multilateralism, coalition-builder, and mediator.

The case analyses how role conflict in the form of domestic role contestations between foreign policy orientations and deviating external expectations between Mexico and other international actors led to the adoption of liberal values in the implementation of foreign policy. In this case, the good international citizen NRC is operationalised by the use of explicit statements from the Mexican government, foreign governments, IGOs, and NGOs denoting their expectations of the adoption of liberal values in the country's foreign policy agenda. Each foreign policy orientation possessed the following interpretation of this specific NRC, as shown in the following table.

117 As with any other constitutional amendment in Mexico, this reform had to be approved by at least a two-thirds majority of the Congress and by a minimum of 17 state legislatures, meaning that the political opposition, which nominally supported the traditional principles of foreign policy, overwhelmingly supported this amendment.
Table 13: Interpretation of Mexico’s good international citizen NRC in Chapter 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good international citizen NRC</th>
<th>Traditional orientation</th>
<th>Pragmatic orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The interpretation of this NRC was based on the defence of national sovereignty as an absolute priority. Being a good international citizen implied delivering speech acts that nominally embraced liberal values but were not sustained by the country's active involvement in multilateral discussions regarding liberal values. This resistance to promoting liberal values in foreign policy existed in the Mexican government until 1994. Afterward, the traditional orientation and opposition to the promotion of liberal values were prevalent in Mexican congresspeople, especially during the Fox and Calderón administrations.</td>
<td>For this orientation, the enactment of the good international citizen NRC in foreign policy was necessary to assert Mexico as part of the Western democracies, where Mexico wanted to intensify trade links. During the Zedillo, Fox, and Calderón administrations, the good international citizen NRC was part of Mexico’s international identity as a young democracy, with active promotion of liberal values, showing an archetypical middle-power behaviour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The enactment of the supporter of multilateralism NRC served as a platform for enacting other NRCs, particularly good international citizen and coalition-builder. This is because Mexico could form common working platforms with other states and display liberal values through multilateral diplomacy, especially after the year 2000. The eventual enactment of this interpretation of supporter of multilateralism NRC was contested by the traditional orientation and is presented in the following table.

Table 14: Interpretation of Mexico’s supporter of multilateralism NRC in Chapter 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporter of multilateralism</th>
<th>Traditional orientation</th>
<th>Pragmatic orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The traditional orientation’s interpretation of multilateralism evolved through time. At first, the Mexican state sought international legitimacy by pursuing membership in several regional groups, such as the Group of Eight. Some years later, Mexico believed</td>
<td>This orientation understands multilateralism through UN agencies and OAS as the ideal way to promote liberal values in foreign policy. In contrast with the bilateral conflicts that the Fox</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that participating in multilateral organisations was necessary to defend the country from accusations regarding democracy and HR. The Mexican government thought it preferable to participate in multilateral institutions to avoid being accused ‘in absentia’.

administration had with Cuba, multilateralism could avoid diplomatic friction with significant others in Mexico’s interactions and be a platform for enacting other middle-power NRCs, such as good international citizen and coalition-builder.

As stated in Chapter 3, the mediator NRC is enacted when Mexico assists other parties in dispute to resolve their conflict through interactive negotiations. Evidence for this variable's enactment emanates from primary and secondary sources, where Mexico aimed to facilitate negotiations between two conflicting parties and this aspiration was acknowledged by these parties. Both orientations of foreign policy had opposite interpretations of this middle-power NRC. These contrasts are detailed in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediator NRC</th>
<th>Traditional orientation</th>
<th>Pragmatic orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this context, the traditional orientation avoided the mediator NRC because it contravened the Estrada doctrine’s principle of non-intervention. The enactment of this NRC could potentially justify unwelcome interventions in Mexico’s affairs by external powers on the sensitive topic of liberal values.118</td>
<td>For the proponents of the pragmatic orientation, a mediator role validated the country's credentials in liberal values. The acceptance of this self-conception by other countries fulfilled the enactment of this NRC. However, both attempts at enacting the mediator NRC on liberal values issues failed. The unsuccessful mediation attempt between the Colombian government and rebel groups can be attributed to the perception that the Fox administration was unsuitable to perform this role due to its close ties to the US. The attempt to mediate in the coup d'état in Honduras failed because the behaviour of the ousted Honduran President made it difficult for Mexico to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

118 However, Mexico enacted a mediator NRC during the Contadora process, contravening the Estrada doctrine. The enactment of the mediator NRC with Contadora responded to a real threat of regional instability at Mexico’s southern border.
continue to support his position. This led to the rejection of the mediator NRC by the Mexican government.

The coalition-builder NRC is operationalised by managing regional alliances and the country's leadership with like-minded states to implement an agenda. This NRC is enacted if the Mexican diplomacy makes formal and informal collaborations with like-minded states and if other actors are receptive to the actions of Mexico as a coalition-builder. At the end of this case, this NRC became enacted through Mexico’s participation in multilateral institutions, an archetypical middle-power behaviour. However, the interpretation of the coalition-builder NRC was severely contested by both foreign policy orientations in the following terms:

**Table 16: Interpretation of Mexico’s coalition-builder NRC in Chapter 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coalition-builder NRC</th>
<th>Traditional orientation</th>
<th>Pragmatic orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As is the case with the mediator NRC, the traditional orientation had not contemplated building coalitions on the issue of liberal values. The only incentive to do so would have been to protect Mexico’s sovereignty against the international regime of HR, which was seen as interventionist. Nevertheless, resisting the international regime of liberal values would have damaged the legitimacy of the Mexican government to its regional peers.</td>
<td><strong>Coalition-builder</strong> was the last NRC to be enacted in the process of Mexico’s adoption of liberal values. According to this orientation, coalition building with like-minded states effectively promotes specific issues in liberal values. Mexico’s collaboration with countries like Guatemala, New Zealand, and Turkey on issues regarding the rights of indigenous populations and people with disabilities or without birth registry is an example of the enactment of this NRC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**7.14 Conclusion**

The evolution of Mexico’s adoption of liberal values in its foreign policy can be explained through role theoretical analysis. Following middle-power behaviour regarding niche diplomacy, Mexico gradually concentrated attention and resources on a specific international regime. As such, Mexico had the potential to enact the NRCs of good international citizen, supporter of multilateralism, mediator, and coalition-builder in this case study.
Evidence was found that domestic role contestation and external role expectations affected the outcome of Mexico’s foreign policy. This link indicates a robust causal inference of a relationship between the hypothetical and actual observable manifestations of the operations of mechanisms within this case.

The causal mechanisms in this chapter were different to those of the previous case studies. Mexico’s motivation to display middle-power NRCs did not originate from an explicit aspiration from the government. The principle of non-intervention from the traditional orientation of foreign policy was not compatible with notions of middle-power behaviour in the 1980s and 1990s. An explicit aspiration from the Mexican government to display middle-power NRCs concerning liberal values began during the Zedillo administration and was consolidated during the Fox and Calderón administrations. During these administrations, official documents and increasing diplomatic engagement with liberal values revealed Mexico’s will to embrace liberal values and achieve a middle-power status.

Mexico’s gradual process of adopting liberal values stemmed from the socialisation and contestation of NRCs. Mexico’s NRCs were prescribed by NGOs and governments in the increasingly vigorous interactions Mexico had with regional players and Western democracies. The prescription of these NRCs was encouraged by the democratisation process developing inside the country, which produced new self-perceptions of Mexico’s place in the world and stimulated the domestic contestation of Mexico’s NRCs between the two foreign policy orientations. The Mexican government managed external expectations by accepting these prescriptions so that it could earn domestic legitimacy and avoid being marginalised from regional and international politics. Declarations, protocols, and treaties signed by Mexico, such as the Inter-American Charter, the democratic clause with the EU, and the Vienna declaration of 1993 are empirical manifestations of this claim.

This case study produced new understandings of foreign policy change and role change. Domestic role contestation between the two foreign policy orientations led to a foreign policy that was unable to consistently display NRCs associated with middle-power behaviour. For instance, there was role conflict between the principle of non-intervention of the traditional orientation and role demands from the Western
democracies Mexico was increasingly seeking to interact with. Evidence of the institutionalisation of roles is also present in the creation of the Undersecretariat of Human Rights and Democracy within the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs. The incorporation of liberal values into bureaucratic structures and foreign policy discourses solidified the pragmatic foreign policy orientation position. This finding resembles similar research made by scholars like Hirata (2016).

Additionally, an expanding civil society called for the involvement of external elements of the international regime of liberal values to consolidate Mexico’s domestic normative framework on HR and democracy. The democratisation process also lent support from public opinion to the country’s promotion of these values, as can be attested by the México, las Américas y el Mundo survey. However, despite the country's expressed willingness to promote liberal values in foreign policy after the year 2000, Mexico was unable to enact the middle-power NRCs consistently throughout the timeline of this case (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2007). The domestic contestation of Mexico’s NRCs between the two foreign policy orientations and the contradictions between Mexico’s self-perceptions and role expectations from other countries prevented the full enactment of middle-power NRCs. For example, evidence was found that policymakers invoked other NRCs, such as bridge-builder and mediator, as roles that Mexico ought to enact in foreign policy. However, these were never fully applied during the timeframe of this chapter. These contestations and contradictory expectations confirm the hypothesis of this thesis.

At the end of this process, the pragmatic orientation of foreign policy prevailed over the traditional orientation in enacting its interpretations of the middle-power NRCs concerning liberal values. This orientation enacted a good international citizen NRC by promoting liberal values as a priority in its foreign policy agenda. It achieved this by wielding a strong presence in multilateral channels and was also able to enact a coalition-builder NRC when the Calderón administration worked closely with several countries on a myriad of issues pertaining to liberal values. The absence of significant domestic contestation and coincidental external expectations from other
players meant that the Calderón administration could include these NRCs in Mexico’s middle-power role repertoire. A comprehensive flowchart depicting the incorporation of NRCs into Mexican foreign policy illustrates the evolution of this process.

**Figure 6: Flowchart depicting the evolution of Mexico’s middle-power NRCs in liberal values through Mexican administrations.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 1980s</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salinas</td>
<td>Enacted NRCs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zedillo</td>
<td>Enacted NRCs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Fox | Enacted NRCs | Good international citizen  
Supporter of multilateralism |
| Calderón | Enacted NRCs | Good international citizen  
Supporter of multilateralism  
Coalition-builder |

The outcome of this process can find an alternative explanation in the lock-in theory developed by Andrew Moravcsik. Scholars such as Covarrubias and Saltalamacchia (2011) have analysed this same process through the lock-in theoretical perspective and have found that it is consistent with the developments of this case study. According to this theory, a young democracy – such as Mexico – is more willing to support international regimes of HR and democracy when faced with considerable domestic challenges or instability that threatens the future of HR and democracy promotion. ‘Young and unstable democracies are the ones who more vigorously promote HR organisations and treaties’ because political elites seek to restrict the margin of action of future governments by establishing binding agreements with international organisations (Moravcsick, 2000). In this context, the theory argues that
countries like Mexico have incentives to introduce (or ‘lock-in’) the international regime to the detriment of notions of sovereignty.

While this theory is convincing in assessing international and domestic influences and how liberal values regimes constrain state sovereignty, it does not account for foreign policy change. This theory assumes that policymakers’ preferences are static and does not explain the process of adopting a liberal values regime, a limitation that Moravcsik himself acknowledges (Moravcsik, 2000). This thesis, nevertheless, benefits from the use of the lock-in lens as an alternative explanation that helps to interpret the motivations of the Mexican government's attempts to harmonise internal legislation with international HR regimes since the 1990s. Several secretaries of foreign affairs explicitly stated the aspiration to achieve this harmonisation in multiple speeches and statements, where they outlined how interactions with international organisations were significant for Mexico in improving the validity of liberal values inside the country.

Another alternative explanation to the outcome of this case comes from the possibility that a new generation of leaders with different preferences was decisive in the enactment of a new Mexican foreign policy. The personal preferences of leaders in semi-authoritarian systems like Mexico matter. Additionally, Mexican presidents of the 1980s and 1990s had distinctly different educational backgrounds from previous presidents, since they received postgraduate education at prestigious American universities. However, presidents such as De la Madrid, Salinas, and initially Zedillo resisted external role prescriptions to include liberal issues in foreign policy platforms. Zedillo only began to acquiesce to external pressures when these role prescriptions became too intense to manage due to domestic developments in the country, such as the Aguas Blancas massacre of 1995 and the Acteal massacre of 1997.

In counterfactual terms, it is interesting to imagine whether the adoption of liberal values in Mexico’s foreign policy would have been remarkably different if the Acteal and Aguas Blancas massacres had not happened. These massacres were the decisive factor driving the external expectations and domestic contestations that finally
caused the Mexican government to unequivocally accept role prescriptions from outside. However, external role expectations had been following an increasing trend since the end of the Cold War that sought to change Mexico’s foreign policy behaviour, and these would have most likely continued to seek a change in the country if these massacres had not taken place. The democratic clause in the trade agreement with the EU is an example of the consistent international pressure on this issue. The electoral victory of the PAN in 2000 and the agenda of Fox’s government to embrace liberal values in domestic and foreign policy would have had a similar outcome of adopting liberal values regardless of the massacres. If the PAN had not won the presidency in the year 2000, perhaps a new government from any other political party would have adopted a liberal-values narrative to differentiate themselves from previous PRI governments or to appease international role expectations. In any case, the Acteal and Aguas Blancas massacres were important catalysts for the unambiguous adoption of liberal values in foreign policy.

Furthermore, Mexico could probably have enacted the mediation NRC if the country’s perception as an overwhelmingly pro-Western state by other countries, especially those in Latin America, could have been avoided. In this regard, there is a consensus that Castañeda was excessively confrontational with Cuba, which hampered the perception of Mexico as a fair and impartial judge in mediating any conflict.

It is also worth asking whether the adoption of liberal values would have been achieved without domestic contestations or external expectations. On the one hand, if the concern for liberal values had not materialised after the Cold War, an application of the traditionalist orientation would have been incentivised. On the other hand, if Mexico had not undergone a democratisation process while having the same kind of external expectations that actually happened, Mexico would have faced intense pressure from NGOs and European countries but probably not from American governments. This is because American governments would have been more worried about safeguarding stability at their southern border than about Mexico’s adoption of liberal values.
Overall, Mexico would have found it more challenging to enact middle-power NRCs if democratisation had not occurred than if external expectations had not been as intense as they were. As such, the domestic realm was more relevant than external considerations in Mexico’s enactment of NRCs.
8. Conclusions: Findings, contributions, and future avenues of research

Why does Mexico display an atypical foreign policy for a middle power? In this thesis, role theory bridged different levels of analyses and looked at how domestic and external elements influenced the enactment of NRCs in foreign policy. This research found that role conflict stemming from role contestation between two orientations of foreign policy and conflicting expectations from other international actors impeded the enactment of the original middle-power NRCs that the Mexican government aimed to enact. This role conflict prompted role change in Mexico’s foreign policy.

The case studies were used to search for middle-power NRCs in instances where middle-power behaviour could be found. Mexico’s involvement in a multilateral organisation like the UNSC, its role in creating regional groups such as CELAC, and its engagement in niche issues such as liberal values are all examples of these instances.

In the following paragraphs, I synthesise the variances, patterns, and other findings gathered from the analysis made in the case studies.

In Chapter 5, the Fox administration’s advocacy for the interpretations of the pragmatic orientation of foreign policy was contested by the traditional orientation, the presence of which was strong in Congress and the diplomatic corps. The Fox administration managed this domestic role contestation by merging compatible elements from both orientations into the good international citizen NRC. The traditional orientation prevailed when their interpretations were enacted in the supporter of multilateralism and coalition-builder NRCs.

Role conflict also led to the discontinuation of the bridge-builder NRC, which the Fox government wanted to enact to reconcile the different positions member states had in the UNSC. Instead, the coalition-builder NRC was enacted as a way to resist the hegemonic expressions of the US during the Iraq crisis. Despite role conflict, and although the US rejected Mexico’s position in the UNSC, Mexico's middle-power NRCs were acknowledged by most of the countries it had
interactions with in the UNSC. The position of the US as Mexico’s *significant other* and the role it played by prescribing role expectations to Mexico contributed to domestic role contestation. Rhetorical expressions from American policymakers provoked a reaction from the general public and advocates of the nationalist, traditional orientation of foreign policy, who were adamant about opposing the US in the UNSC. This interplay between external role expectations and domestic role contestation and the way it affected foreign policy outcomes were thus visible in this chapter.

This case illustrated the influence of personalities in the development of role conflict. For instance, although Castañeda, as a role entrepreneur, had a considerable amount of influence at the beginning of the Fox administration, his action channels became narrower, and his margins of advocacy for the pragmatic orientation were increasingly limited due to his conflicts with other political actors. Another individual whose actions were relevant to the case study outcome was Aguilar Zinser in his proactive role as Mexico’s ambassador to the UN. Aguilar Zinser individually promoted Mexico’s middle-power NRCs in the UNSC without any instructions from the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Affairs or President Fox’s indecisive leadership. These empirical observations indicate why the role of personalities should be studied more in foreign policy analysis and guide the ways such analyses might be performed.

Chapter 6 produced different results from Chapter 5. Unlike the first case, during the formation of CELAC, Mexico attempted to seek regional leadership in Latin America and amend its deteriorated relations with Cuba and ALBA countries. In Chapter 6, Mexico aimed to display NRCs that would affirm its Latin American identity for both domestic and external audiences. Thus, this chapter contributes to an understanding of the relation between roles and identity.

The case in this chapter took place in a time of deep regional polarisation in Latin America that fomented incompatible expectations from the different CELAC member states. This role conflict, constituted by divergent expectations, and the real possibility that Mexico would antagonise the US by helping establish a regional organisation that would rival the OAS prompted Mexico to withdraw from actively participating in CELAC. Instead, Mexico concentrated its attention on the creation of
the Pacific Alliance as an alternative method to achieve a foothold in Latin American politics.

Domestic contestation was not observable in Congress or the cabinet, since all political parties in Congress supported any policy that made Mexico engage with Latin America. Moreover, the personal involvement of Calderón in the creation of CELAC and his decision to grant the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs widespread control over issues regarding CELAC prevented bureaucratic infighting from taking place.

After the analysis made in Chapter 6, it can be argued that the hypothesis of this research was confirmed. There was a conflict in the external expectations and domestic conceptions of the ways Mexico embraced its Latin American vicinity. Latin American governments, mainly those emanating from ALBA countries, had role prescriptions for Mexico that were in conflict with the role prescriptions of the US – Mexico’s primary significant other – when ALBA countries proposed making CELAC an alternative to the OAS. The turning point in this chapter was the 2011 Caracas summit. In its aftermath, Mexico abandoned the seeker of regional leadership NRC and substituted the bridge-builder NRC for a coalition-builder NRC. At the 2011 Caracas summit, it became evident that polarisation between the ALBA countries and the block of countries that were more aligned with Washington, such as Mexico, would be an obstacle for CELAC’s goal of regional integration. The Mexican government’s changing objectives can be observed in official documents after this summit.

Consequently, expectations clearly established limits on the range of roles Mexico had the potential to pursue. In this regard, the case showed that the domestic success of one foreign policy orientation did not influence a change in foreign policy behaviour, since role enactment also depended on other countries acknowledging Mexico’s NRCs. It seems counterintuitive that Mexico proposed creating a new regional organisation that replicated the same flaws the Mexican government identified within the Rio Group. It is evident that some mechanisms intervened to alter Mexico's aspiration for leadership in Latin America and to promote regional integration through CELAC (Presidencia de la República, 2007; CELAC, 2011). Role conflict in the form of external role expectations, expressed in the irreconcilable
positions of the ALBA countries and the US, provides a logical explanation of the intervening mechanisms between Mexico’s NRCs and the outcome of the case. In contrast, Mexico’s role prescriptions to other countries within CELAC were rejected. For instance, the promotion of ‘better economic integration’, an element of Mexican foreign policy's pragmatic orientation, did not appeal to countries like Venezuela, Nicaragua, or Bolivia (De La Barra and Dello Buono, 2012; Presidencia de la República, 2015).

Mexico attempted to enact the bridge-builder NRC within CELAC to manage the deep political polarisation in the organisation. However, the case study found that the bridge-builder NRC was incompatible with the expectations of other Latin American states, who viewed Mexico’s position as being too close to the US. This role conflict resulted in a dysfunctional Mexican policy within CELAC that prevented the expected enactment of middle-power NRCs. Mexico managed this role conflict by joining the Pacific Alliance during the last months of the Calderón administration as an alternative method to re-assert its Latin American identity. Due to the Pacific Alliance being a group of four states characterised in CELAC as being close to Washington, Mexico could not be considered a regional leader, nor could it be said that Mexico could build bridges between different ideological sides, which did not exist in the homogeneity of the Pacific Alliance. Instead, the coalition-building NRC was the only middle-power NRC that Mexico enacted as a Pacific Alliance member.

In summary, Chapter 6’s findings are threefold. First, it contributes to understanding the link between regional identity and foreign policy roles. In addition, it confirms Ozdamar’s (2014) findings of how the domestic success of one foreign policy orientation did not necessarily lead to the state’s desired outcome. Finally, this case illustrates how role conflict was managed within a regional organisation with Mexico receiving divergent expectations from several countries.

Chapter 7 had a different structure than the previous chapters due to the nature of the topics being analysed. The adoption of liberal values into Mexico’s foreign policy was a process that took more than 25 years (1986–2011), in contrast with the three-year timeframe (2000–2003) analysed in Chapter 5 and the eleven-year span (2006–2017) covered in Chapter 6. Consequently, this chapter approached the subject
differently, examining the role of domestic contestation of NRCs and external expectations in specific moments of the case study, rather than having a specific section in the chapter analysing these mechanisms.

In Chapter 7, Mexico was not originally the main advocate for the inclusion of liberal values in foreign policy. Domestic actors, such as NGOs and political parties, propelled external entities to pressure the Mexican government to change its foreign policy behaviour. Thus, Mexico had the potential to enact the following middle-power NRCs: good international citizen, supporter of multilateralism, coalition-builder, and bridge-builder.

Mexico gradually concentrated attention and resources on a specific international regime due to external and internal role demands. External demands resulted from the promotion of democracy and HR by Western democracies in the aftermath of the Cold War. Internal demands, on the other hand, were an outcome of the country’s democratisation process. Initially, in 1986, an electoral conflict attracted the attention of international organisations like the IACHR at the request of internal actors. The IACHR issued prescriptions, which prompted a defensive reaction from the Mexican government. External expectations predominated until 1997, when the Acteal massacre occurred. Since then, domestic role contestation has guided role conflict.

Throughout a process spanning from 1986 to 2011, Mexico evolved from a country that opposed the universality of liberal values to a state that wanted to be perceived as a democratic country championing HR in international politics. The aftermath of the Cold War and the electoral transition of the year 2000 served as critical junctures and took a prominent part in the process-tracing methods used. However, the Aguas Blancas Massacre of 1995 and the Acteal massacre of 1997 were the turning points that prompted the unequivocal adoption of liberal values in Mexico’s foreign policy.

By the year 2011, the acknowledgment by other countries of Mexico’s adoption of liberal values in foreign policy led to the successful enactment of the middle-power NRCs of supporter of multilateralism, coalition-builder, and good international citizen. The pragmatic orientation of foreign policy prevailed over the traditional
orientation in enacting its interpretations of the middle-power NRCs. The contributions of this case study provide a new understanding of the portrayal of middle-power behaviour in the particular niche area of liberal values by including the interplay of domestic and external actors in influencing foreign policy.

The case studies demonstrate how role conflict provides a convincing explanation as to why Mexico did not follow typical middle-power foreign policy behaviour. However, role conflict varied from case to case, depending on the contextual features involved. Table 17 showcases the different contextual features of these cases.

Table 17: Comparison of contextual features of the case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NRCs that Mexico aspired to enact:</td>
<td>Coalition-builder, supporter of multilateralism, and good international citizen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRCs that were enacted:</td>
<td>Coalition-builder and supporter of multilateralism. Role merging took place between both orientations in the good international citizen NRC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual features:</td>
<td>• International crisis in the context of the War on Terror.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conflicting relations between the executive and legislative branches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study 2: Mexico’s involvement in the creation and performance of CELAC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timeframe:</strong></td>
<td><strong>2006–2018</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NRCs that Mexico aspired to enact:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Seeker of regional leadership and bridge-builder.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NRCs that were enacted:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mexico switched from the bridge-builder to the coalition-builder NRC.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual features:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Attempt to repair damaged relations with the rest of Latin America.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Perception that conflicts with the US should be avoided in CELAC’s debate of forming an organisation that would rival the OAS.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- High interest of public opinion due to the role of Mexico in an international crisis. The role of public opinion was relevant in an election year.
- Overwhelming influence of the US in the UNSC and in bilateral channels.
- Inconsistent presidential leadership.

Foreign policy orientation that prevailed:

The traditional orientation prevailed. A merger in the *good international citizen* NRC took place with elements of both orientations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study 3: Adoption of liberal values in Mexico's foreign policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timeframe:</strong> 1986–2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NRCs that Mexico aspired to enact:</strong> Mexico's motivations to display middle-power NRCs did not originate from an explicit aspiration from the government. They were adopted through role prescriptions from other states, supranational entities, and international NGOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NRCs that were enacted:</strong> Supporter of multilateralism, coalition-builder, and good international citizen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual features:</strong> Conflicts with Cuba and ALBA countries when Mexico tried to prescribe liberal values roles to other countries. Conflicting relations between the executive and legislative branches.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This research articulates several scholarly contributions within the analysis made in these case studies. By using role theory, the cases made it possible to observe the different interactions in the formulation of foreign policy that other theoretical lenses may not reveal.

For instance, this research contributed to the agent-structure discussion by linking the purposive action of the state with external limitations. As was seen in this thesis, Mexico’s explicit foreign policy goals were often in conflict with external limitations imposed by its close proximity with US and by interactions with other countries in the Global North and Latin America. These limitations restricted the number of foreign policy roles Mexico could pursue.

In some instances, external role expectations and domestic role contestation influenced each other to prompt change in foreign policy, illustrating under what circumstances foreign policy change occurs. This is evident in the way Mexico shifted its defensive position regarding liberal values and became a state prescribing roles related to liberal values to other states.

This research has also produced new theoretical understandings of the operationalisation of roles. For example, it shows what specific contextual factors might propel the merging of two interpretations of the same role. This observation speaks to a larger area of scholarship on intra-role conflict and orientations in foreign policy. Another finding in this regard is the interaction of the traditional and pragmatic foreign policy orientations. The traditional orientation was more stable throughout the cases, and its advocates were established in strategic institutions where foreign policy making took place, such as Congress and the diplomatic corps; it also received ample support from public opinion. The pragmatic orientation was weaker because its advocacy was not institutionally rooted, and its interpretations of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign policy orientation that prevailed:</th>
<th>Massacres and electoral conflicts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The pragmatic orientation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
middle-power NRCs were not harmonious with Mexico’s historical and traditional roles.

Despite this, there were certain combinations of conditions that worked together for the pragmatic orientation to prevail. For example, the country’s aim to connect to the rest of Latin America, even in a regional integration promoting free trade like the Pacific Alliance, was successful, since the Congress was enthusiastic about supporting any measure that would approach Latin America. In the last chapter, a constant interplay between domestic actors and external forces gradually shifted the resistance to liberal values in Mexico’s foreign policy in favour of the interpretation of the pragmatic orientation.

Different ways in which role conflict emerged and was managed by the Mexican government were also analysed in this project. Specifically, this thesis observed how role conflict was handled in regional organisations such as CELAC and how the prevalence of one NRC's interpretations over another did not necessarily produce foreign policy change, which replicates earlier research carried out by Ozdamar (2014).

In summary, the cases found that Mexico did enact middle-power NRCs, but it was not consistent in its application. Unlike countries with similar characteristics, Mexico’s search for a middle-power status in world politics was in some cases hesitant or circumstantial. For instance, Mexico resisted the hegemonic expressions of the US at the UNSC. Mexico also integrated with other like-minded states in the region and adopted a liberal-values platform in foreign policy. All of these behaviours correspond to middle powers, but their enactment was conjectural. For example, public opinion and the personal involvement of Ambassador Aguilar Zinser – whose work was often carried out without instructions from Mexico City – were key for the country to enact some middle-power NRCs. Another example of the country’s erratic behaviour is its involvement in creating CELAC as an instrument to achieve a position of leadership in the region, only to withdraw from the organisation years later due to the incapacity of the Mexican government to manage highly divergent expectations. The last case showed a long process of 25 years where
Mexico struggled to react to the shifting changes taking place in geopolitics, strategic cultures, and narratives, which caused role conflict in the country’s foreign policy.

It seems that Mexico’s aspiration to seek a middle-power status was motivated by several contextual factors. One motivation to pursue a middle-power status would be to use it as a signalling strategy to differentiate one administration from another, as was the case with the Fox administration. Another motivation would be the perceived need to reconnect with the rest of Latin America, either as a way to appease domestic audiences or to build coalitions with other countries to constrain the US and Brazil. Finally, the aim to socialise with Western democracies motivated Mexico to include liberal values in its role repertoire.

These motivations were mainly based on policymaker’s perceptions within each administration. These administrations all showed erratic reactions when role conflict emerged to interfere with their original foreign policy goals. Consequently, the outcome of the enactment of middle-power NRCs depended on factors outside the Mexican government’s control, leading the country to be an atypical middle power.

These findings replicate the claims made by the body of research on Mexico’s foreign policy. The next section covers the added value of using role conflict as an intervening variable and explains why alternative explanations are not able to explain the outcome of the case studies on their own.

8.1 Alternative explanations

One of the advantages of role theory discussed in Chapter 2 is that role theory can complement explanations given by intermediate theories. This section explores whether the same research outcome could have been achieved by using different intervening variables. In other words, this section asks if Mexico’s atypical foreign policy as a middle power could be better explained by causes other than role conflict in domestic role contestation and external role expectations.

An alternative argument to the effect of domestic role contestation and external role expectations on foreign policy outcomes is the theoretical framework of entrepreneur states. Mexico's willingness to achieve a recognised status despite its limited
capabilities and its coalitions with other states to pursue agendas correlate with countries that have been identified as entrepreneur states. However, the problem with this theoretical lens is that its definitions and claims are excessively generalisable, since many countries have limited resources to pursue their specific foreign policy objectives. Cooper (2018) proposes that foreign policies of middle powers be analysed through an entrepreneurial framework, but he acknowledges that this framework needs further development. However, his criticisms of how the focus on middle powers is static and limited are valid.

In the three case studies of this research, there were alternative explanations for the analytical findings. It could be argued that some of the elements present in the case studies may constitute an alternative explanation on their own. For example, it could be claimed that presidential leadership, close interactions with the US, or Mexico’s aspiration to strengthen ties with the rest of Latin America could also explain the outcomes that these case studies produced. These contextual features, along with alternative theoretical arguments, are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The case study made in Chapter 5 includes several alternate arguments, such as bureaucratic politics, leadership style, vicinity with the US, and public opinion. As mentioned in this chapter, although these explanations have varying degrees of relevance, their perspectives are not enough to explain the outcome of the case study. In comparison, role conflict taking place within and outside Mexico’s borders serves as an explanation that bridges different perspectives to explain the foreign policy actions depicted in this case. In this sense, role theory’s conceptual framework provides an elegant explanation that helps illustrate the different means through which NRCs were contested and how they prevented the enactment of middle-power behaviour.

Chapter 6 enlists presidential leadership as an element that influenced policy-making processes during the time CELAC was created. However, presidential leadership had no more influence than external role expectations in the outcome of this case study. For instance, it can be seen that Presidents Calderón and Peña Nieto's personal involvement in foreign policy issues were starkly different. Nonetheless, both Presidents worked with the same external constraints. Concerning public opinion, the
Mexican population was indifferent, as a significant portion of the population was not aware of the existence of CELAC or the Mexican government's attempts to engage with the rest of Latin America. However, focusing only on these explanations would be a simplistic approach to the content of this case, as there were other elements that motivated Mexican policymakers to adopt NRCs. One such example is bureaucratic segmentation. The Secretariat of Foreign Affairs was managed differently by Calderón and Peña Nieto. However, Mexico’s waning support for CELAC was not a direct result of bureaucratic politics, as decisions relating to CELAC were handled exclusively by the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs.

Finally, some empirical observers of Mexican politics may claim that government transitions are another alternative explanation for Mexico’s retreat from CELAC. Nonetheless, Mexico joined the Pacific Alliance in the last months of the Calderón government, when it was clear that CELAC’s original goal of promoting regional integration was not going to be achieved due to regional polarisation.

In Chapter 7, the lock-in theory developed by Andrew Moravcsik serves as an alternative explanation. Several scholars, such as Covarrubias and Saltalamacchia (2011), have analysed this same process through the lock-in theoretical perspective and have found that it is consistent with the developments of this case study. In this context, a lock-in theory perspective would claim that Mexico had incentives to ‘lock-in’, or internalise, international legislation of liberal values to the detriment of the interpretation of sovereignty from the traditional orientation. The lock-in theory helps interpret the motivations of Mexican policymakers to harmonise internal law with external legislation of liberal values from the 1990s onwards. For example, several secretaries of foreign affairs explicitly stated this purpose in a number of speeches and statements. These secretaries outlined how interactions with international organisations were important for Mexico to improve the validity of liberal values inside the country. However, while this theory is convincing for assessing the influences of both international and domestic factors and can explain how liberal values regimes constrain state sovereignty, it does not account for foreign policy change. The lock-in theory assumes that policymakers' preferences are static.
and does not explain the process of adopting a liberal values regime (Moravcsik, 2000).

One final alternative explanation of the outcome of Chapter 7 is the preference of leaders. A new generation of leaders with different backgrounds and new preferences might have been decisive in adopting liberal values in foreign policy. However, Presidents De la Madrid, Salinas, and Zedillo shared similar backgrounds as students of prestigious universities and resisted external role prescriptions to adopt liberal values in foreign policy platforms. President Zedillo only conformed to external pressures when these became too difficult to manage after the massacres of 1995 and 1997 that took place in Mexico.

Thus, role conflict offers a comprehensive explanation of the outcomes of these case studies. Role conflict both in domestic role contestation and deviating role expectations serves to connect different explanations based on the individual, the state, and the international system. This thesis demonstrates that role theory can aggregate different theoretical explanations to solve complex empirical puzzles. For instance, soft balancing Brazil on its own does not explain Mexico’s adherence to CELAC, nor does public opinion alone explain Mexico’s performance in the UNSC from 2002–2003, nor does democratisation on its own provide a comprehensive explanation of Mexico’s adoption of liberal values in foreign policy. This thesis was able to explain the above factors because it is based on the policymaker’s vantage point and can hold together different angles that theoretical lenses other than role theory might omit. As a result, role theory produced a more comprehensive analysis of the research puzzle of this thesis.

8.2 Implications and avenues of future research

This thesis contributes to establishing future avenues of research. The agenda of future studies might broaden the application of role theory to research focused on other contexts. For instance, one question worth asking is how Mexico is different from other middle powers in its reaction to changing contextual factors. The structure of the Mexican state might not be similar to other countries also regarded as middle or emergent powers. Hence, it would make academic sense to research the implications of these differences through a comparative analysis.
The implementation of the analytical lens of role theory merits further consideration as well. For example, role theory might engage with how historical experiences interact with new role demands produced by democratisation and economic opening processes. Additional undertakings on how role conflict emerges and how it is managed in different circumstances might also contribute to scholarly literature.

Regarding the study of middle powers, academic research would benefit from studying the foreign policy of middle-power countries through a role theoretical approach, especially for those countries in the vicinity of greater powers, as is the case with Poland and Turkey.

In summary, this thesis provides several avenues of research that go beyond the scope of this work. An example of a path that might reveal new understandings for foreign policy analysis would be to research what role individuals in particular positions other than executives or cabinet members hold in role enactment. This was the case of ambassador Aguilar Zinser in the UNSC. Another tentative avenue of research would be to enquire how NRCS and other elements of domestic role contestation operate in a time of international crisis, which might answer the question of whether role conflict under these conditions is able to produce different outcomes than in other circumstances. The operationalisation of the significant other in domestic role contestation needs to be further analysed too, since it was shown that statements from US policymakers regarding Mexico had a substantial effect on public opinion in Mexico, contributing to domestic role contestation. Finally, a study on the ways external expectations prompt domestic contestation and vice versa, such as was seen with liberal values in Chapter 7, may also produce meaningful findings. Engaging with these topics could contribute to scholarship on role theory, research on middle powers, and the study of Mexican foreign policy.

To recapitulate, the significance of this thesis is its contribution to both theoretical and empirical research. The development of the argument used in this thesis, that role conflict caused by domestic contestations and external expectations modified the
foreign policy of Mexico from its original aspirations, led to several findings. These findings offer new and important contributions for role theory and the understanding of Mexico’s place in the world.
Appendices:

List of interviews

Schiavon Uriegas, Jorge Alberto (Mexico City, 2 December 2018). Jorge Schiavon is a professor of international relations at the International Studies Department, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE) (1999–today). He is a member of the National Research System (SNI) in Mexico, level 2. Schiavon holds a Ph.D. in political science and international affairs from the University of California, San Diego; M.A. in political science (UC San Diego), and B.A. in international relations (El Colegio de México).

Covarrubias Velasco, Ana (Mexico City, 4 December 2018). Ana Covarrubias has been a professor at the Center for International Studies of El Colegio de México since 1995. She was director of the Center from 2012 to 2017. She teaches international relations theory, the international relations of Latin America, and the US and Canadian foreign policy. She holds a B.A. in International Relations at Colegio de Mexico and an MSc and a Ph.D. in international relations from Oxford University.

Saltalamacchia Ziccardi, Natalia (Mexico City, 11 December 2018). Natalia Saltalamacchia Ziccardi is a professor at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM). She was director of the Diplomatic Academy at the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She was Director of the Undergraduate Program of International Relations, as well as of the Center for Inter-American Studies and Programs (Centro de Estudios y Programas Interamericanos, CEPI) at the ITAM.

González González, Guadalupe (Mexico City, 5 December 2018). Guadalupe Gonzalez is a professor at the International Studies Division of the Center for Economic Research and Teaching (CIDE). She has a BA degree in International Relations at El Colegio de México, a Master of Sociology from the London School of Economics and Political Science, UK, and is currently a candidate for a Doctor of Political Science degree from the University of California in San Diego, California.
9. References


Becerril, A. (2001). ‘Exharta el Congreso de la Unión a Fox a oponerse a cualquier resolución contra Cuba’ [Congress demands Fox to oppose to any resolution against Cuba], *La Jornada*, 11 April.


Cámara de Diputados, (2002a). La legisladora Magdalena Socorro Núñez Monreal presenta proposición con punto de acuerdo sobre el viaje del Presidente Vicente Fox Quesada, a la República de Cuba. Se turna a segunda Comisión, [Congresswoman Magdalena Socorro Núñez Monreal presents a joint agreement on President Vicente
Fox travel to the Republic of Cuba]. *Diario de los debates*, stenographic version, 6 February.


Castañeda, J. (2002c). Palabras del secretario de relaciones exteriores Jorge Castañeda, en el almuerzo ofrecido por el presidente Vicente Fox al cuerpo diplomático acreditado en México. [Words of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs Jorge Castañeda in the lunch provided by President Fox to the diplomatic corps in Mexico]. *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior*, 67-68: 163-176.


Castañeda, J. (2002e). Palabras del secretario de relaciones exteriores, Jorge G Castañeda, durante su comparecencia ante comisiones de la cámara de senadores con motivo del análisis del segundo informe de gobierno del presidente Vicente Fox Quesada. [Speech by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs Jorge Castañeda during his presence at the Senate after the State of the Union address by president Vicente Fox Quesada]. Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior, 67-68, 177-187.


Castañeda, J. (2012). La rivalidad México-Brasil: La economía mexicana creció más, pero los brasileños han realizado una magnífica labor de autoelogio y promoción mundial. [The Mexico-Brazil rivalry: The Mexican economy grew more, but the Brazilians have done a magnificent job at promoting themselves]. Retrieved from: https://elpais.com/elpais/2012/02/28/opinion/1330453013_778328.html


CELAC. (2011). Declaración de Caracas: En el Bicentenario de la Lucha por la Independencia Hacia el Camino de Nuestros Libertadores. [Caracas declaration: In the bicentennial of the struggle for Independence towards taken by our liberators]. Caracas: CELAC.


Gaskarth, J. (2016). Intervention, domestic contestation, and Britain’s national role conceptions. In C. Cantir and J. Kaarbo (Eds.), Domestic role contestation, foreign policy, and international relations (pp. 105–121).


Marin-Bosch, M., (2008). Entre la espada y la pared: algunas reflexiones en torno a la política exterior de México al fin de la guerra fría [Between the sword and the Wall: Some reflections involving the foreign policy of Mexico during the Cold War], en A. Covarrubias (coord.), Temas de política exterior. México, El Colegio de México, pp. 59-78.


Millán D. (2003). Prevén represalias si no hay apoyo a EU [Fear of reprisal if there is no support to the US]. February 13. La Jornada.


Presidencia de la República. (2015). Celac, Plataforma que Permitirá Avanzar Hacia Una Mayor Integración Económica De América Latina y el Caribe: EPN. [CELAC, platform that will allow Mexico to have a greater economic integration with Latin America and the Caribbean: President Peña Nieto]. Presidencia de la República. Mexico City: Gobierno de México.


Sistema de información legislativa (2013). Versión estenográfica de la comparecencia del secretario de relaciones exteriores, Jose Antonio Meade Kuribreña, en materia de política exterior en el marco de la glosa del primer informe de gobierno del presidente de la república. [Stenographic versión of the speech from the Secretary of foreign affairs, Jose Antonio Meade Kuribreña, in relation to foreign affairs issues of the first government report to Congress from the President of the Republic]. Secretaría de gobernación de México.


Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, (2010b). Papel De México En La Integración De América Latina Y El Caribe: Creación De La Comunidad De Estados Latinoamericanos Y Caribeños (CELAC) [The role of Mexico in the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean: The creation of the Community of Latin American
and Caribbean States]. Mexico City: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Gobierno de México.


Valencia, A. R. (2015). La Celac en la cúspide de los procesos de integración regional: más allá de un foro político-diplomático y más acá de una organización política internacional. [CELAC at the Summit of the processes of regional integration: Beyond a diplomatic or a political forum towards an international political organisation]. In Contextualizaciones Latinoamericanas (10), 1-11.


Velázquez, R. (2008b). La relación entre el Ejecutivo y el Congreso en materia de política exterior durante el sexenio de Vicente Fox: ¿Cooperación o conflicto? [The relation between the executive and the Congress in foreign policies issues during the Vicente Fox administration: Cooperation or conflict?] Política y gobierno, 15(1).


VOA news, (2003). Mexico Seeks End to Iraq War Through the UN. 31 March.


