



GLOBAL FOREIGN POLICY STUDIES



# Principled Pragmatism in Mexico's Foreign Policy Variables and Assumptions

Rafael Velazquez-Flores

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Rafael Velazquez-Flores

# Principled Pragmatism in Mexico's Foreign Policy

Variables and Assumptions

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Rafael Velazquez Flores

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AMEXCID</b>	Agencia Mexicana de Cooperacion Internacional para el Desarrollo (Mexican International Cooperation for Development Agency)
<b>AMLO</b>	Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador
<b>APEC</b>	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>BREXIT</b>	British Exit
<b>BRI</b>	Belt and Road Initiative
<b>BRICS</b>	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
<b>CCE</b>	Consejo Coordinador Empresarial (Entrepreneurial Coordinator Council)
<b>CELAC</b>	Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States)
<b>CESPEM</b>	Centro de Enseñanza y Analisis sobre la Politica Exterior de Mexico (Center for Teaching and Analyzing Mexico's Foreign Policy)
<b>CIA</b>	Central Intelligence Agency
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>COMECON</b>	The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
<b>CTM</b>	Confederacion de Trabajadores de Mexico (Mexican Workers Confederation)
<b>DEA</b>	Drug Enforcement Administration
<b>ECLAC</b>	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>ECSC</b>	European Coal and Steel Community
<b>EEC</b>	European Economic Community
<b>EU</b>	European Union

<b>EXIMBANK</b>	Export–Import Bank of the United States
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign Direct Investments
<b>FTAA</b>	Free Trade Area of the Americas
<b>FTAMEU</b>	Free Trade Agreement between Mexico and the European Union
<b>GATT</b>	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GRULAC</b>	Grupo Regional Latinoamericano y del Caribe (Regional Group for Latin America and the Caribbean)
<b>IBC</b>	International Bankers Committee
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>IMEXCI</b>	Instituto Mexicano de Cooperacion Internacional (Mexican Institute for International Cooperation)
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>INE</b>	Instituto Nacional Electoral (National Electoral Institute)
<b>INEGI</b>	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (National Institute of Statistics and Geography)
<b>INS</b>	Immigration and Naturalization Service
<b>LAFTA</b>	Latin American Free Trade Association
<b>LAIA</b>	Latin American Integration Association
<b>LG</b>	Lima Group
<b>MIKTA</b>	Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey, and Australia
<b>MLN</b>	Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Movement)
<b>MERCOSUR</b>	Mercado Común del Sur (South Common Market)
<b>MORENA</b>	Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional (National Regeneration Movement)
<b>NAFTA</b>	North American Free Trade Agreement
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NSC</b>	National Security Council
<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OPANAL</b>	Organismo para la Proscripción de las Armas Nucleares en la América Latina y el Caribe (Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean)
<b>OPEC</b>	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
<b>PA</b>	Pacific Alliance
<b>PAN</b>	Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party)
<b>PCM</b>	Partido Comunista Mexicano (Mexican Communist Party)
<b>PDM</b>	Partido Democrático Mexicano (Mexican Democratic Party)
<b>PEMEX</b>	Petróleos Mexicanos (Mexican Petroleum)

<b>PIC</b>	Plan Integral de Cooperacion (Comprehensive Development Plan)
<b>PNR</b>	Partido Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Party).
<b>PND</b>	Plan Nacional de Desarrollo (National Plan of Development)
<b>PPP</b>	Plan Puebla Panama
<b>PRD</b>	Partido de la Revolucion Democratica (Democratic Revolution Party)
<b>PRI</b>	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party)
<b>PRM</b>	Partido de la Revolucion Mexicana (Mexican Revolution Party)
<b>PSUM</b>	Partido Socialista Unificado de Mexico (Mexican Socialist Unified Party)
<b>SEDENA</b>	Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional (Secretary of National Defense)
<b>SELA</b>	Latin American Economic System
<b>SEM</b>	Servicio Exterior Mexicano (Mexican Foreign Service)
<b>SEMAR</b>	Secretaria de la Marina (Secretary of Navy)
<b>SPP</b>	Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America
<b>SRE</b>	Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores (Foreign Affairs Secretary)
<b>TLCUEM</b>	Free Trade Agreement between Mexico and the European Union
<b>TPP</b>	Trans-Pacific Partnership
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNASUR</b>	Union de Naciones Suramericanas (Union of South American Nations)
<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollars
<b>USMCA</b>	United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement
<b>USSR</b>	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization
<b>WWII</b>	World War Two

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## CHAPTER 1

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# Introduction

At first glance, the term “principled pragmatism” seems to be an oxymoron. This could be true. However, the concept makes a lot of sense in the case of Mexican foreign policy. Officially, the government maintains that Mexico always bases its international links on normative and legal principles, such as Non-Intervention, Self-Determination, Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, among others. Nevertheless, on several occasions, the country has carried out external actions that reflect a pragmatic nature; but the government has tried to cover them with a “principled” discourse. Therefore, Mexico develops what might be called “principled pragmatism” in foreign policy.

Pragmatism, in foreign policy, means that a state acts, in the world realm, according to its own interests and particular objectives. In other words, the state acts rationally, as the realist paradigm of the international relations discipline points out. Idealism is when a nation behaves according to moral tenets. Therefore, this foreign policy is based on normative values, as the idealist paradigm indicates. Principled pragmatism would imply the use of both views in a particular combination.

In the Foreign Policy Analysis literature, there are several models and theories that are useful to explain foreign policy behavior, such as Realism and Liberalism and its variants, Marxism, Constructivism, the Two-level game Theory, the Level of Analysis Model, the Rational Actor Model, and so forth. However, this book proposes a different analytical framework,

which could be called “Principled Pragmatism.” Therefore, the main purpose of this book is to analyze Mexico’s foreign policy under this approach. However, the important question here is: Under what circumstances this nation adopts principled pragmatism? In other words: What are the external, domestic, and individual variables that determine when Mexico decides for that option? Thus, a central objective of this book is to identify those factors that explain Mexican principled pragmatism.

The main argument of the book is that Mexico projects a principled-pragmatic foreign policy due to external, domestic, and individual variables. First, sharing a border with a world power leads to the use of a realistic foreign policy but also a principled one. Pragmatism is needed to promote national interests and solve bilateral problems, and idealism is used as an instrument of bargaining power. Second, political, economic, and social realities also explain why Mexico adopts this policy. On the one hand, the government must enhance economic development, political stability, and social welfare. On the other, it must satisfy different interests of domestic groups and, at the same time, gain some legitimacy and political power. In this context, a principled-pragmatic option could be suitable for those aims. Third, actors have particular interests as well; thus, their preferences could impact decisions. Since Mexico’s political system is characterized by a strong presidentialism, the president’s interests, ambitions, and perceptions could also lead to a principled pragmatism according to specific circumstances.

In the case of Mexico, principled pragmatism has been used in different forms. For example, the Mexican government has resorted, in diverse circumstances, to a double track policy. On one hand, it has assumed an external position publicly and, on the other hand, has projected a different one in the private sphere. An example of this duality has been Mexico’s relationship with the United States. In certain occasions, particularly during the Cold War period, the Mexican government showed, in the public discourse, a nationalist and critical attitude toward Washington. However, Mexico had to collaborate, in private, with the United States to fight against communism, almost in secret to the Mexican public opinion. In other words, the government of Mexico openly and publicly rejects US interventionism but privately collaborates with its northern neighbor. The cooperative policy was based on geopolitical considerations. That is, Mexico had to cooperate with the United States in the context of the Cold War due to the geographical proximity and not to jeopardize the intense economic relation with the neighbor. However, its government tried to

cover those actions with a veil or idealism and nationalism. This policy is clearly a good example of what could be called “principled pragmatism.”

Mexican principled pragmatism is also related to the actors involved in the decision-making process. A constant feature in the Mexican diplomacy has been that, for the day-to-day issues, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs (SRE in Spanish) makes decisions in accordance with the traditional principles of Mexico’s foreign policy. However, in issues of high priority, the president makes decisions that can go beyond the principled framework. In other words, he leaves low-profile issues in the hands of the members of the Mexican Foreign Service (SEM in Spanish). But, on issues where the president is personally involved or interested, the decisions are made based on interests that prevail at a particular moment.

The use of principled pragmatism is linked to the nature of issues as well. For example, in economic matters, the Mexican government has maintained a position based primarily on immediate interests. In recent years, Mexican foreign policy has had a special emphasis on economic affairs. Key objectives are to promote trade and attract foreign investments. Therefore, in foreign policy matters, the government must use a more pragmatic view. In security issues, Mexico has applied some pragmatism to confront security threats. In other topics, such as migration or human rights, Mexico has used a principled stance since in these areas its bargaining power is limited.

The book is divided into ten chapters. The first one includes the theoretical framework. It contains a discussion on different approaches that have been used to explain foreign policy behavior. It also incorporates the definition of principled pragmatism. This analysis is based on the realist and idealist perspectives and other theoretical models. Finally, it includes the domestic, external, and individual variables that explain Mexico’s principled pragmatism in foreign policy.

The second chapter explains, using the principled-pragmatic notion, Mexico’s first steps in foreign policy in the first half of the nineteenth century. At the beginning, Mexico’s foreign policy was focused on achieving the recognition of the international community as a sovereign state, especially. At that moment, the main purpose was to guarantee national security and promote economic and social development. However, the nation faced two serious problems that affected its international bargaining power. The first one was the struggle between conservatives and liberals, who attempted to gain power using military force. The second problem was that the international environment was not favorable for Mexico.

Several world powers had many interests on the new state. For example, the United States desired Mexican territory; France and the United Kingdom wanted economic privileges; and Spain intended to recover the old colony. Later, Mexico faced war with the United States and France and lost almost half of its territory. These historical events settled the basis of a principled foreign policy.

Chapter three analyzes Mexico's foreign policy during the "Reform" period and under the Porfirio Diaz administration. From 1853 to 1867, the nation continued with the civil war between conservatives and liberals. Besides, economic trouble worsened the situation. Since President Benito Juarez halted paying external debt, France launched a second invasion and established a monarchical empire, supported by conservatives. With US aid, liberals could oust Maximilian of Habsburg. In 1876, Porfirio Diaz came to power. He could achieve political stability and, hence, economic growth. This time, the international environment was favorable and his administration could project a more effective foreign policy. For instance, Mexico could solve some border problems with its neighbors and attracted foreign investments. However, Diaz became a dictator and foreign capital dominated the key economic sectors of the nation. These two factors were a perfect formula for a revolution.

Chapter four analyzes Mexico's international relations during the Mexican Revolution at the beginning of the twentieth century. It describes the short period of President Francisco I. Madero and the US Invasion in 1914. The chapter also discusses the "Carranza" Doctrine and the 1917 Constitution, which were the doctrinal base for Mexico's principled and nationalist foreign policy after the Revolution. The chapter also examines the pragmatism in the administrations of Alvaro Obregon and Plutarco Elias Calles. Obregon accepted the Bucareli agreements, and Calles tried to change the legal nature of the oil companies. Both actions were deemed pragmatic because the first one was based on Obregon's political interests and the second was linked to economic benefit.

Chapter five studies Mexico's foreign policy during the administrations of Lazaro Cardenas and Manuel Avila Camacho. In his presidential term, Cardenas brought political stability, economic growth, and social cohesion to the nation. Therefore, Mexico enjoyed a high international bargaining power due to domestic stability and because the beginning of the Second World War represented a favorable context for Mexico. World powers focused their attention on the conflict and this granted Mexico a broader leeway in foreign affairs. The chapter explores the relation between a deep

nationalism and a principled policy *vis-à-vis* a renovated pragmatism of President Lazaro Cardenas. During his six-year term, his administration expropriated the oil foreign companies. At the same time, Cardenas sent money and arms to the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War, breaching the sacred tenet of Non-Intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries. This chapter also analyzes Mexico's foreign policy under the Second World War, when the Avila Camacho administration carried out a pragmatic cooperation with the United States to ward off the Nazi threat and to benefit Mexico's economy during the conflict.

Chapter six examines Mexico's foreign policy in the first years of the Cold War, particularly exploring the nation's position in the ideological confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. First, it examines the Miguel Aleman and Adolfo Ruiz administrations. Second, it highlights Mexico's relationship with the United States and Cuba after Fidel Castro took power in the island. The Cuban Revolution brought the Cold War to the American continent and changed the nature of Mexican foreign policy due to the external and domestic repercussions. The Adolfo Lopez Mateos administration had to use a principled-pragmatic approach to deal with the United States and appease internal groups. The votes in the Organization of American States (OAS) meeting to expel Cuba were clear examples of the principled pragmatism because Mexico needed to cooperate with the United States in its fight against communism but, at the same time, it had to defend its foreign policy principles for domestic concerns and avoid Fidel Castro from financing guerrilla groups in Mexico.

Chapter seven explains Mexico's foreign policy during the seventies and eighties, emphasizing the oil thrust and the financial crisis. In that period, Luis Echeverria implemented an activist foreign policy based on the "ideological pluralism," which meant that Mexico would establish diplomatic relationships with any nation regardless their ideological stance. In that time, Echeverria carried out a "*tercermundista*" (Third World) foreign policy, in which the country launched a close relationship with Third World nations. In the next presidential term, Jose Lopez Portillo based its foreign policy on the new international bargaining power that was provided by Mexican oil. Under this context, his administration called for a North-South summit, proposed a world energetic plan, provided oil to Caribbean and Central American nations, broke diplomatic relations with Nicaragua and sent money and arms to the Sandinistas in their fight against Anastasio Somoza, breaching the principle of Non-Intervention. Nonetheless, despite the oil thrust, the Mexican economy underwent, at

the beginning of the eighties, through a severe financial crisis due to the drop in the oil international price and the increase of external debt interests. Under this troubled economic situation, the Miguel de la Madrid administration had to change Mexico's economic development model to face the financial mismatch. From an import-substitution scheme, Mexico went to a neoliberal economic policy that emphasized free trade and foreign investments. Under these new economic circumstances, foreign policy had also shifted to be congruent with the new economic strategy.

Chapter eight studies the next presidential periods using the principled-pragmatism debate. In the Carlos Salinas de Gortari administration, Mexican government made pragmatic decisions. First, Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Second, it joined to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Third, it reinitiated diplomatic relations with the Vatican. These actions had a pragmatic nature because, for the first time, Mexico allied openly with Washington in an economic partnership. Besides, Mexico had to resign its membership of the Group of 77 (Third World countries) to be able to join the OECD. Finally, the restart of the relationship with the Vatican broke an old Mexican tradition of "state-church separation." Next president, Ernesto Zedillo, continued with the neoliberal policy and also signed different free trade agreements. However, his administration underwent one of the most severe financial crises in Mexico's history. Under these circumstances, Zedillo had to make pragmatic decisions to overcome the economic turbulence. For example, his government accepted the conditions established by Washington to bail out Mexico's economy, among them to deposit oil sales in a US banking account and shift Mexico's approach to Cuba. Once the problem was settled down, Zedillo administration signed a free trade agreement with the European Union.

Chapter nine analyzes Mexico's external behavior during the twenty-first century when the alternation in government began. In 2000, the seventy-year ruling party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), lost the presidential election before a conservative party, National Action Party (PAN). This event brought important domestic changes in Mexico's political system. Vicente Fox took power and tried to change Mexico's foreign policy according to his new vision. He promoted human rights and democracy abroad, endorsed a new multilateralism, and opted for a closer relationship with the United States. He also continued with the neoliberal

vision for external economic policy and advocated free trade and foreign investments. However, under his administration Mexico got involved in several diplomatic crises with some Latin American countries, especially with Cuba and Venezuela. Next President, Felipe Calderon who came from the same political party as Fox's, tried to continue with the foreign policy of his antecessor. However, his administration attempted to mend Mexico's relationships with Latin American countries. In his six-year term, Mexico faced a violent war against drug cartels. Therefore, security was a key topic in his administration. Finally, this chapter evaluates Enrique Peña's foreign policy when the PRI returned to power in 2012. At the beginning, domestic stability allowed some leeway in foreign affairs. However, two new circumstances changed the domestic and external panorama. First, there were several cases of corruption and human rights violations during Peña administration. Second, Donald Trump won the presidential election in 2016. These events impacted deeply on Peña's foreign policy.

The last chapter analyzes Mexico's foreign policy under a leftist administration. In 2018, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) won the presidential election. His triumph marked an important change in the political system because it was the first time a leftist party took power in Mexico's history. The fact was important in terms of international relations because AMLO promised to change the traditional neoliberal foreign policy. In his inauguration speech, he stated that, in his administration, Mexico's foreign policy will be based on its traditional principles. However, in his first three years, there were some continuity and a certain degree of pragmatism in Mexico's international relationships, particularly regarding the United States.

This book was writing for teaching purposes mainly. It is targeted basically to international relations or political science students. But it could be useful for researchers or people interested in foreign policy analysis. As for the methodology, the book uses quantitative and qualitative information. Each chapter presents, at the beginning, key variables that could explain Mexico's principled pragmatism. These variables are classified into three sets of indicators: domestic, external, and individual. Then, each chapter describes and explains Mexico's foreign policy actions in each historical period, using the principled-pragmatic notion. At the end of each chapter, there is a brief analysis to discuss results and findings.





## CHAPTER 2

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# “Principled Pragmatism”: An Approach to Study Foreign Policy

The purpose of this chapter is to present some of the theoretical approaches and analytical models that have been used to study and explain foreign policy. First, it discusses the Realism and Idealism paradigms since both contribute to the dialogue between pragmatism and a principled policy. Second, it describes some analytical models, such as the three levels of analysis, Graham Allison’s models, and Robert Putnam’s two-level game model. This chapter also defines the term “principled pragmatism.” Finally, this chapter identifies and explains the variables that will be used to analyze Mexico’s foreign policy. In this part, some assumptions of possible foreign policy options are made to establish the bases of analysis.

### THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND ANALYTICAL MODELS TO STUDY FOREIGN POLICY

Studying foreign policy is a difficult task because there are several variables that determine the decision process. Fortunately, the existing literature in the discipline of International Relations reveals several theoretical orientations to explain foreign policy. Realism and Idealism have become key paradigms to study this academic endeavor. Political theorists have also constructed some analytical models. Some of the most representative models are Graham Allison’s three models, the three levels of analysis originally proposed by Kenneth Waltz, and Robert Putnam’s double-level game.



*Realism in Foreign Policy: The Base of Pragmatism*

Pragmatism is closely related to Realism in foreign policy. The central realist idea is that states must act in foreign affairs according to national interests and national security. Pragmatism coincides with this view. As a political concept, Realism finds its origins in the writings of Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes. In their classic works, they laid the foundations of what later became the realist approach of the International Relations discipline.

Thucydides (471–400 BC) is considered one of the founding fathers of the realist theory. In his masterwork, *The Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides attempted to explore the actual causes of war. Not only did he explore the immediate motives of conflict, but he also studied its profound reasons. In his book, he suggests that the underlying motive of any conflict is the fear or perception of a possible shift in the balance of power.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is predictable that, if a nation is willing to shift the power equilibrium, then conflict would arise. In other words, the fear or perception of a possible change in the balance of power is a central cause of wars. The notion of balance of power then became a crucial element for the realist paradigm and a key variable to understand the international system. It also turned into a factor that explains pragmatism. Since the external context is anarchical by nature and the possibility of change is latent, states must resort to pragmatism to face those conditions, promote their national interests, and defend their national security.

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527) also contributed to the realist approach. His main work, *The Prince*, focused on the concepts of power, balance of power, the formation of alliances, and counter alliances. While his primary attention centered on what is known as national security, this philosopher reckoned that the survival of the state was paramount. One of the most controversial Machiavellian theses was the notion that “the end justifies the means,” which imposed power as a primary concern of any state. Under this consideration, even the use of military force would be justified to promote national interests or defend national security. For this reason, the vision of Machiavelli is highly pragmatic. For him, ethics and politics were divorced. Therefore, in his view, moral and normative tenets are not useful to achieve power.

<sup>1</sup>Paul Viotti and Mark Kauppi, *International Relations Theory* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), p. 36.

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) held a pessimistic view of human nature. His outstanding book, *The Leviathan*, centered on domestic politics and its purpose was to demonstrate the necessity of a centralized and strong authority. For him, men lived in a “state of nature,” which entailed a notion of “everyone against everyone.” Hobbes claimed that the world had no central government, nor any other social structure of self-control. His main contribution to the realist approach was the articulation of the anarchical condition of the world system due to the lack of a central authority.

Edward H. Carr was one of the contemporary authors who have also contributed to the realist vision. In his book, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919–1939*, he aimed at analyzing the underlying and significant causes of conflict and not the personal or immediate factors. As Thucydides did, Carr concluded that the most important cause of any conflict was the fear in a shift of the balance of power.<sup>2</sup> In the inter-war period as a context, Carr criticized Idealism as an effective approach since it failed to keep the peace in 1939, when Second World War broke out. However, he suggested that any foreign policy must be based on a combination of Idealism and Realism. Therefore, Carr inaugurated the debate between Realism and Idealism and set the basis for an inextricably intertwined principled pragmatism in foreign policy, values, and power.

After the Second World War, Hans Morgenthau wrote an influential book entitled *Politics among Nations, the Struggle for Power and Peace*. Since his purpose was to create an international relations theory, his work has been considered a key foundation of the realist image, which became the dominant approach during the Cold War. In his book, Morgenthau laid down a key realist assumption. Foreign policy is motivated by the concept of national interest defined in terms of power. In other words, states pursue power in foreign affairs. Therefore, world policy implies a struggle for power, and power will always be the immediate goal.<sup>3</sup>

Realists’ key assumptions are (1) states are the primary actors in the international system; (2) states are rational and unitary entities; (3) they reckon national interest in terms of power, whether as a means or an end; (4) the international system is anarchical by nature; (5) international

<sup>2</sup>Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919–1939* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 112.

<sup>3</sup>Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), pp. 12–22.

politics is a struggle for power; (6) the primary obligation of every state in an anarchical environment is to promote the national interest, defined as the acquisition of power; (7) under the anarchical nature of the international system, states need to acquire military capabilities enough to deter attack by potential enemies; (8) alliances might increase the ability of a state to defend itself; (9) international organizations or international law are not effective to keep peace, but balance of power could bring international order; (10) unilateral actions are more effective than multilateral policies when security issues are at stake.

Realism has set the basis for a pragmatic foreign policy. Under this notion, states must promote their national interest, protect national security, and enhance economic growth, as primary foreign policy aims. Pragmatism is also related to the idea of the acquisition of power. As realists put it, nations must struggle for power in the international arena. For them, normative principles are not helpful, in world politics, to gain power. Therefore, international organizations may not be effective to promote national interests. In an anarchical system, states must resort to military force if necessary, according to the realist perspective.

It has been argued that Mexico has not traditionally used a realistic approach in foreign policy. However, its diplomacy normally seeks to respond to national interests and solve world problems. Similarly, security issues have been a core objective in its international links in a historical perspective. In an anarchical environment, Mexico has sought to create alliances to counterbalance the heavyweight of the relationship with the United States. While the use of military force has been a rare option, on few occasions, Mexico has resorted to war for security concerns. Mexico is not a military power. That is why the nation must look for alternative sources of power. Principled pragmatism has been an excellent option to create soft power, which can increase bargaining power and be useful to achieve foreign policy goals.

### *Idealism in Foreign Policy: The Base of Principism*

Idealism is closely related to a principled foreign policy. The main idea is that states must conduct its international affairs based on normative and legal rules. This paradigm is derived from several schools of thought. This approach is old. It could be traced from the medieval Hugo Grotius' ideas. Influenced by the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), he was a seminal promoter of international law. Grotius' principal aim was to reduce bloodshed

in wars. Therefore, he tried to build a theory of international law that would create norms and principles that would “restrain and regulate war between various independent powers, including states.”<sup>4</sup> Grotius favored liberalism when he proposed free access to the sea for all nations. Another important promoter of Idealism was Immanuel Kant. Inspired by the Enlightenment, he wrote an influential piece of philosophy, his *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*. In this work, Kant recommended what nations must do to avoid war and promote peace. He pointed out that democratic governments would not go to war. Therefore, he supported democracy as an ideal political system.

After the First World War, idealists deemed that the old international structure of “balance of power” and secret military alliances failed to keep the world peace. Hence, a new international system based on “collective security” and “open diplomacy” was necessary.<sup>5</sup> US President Woodrow Wilson advocated these tenets in his famous “Fourteen Points” speech. He severely criticized the old international system and encouraged the creation of the League of Nations as an organization to bring peace and avoid war. Other authors that also contributed to the idealist notion were Alfred Zimmern, Goldsworthy Dickinson, and Norman Angell. They endorsed the foundation of world institutions and the creation of international norms to avoid war, further cooperation, and achieve peace.

Idealists hold different views of world reality. However, what associates them are their joint assumptions about international politics. Generally, they observe the world based on the following tenets. First, states must conduct their foreign policy according to international law. Second, the international community must create institutions to promote peace and prevent war. Third, nations must behave in world politics according to basic views, such as non-intervention, self-determination, sovereign equality of all states, peaceful settlement of international disputes, proscription of the threat or use of military force, and promotion of international peace and security. Moreover, in global problems, states must resort to collective or multilateral solutions rather than unilateral ones.

<sup>4</sup>Elizabeth Rosas, “Hugo Grocio, precursor del Derecho Internacional,” in Rafael Velazquez et al. (editors), *Los clásicos de las relaciones internacionales: Ideas y conceptos para la construcción teórica de la disciplina* (Mexico City: AMEI/CIDE/UABC, 2020).

<sup>5</sup>Chris Brown, *Understanding International Relations* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), p. 23.

In this context, Idealism set the basis for principism.<sup>6</sup> The main idea is that states must follow established principles in world affairs. If they apply norms of international law, then peace would be possible, and war would be evitable. In this context, diplomatic negotiation would be the paramount instrument in any situation. In other words, peaceful solutions to any conflict are potential if states have enough political will to do so. Moreover, a principled policy advances the idea that international organizations could foster cooperation to solve global problems, such as pandemics, climate change, poverty, migration, economic crises, violations of human rights, insecurity, social violence, and so forth.

It has been commonly argued that Mexican foreign policy is based on an idealistic perspective because it is grounded in (a) international principles, such as non-intervention, self-determination, legal equality of states, peaceful dispute settlement, and international cooperation; (b) norms of international law; (c) resolutions from worldwide organizations; and (d) legal doctrines, such as the Carranza, Estrada, Juarez, among others.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, Mexico implements a principled foreign policy. The factors that explain this position are the following. First, the historical experience was full of interventions, foreign invasions, and territorial loss. Thus, the government adopted a defensive and nationalist foreign policy to ward off those threats. Second, Mexico is not a military power; thus, a principled policy is an option to achieve its external objectives. Third, Mexico has been a pacifist nation; therefore, a principled policy is the best alternative

<sup>6</sup>In the context of this book, “principism” refers to a foreign policy based on principles. Principism and Idealism will be used as synonyms in the book.

<sup>7</sup>Existing literature reveals an extensive scholarship in this topic. See Ana Covarrubias, “Los principios y la política exterior de México,” in Jorge Schiavon et al, *En busca de una nación soberana: relaciones internacionales de México, siglos XIX y XX* (Mexico City: CIDE/SRE, 2006), pp. 387–422. Sergio Gonzalez, “La política exterior de principios en tiempos de la globalización,” in Jorge Eduardo Navarrete (coordinator), *La reconstrucción de la política exterior de México: Principios, ámbitos, acciones* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2006), pp. 99–137. Cesar Sepulveda, “Vigencia actual de los principios de la política exterior del Estado mexicano,” en *Relaciones Internacionales*, Nos. 26–27, FCPyS-UNAM, July–December 1979, pp. 5–18. Emilio O. Rabasa, “Los principios constitucionales de la política exterior de México en el nuevo contexto internacional,” in *Memoria del foro de consulta sobre los factores externos y el contexto internacional* (Mexico City: SRE, 1989), pp. 43–46. Jaime E. Tamayo, *Los principios de la política internacional de México* (Mexico City, University of Guadalajara, 1978) and *Los siete principios fundamentales de la política exterior de México* (Mexico City: PRI, 1993).

since the country does not get involved in wars easily. For the above reasons, the Mexican government sustains that its foreign policy is based on normative principles.

### *Analytical Models for Foreign Policy Analysis*

To explain the 1962 missile crisis, Allison created three explanatory models.<sup>8</sup> The first is the Rational Actor, which points out that the decision-making process is practically based on four steps. The first one is to set an objective when there is a specific problem or situation. The second step is to identify different courses of action. In the third step, decision-makers must analyze each alternative to identify advantages and disadvantages of each of them. The last step is to choose the option with the greatest advantages to achieve the objective. The Rational Actor model is closely linked to pragmatism because the main idea is to make decisions based on particular interests and concrete objectives.

The second Allison's model is the bureaucratic one. Here, the idea is that decisions are not necessarily rational, but they come from actors' preferences. In other words, each actor (ranging from the president, key advisors, legislators, army officials, diplomats, and governmental officials) tries to impose its point of view on the matter. In the end, the decision is reached by consensus among different perspectives. Finally, there is a commitment of each actor to attach to the decision even if its preference did not prevail. This model is also pragmatic since it is based on actor's preferences. Pragmatism is basically focused on actor's interests.

The third model is the organizational one. The approach is quite simple. Under any situation or emergency, there is a previously established Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). In this model, each actor is assigned specific functions based on an operating manual previously established. At first sight, the model seems to be idealistic because it is based on normative rules already set. But it is also pragmatic because the main idea is to defend national interests or preserve national security when there is a threat. Therefore, any action based on this model could be deemed as principled pragmatic.

The three levels of analysis suggest that main motivations for a foreign policy decision can be located at the systemic level (outside the borders),

<sup>8</sup> Graham Allison, *Essence of decision, Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (USA: Harper Collins, 1971).

at the state level (within national limits), or at the individual level (based on leaders' personal preferences).<sup>9</sup> In the first level, international system's characteristics and functioning are main elements that determine the decision-making process. Here, it is necessary to include the variables of balance of power and the pressure exerted by other actors. For instances, the contexts of the Cold War and US pressures on Mexico are two key factors that determine its foreign policy. The systemic level could lead to a pragmatic or a principled policy, depending on the conditions.

At the state level, the political system's type, the economic development's model, and socio-cultural traits have a significant impact on external decisions. In the case of Mexico, pressures of nationalistic and conservative groups, as well as the economic situation, significantly impact on the course of any foreign policy. These domestic conditions could lead either to a pragmatic or to a principled policy, depending on the particular situation.

Finally, the individual level of analysis suggests that personal preferences, perceptions, and ambitions of the leaders are variables that influence the decision-making process. In Mexico's case, since the president has ample powers in foreign affairs, it plays a key role in the decision process. Mexico's foreign policy could oscillate between pragmatism and Idealism depending on presidents' preferences.

Robert Putnam's theory of the Two-Level Game<sup>10</sup> posits that governments have a dilemma when making foreign policy decisions. On one hand, they must take into account domestic groups' interests. At the same time, they must consider external actors' interests. For Putnam, the process must be based on two criteria. The first one is that actions must seek to satisfy the interests of national groups. The second is that decisions also should consider foreign actors' interests to achieve an agreement. Therefore, this two-level game has a high content of pragmatism since any decision must satisfy domestic and external concerns at the same time, which sometimes could be highly difficult or sometimes contradictory. Domestic groups could have a specific interest that could be different from foreign actors. This game is the basis of Putnam's logic.

<sup>9</sup>Kenneth Waltz, *The Man, the State, and the War. A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

<sup>10</sup>Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," in Peter Evans, et. al., *Double-Edged Diplomacy* (United States: University of California Press, 1993).



Putnam argues that, in international negotiations, there are two levels. The first level is when a government gets in contact with an external counterpart to reach an agreement. At the second level, the same government consults with national interest groups to reach consensus on such agreement. Finally, the negotiation returns to the first level to ratify or make the necessary adjustments. The steps described above also represent the two-level game. But, in addition, Putnam argues that foreign policy is like playing on two chessboards at the same time. That is, there is an international board and a national one. Hence, the challenge is to play on two tracks at the same time to satisfy internal groups and reach an agreement with the external actor. This game is also called “double-edged diplomacy.”

These three analytical models are quite useful to explain principled pragmatism. First, Alisson’s approach offers the basis for rational decisions and actors’ preferences. These two elements are basic for a pragmatic foreign policy, in which interests, and security prevail. Second, the three levels of analysis provide the context to identify systemic, statal, and individual variables that could explain a principled foreign policy. Third, Putnam’s model is highly useful to explain Mexico’s principled pragmatism since the government plays with two boards at the same time: the domestic groups and external actors. On many occasions, the government has recurred to a double discourse. One that is based on nationalism and Idealism to appease internal groups and other to comply with other nation’s interests, particularly the United States. This double policy has been the core characteristic of Mexico’s principled pragmatism.

#### PRINCIPLED PRAGMATISM AS A THEORETICAL APPROACH FOR FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS

Principled pragmatism is not a comprehensive theory of International Relations, such as Realism, Idealism, or Constructivism. Rather, it is an analytical framework that can be used to describe and explain the foreign policy decision-making process. In general terms, it is a behavior that mixes pragmatic elements—that is, promotion of material and geopolitical interests—with moral and legal principles. In other words, principled pragmatism is the combination of a realistic foreign policy (based on interests) with an idealistic one (based on normative values). Apparently, the concept may represent an ideological contradiction. But the reality is that this mixture is not opposite, but complementary. For instance, some governments make decisions based on interests; but they declare that those



actions are based on principles. As said before, this is a central element of the principled-pragmatic notion.

Many international observers claim that between Idealism and Realism there is an irreconcilable antagonism. It is true that they are theoretically different, but they also share some assumptions. For instance, they coincide with the anarchical situation of the international system. Both consider the state as an important actor, though Realism emphasizes more its relevance. While strong countries might base their foreign policy on Realism, weak states must resort to Idealism. Under this consideration, Realism would be selfish, utilitarian, and opportunistic, that is, the politics of power and force. Idealism would be unselfish, moral, and based on values. According to T. A. Kozłowski:

On one hand, the politics of world powers is, somehow, idealist since they claim sacrifice to serve their own interests and ideals. Reciprocally, the politics of weak states does not aim at pursuing other's ideals and interests; on the contrary, their policy must be realistic if they want to assure their defense and realize their own interests. The distinction between Idealism and Realism in politics may refer both to ends and method. However, politics without Realism stops being politics. (...) Therefore, Idealism without pragmatism is politically harmful.<sup>11</sup>

In other words, this author suggests that a successful policy in world affairs would require a combination of idealistic and realistic assumptions. Edward H. Carr also implied the same idea when he wrote:

Any sound political thought must be based on elements of both utopia and reality. Where utopianism has become a hollow and intolerable sham, which serves merely as a disguise for the interests of the privileged, the realist performs an indispensable service in unmasking it. But pure Realism can offer nothing but a naked struggle for power, which makes any kind of international society impossible.<sup>12</sup>

Strictly speaking, pure Idealism will lead nowhere. Similarly, a policy based exclusively on pure Realism would be chaotic. Therefore, states

<sup>11</sup>T. A. Kozłowski, *Nuevos potenciales de la política mundial* (Buenos Aires: Pleamar, 1967), p. 29–30.

<sup>12</sup>Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 93.

must combine both perspectives for a more effective foreign policy, in which objectives are achieved. In this context, pragmatism is closely linked to Jeremy Bentham’s utilitarian economic perspective. For this author, any policy is morally right if it promotes “happiness or pleasure.” In other words, an action must be utilitarian, and the outcomes must benefit society. In foreign policy, this idea would translate into the pursuit of national interest, such as economic growth, security, and social development.

Pragmatism is also related to the Anglo-American political philosophy that was developed in the 1870s. As a political conception, it was a new approach toward European classical thought. According to Karla Valverde, this philosophy was a new conception of the world and a reconstruction of culture. “This conception attempted to breach old European categories through the application of two basic principles: Idealism and Realism.”<sup>13</sup> Therefore, this author also suggests that the combination of these two paradigms constitutes a sound formula for public policy.

According to Jose Luis Orozco, pragmatism was born in the United States as an interdisciplinary cognition philosophy, in which the academic efforts of mathematicians, philosophers, psychologists, teachers, theologians, lawyers, and others converged in order to respond to the necessities of US national development. This development was hindered by “closed systems” of thoughts that were developed in Europe. Seeking for a “plastic philosophy,” US pragmatism evolved into an institutional, entrepreneurial, and academic net that achieved national ascendancy and later world hegemony. In the realm of international relations, pragmatism removed old categories derived from idealistic and materialistic philosophies to reformulate old notions of state and democracy and to introduce new concepts such as pressure politics, interest groups, and pluralism.<sup>14</sup>

Pragmatism as a philosophy of domestic policy has been widely studied.<sup>15</sup> However, there are few works that examine pragmatism on foreign

<sup>13</sup>Karla Valverde, “La politica social en la era pragmatica,” in Jose Luis Orozco and Ana Luisa Guerrero (editors), *Pragmatismo y Globalismo, una aproximacion a la politica contemporanea* (Mexico City: Fontamara-UNAM, 1997), p. 119.

<sup>14</sup>Jose Luis Orozco and Ana Luisa Guerrero (editors), *op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.

<sup>15</sup>The main expositors of Anglo-American pragmatism are William James and John Dewey. However, there are also other authors who have contributed to the development of this thought. See Edward C. Moore, *American Pragmatism: Pierce, James, and Dewey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961); Milton R. Konvitz and Gail Kennedy (editors), *The American Pragmatists* (New York: Meridian Books, 1960); Darnell Rucker, *The Chicago Pragmatists* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1960); and Amelie Rorty,

policy. An important contribution was made by Cecil Crabb. This author was one of the first to write about this subject. He acknowledges that pragmatism is a highly “variegated,” “elusive,” and “subjective” concept. However, Crabb reveals that there is a reasonably clear connotation of the concept. For Crabb, a pragmatic policymaker may be one who observes that national policies are guided by a myriad of different influences and motivations, or one whose actions are dictated by immediate challenges; or one who avoids general tenets to solve problems and decides on the merits of each case, or one who is able to design policies in the light of feasible alternatives available.<sup>16</sup>

Crabb also suggests that pragmatism is a special blend of Idealism and Realism. He resorts to the ideas of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson and claims that their thoughts were always a particular mixture of the highest expressions of Idealism and the precepts of political Realism. Crabb summarizes the thought of pragmatism into the following principles:

- 1) Pragmatic thinkers must be engaged in solving problems of human society.
- 2) Pragmatists use the experimental method as the most reliable form of scientific inquiry.
- 3) They believe that experience is the most useful and reliable tool for testing and verifying different realities.
- 4) They are skeptical about the validity of closed philosophical systems that hamper the search of truth.
- 5) They consider the human mind as part of the social environment. The relationship between mind and environment determines the meaning of truth.
- 6) They observe the environment as essentially plastic or subject to human control and transformation.

*Pragmatic Philosophy: An Anthology* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1966). In Mexico, the best scholar of this school of thought has been Jose Luis Orozco. See “Las razones del pragmatismo,” in *Criticas de la economia politica*, Vol. 18 and 19 (Mexico City: El Caballito, 1981); “Pragmatismo y globalismo: El primer ensayo,” in Jose Luis Orozco and Ana Luisa Guerrero (editors), *op. cit.*; and *El Estado pragmatico* (Mexico City: Fontamara-UNAM, 1997).

<sup>16</sup>Cecil Crabb, *The American Approach to Foreign Policy: A Pragmatic Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 6-7.

- 7) They believe in the possibility and desirability of beneficial change in all human spheres. For them, change is intrinsically natural.
- 8) They are convinced that new truths are acquired when man is challenged to solve concrete and immediate problems.
- 9) They deem that the scientific search for truth and its application is a cooperative social endeavor.
- 10) They advocate the Western tradition of liberal democracy.

Crabb inclines his analysis to the idealistic tradition as he emphasizes the social well-being, the democratic principles, and human institutions. He does not pay too much attention to the realist connotation of pragmatism. However, his contribution was relevant for exploring pragmatism on Mexican foreign policy.

Since the interest in studying the concept has been wide, other authors have also contributed to analyze foreign policy under principled pragmatism.<sup>17</sup> In 2016, the European Union (EU) outlined the concept of “Principled pragmatism” as a new global strategy.<sup>18</sup> According to this new vision, the EU must “adapt to a ‘rapidly changing environment’, and insert a dose of political Realism in its foreign policy while continuing to uphold its principles.”<sup>19</sup> In other words, the EU “has attempted to bridge the existing gaps between values and principles, on the one hand, and interests on the other.”<sup>20</sup> The declaration triggered academic interest in the concept because expectations of how the EU would implement this

<sup>17</sup> See for instance: Fabienne Bossuyt, Peter van Elsuwege (editors), *Principled Pragmatism in Practice: The EU's Policy towards Russia after Crimea* (Leiden: Nijhof, 2021). Angela Pennisi di Floristella, “EU Trade Policy: Principles versus Pragmatism. The Cases of Vietnam and Cambodia,” in *The International Spectator*, Vol. 56, Issue. 2, 2021. Jack Snyder, and Leslie Vinjamuri, “Principled Pragmatism and the Logic of Consequences,” in *International Theory* 4, No. 3, 2012, 434-448. Ana Juncos, “Resilience as the new EU foreign policy paradigm: a pragmatist turn?” in *European Security*, 26:1, 2017, pp. 1-18. Gergana Tzvetkova, “Principled pragmatism as an emergent US foreign policy tradition,” in *Diplomacy*, 21, 2018.

<sup>18</sup> See the document *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, 2016, available at: <https://bit.ly/3tcJuSG>

<sup>19</sup> Iulian Mihalache, “Principled pragmatism in EU foreign policy: A return to Realpolitik or rapprochement with Russia,” Centre for Geopolitics & Security in Realism Studies, 2016, available at <http://cgsrs.org/publications/80>

<sup>20</sup> Silvia Colombo, “Principled Pragmatism” *Reset: For a Recalibration of the EU's Diplomatic Engagement with the MENA Region*, Istituto Affari Internazionali papers, September 2021, p. 1.

policy grew. In the case of Mexico, there are few studies that analyze foreign policy under this notion.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to deepen the research in this perspective.

In sum, principled pragmatism is a useful tool to study and explain foreign policy since it combines elements of Realism and Idealism at the same time. The reasoning here is that a blend of concrete interests and normative values can improve diplomatic capacities. Therefore, this particular practice may help achieve foreign policy objectives. Thus, under this mix, foreign policy could be more effective. In this context, principled pragmatism is also a foreign policy instrument. States could resort to this alternative to reach external goals and solve global problems.

In practice, most states use this mix in their foreign relations. For instance, the United States includes values, such as democracy and human rights, though this nation resorts frequently to military force to promote its interests in the world. However, the factors that explain why a country applies this policy may vary from one case to another. In this context, the next section tries to identify the variables that determine Mexico's principled pragmatism.

#### PRINCIPLED PRAGMATISM IN MEXICAN FOREIGN POLICY: VARIABLES, ASSUMPTIONS, AND METHODOLOGY

In the case of Mexico, principled pragmatism has manifested itself in different ways. There are different variables that might explain whether Mexico adopts a sole principled stance, applies a pragmatic policy, or resorts to principled pragmatism. The variables can be classified into three sets according to the three levels of analysis. The first group includes quantitative and qualitative statal variables (see Table 2.1). This part involves

<sup>21</sup> See Ana Covarrubias, "Mexico's Foreign Policy under The Partido Accion Nacional: Promoting Democracy, Human Rights, and Interests," in Gian Luca Gardini y Peter Lambert (editors), *Latin American Foreign Policies Between Ideology and Pragmatism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 213-234. Alberto Van Klaveren, "Mexico: principios y pragmatismo en la politica exterior," in *Las politicas exteriores latinoamericanas frente a la crisis* (Argentina: GEL, 1985), pp. 39-70. Ana Rosa Suarez Arguello, *Pragmatismo y principios. La relacion conflictiva entre Mexico y Estados Unidos, 1810-1942* (Mexico City, Instituto Mora, 1998). Rafael Velazquez, "Pragmatismo Principista: La Politica Exterior de Mexico," in *Revista de Relaciones Internacionales de la UNAM*, Nos. 120 and 121, September 2014–April 2015. Rafael Velazquez, "El 'Pragmatismo Principista' de la Politica Exterior de Mexico en los Votos sobre Cuba en la OEA (1962-1964)," in *Foro Internacional*, Vol. LXI. No. 3, 245, 2021, pp. 687-765.

**Table 2.1** Statal variables

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Variations</i>	<i>Expected policy</i>
<b>Political</b>	<i>Electoral result</i>	Ample victory	Pragmatism
		Narrow result	Principled
	<i>Timing</i>	Beginning and last part	Principled
		In the middle	Principled pragmatism
	<i>Party ideology</i>	Left-wing	Principled
		Right-wing	Pragmatism
		Center-wing	Principled pragmatism
	<i>Stability</i>	High	Pragmatism
		Low	Principled
<b>Economic</b>	<i>Model of development</i>	Open	Pragmatism
		Close	Principled
	<i>Economy</i>	Strong	Pragmatism
		Weak	Principled pragmatism
<b>Social</b>	<i>Social cohesion</i>	High	Pragmatism
		Low	Principled
<b>International bargaining power</b>		High	Pragmatism
		Low	Principled pragmatism
<b>National interest and foreign policy objectives</b>		Economic issues	Pragmatism
		Security issues	Principled pragmatism
		Social and political issues	Principled
		Legal issues	Principled
<b>National identity</b>		History	Principled
		Latin Americanism	Principled
		United States	Principled
			pragmatism

six domestic factors: (1) political, (2) economic, (3) social, (4) international bargaining power, (5) national interest and foreign policy objectives, and (6) national identity. The political factor includes four items. The first one is the presidential electoral results. Here, there are two variations: ample victory or narrow result. The assumption is that, if the president-elect achieves an unquestionable triumph, then it is possible that he could adopt a pragmatic policy since he obtained democratic legitimacy and there is no political polarization. If the result is very narrow, the option could be a principled policy due to the potential divergence. Then, the new president could resort to Idealism to gain legitimacy or appease domestic groups and reduce polarization. However, the option could vary depending on domestic and external conditions and president's personal preferences. For collection of data, the electoral results will be obtained from the National Electoral Institute (INE in Spanish).

The second item is timing, which refers to the stage of the *sexenio* (six-years term of the president). It could be possible that, at the beginning of the administration, the president would adopt a principled foreign policy since he is barely taking control. It is also possible that, at the end of the term, the outgoing president would also implement a principled policy since he has less power and prefers to leave high-profile decisions to the next administration. In the middle of the *sexenio*, the administration could combine a principled or pragmatic foreign policy according to domestic and external conjunctures. Party ideology could also be significant. It has been argued that left-wing parties are normally inclined to project a principled foreign policy. Right-wing parties could opt for a more pragmatic stance.<sup>22</sup> Center-wing political institutions could resort to a principled pragmatism if it is convenient. In the case of Mexico, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) considered itself as a center-leftist political party. It is highly probable that this fact explains why PRI governments recurred commonly to principled pragmatism. Finally, the stability of the political system could also impact the choice. If there is a high level of stability (absence of high polarization or civil war, strong institutions, and pacific transition of the Presidency), the conditions are suitable for a pragmatic policy. Stability could strengthen Mexico's foreign policy capacities and, under this situation, a realist stance could be possible. However, if the

<sup>22</sup>Federico Merke and Diego Reynoso, "Dimensiones de política exterior en América Latina según juicio de expertos," in *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 48, No. 185, 2016, pp. 107–130.

stability is low, the assumption is that the nation must apply a principled policy since the government must focus its attention to solve domestic problems; thus, foreign affairs become a secondary matter.

In the economic sphere, there are two variables. The first one is the model of development. If Mexico adopts an open scheme (free trade), then it is probable that pragmatism would be the preference. If the model is closed (protectionism), then a principled alternative could prevail. The second element is the strength of economy. If it is strong (variables would be GDP growth, inflation and unemployment rates, external debt, trade, and foreign investments), conditions are appropriate for pragmatism. If economy is weak, then principled pragmatism would be required. It is difficult that sole Idealism could resolve severe economic problems. In this case, the information will be gathered from National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) and other sources.

The third factor is social. The only item here is social cohesion. The assumption is that, if there is high degree of unity (absence of political polarization) and the society backs the government (presidential approval rate and congressional support), then the president could go for a pragmatic position because there is no polarization, and any important decisions could be supported by the population or the Legislative power. But, if there is low social cohesion, a principled foreign policy could help to reduce polarization since Idealism generates domestic consensus among national groups. Congress could also ratify a principled decision since Mexican lawmakers normally agree with this kind of policies. But, in some cases, a president could resort to pragmatism when there is low social cohesion if other variables emerged. For example, when the economy is at stake, pragmatism could be an option regardless of the level of unity.

The next factor is the international bargaining power. If it is high (political stability, strong economy, social cohesion, and favorable external conditions), then pragmatism is possible because the nation counts on material elements to achieve objectives. Under a high level of international bargaining power, Mexico could even impose conditions on other nations to negotiate an agreement. Nonetheless, if this kind of power is low (political instability, weak economy, social polarization, and an unfavorable external scenario), then Idealism could be the choice. However, it is possible that at any moment Mexico could have a high international bargaining power but opted for a principled policy and vice versa. It could depend on the president's personal preferences or other variables.



National interest and objectives are also determining factors that influence foreign policy. If the central issue is economic, then pragmatism is a possible option. Key issues could be growth, trade, external debt, and foreign investments. If security is the topic, then principled pragmatism could prevail. In the case of external threats, sole Idealism could not work out. Then, a dose of pragmatism would be useful to protect national security. Security issues include drug trafficking and military threats from abroad. If the national interest and objectives focus on social, political, or legal issues, then a principled stance could be the normal option. Social and legal topics could include migration, human rights, environment, and democracy, among others.

Finally, the national identity is a compelling factor in foreign policy matters. For example, constructivists argued that a fundamental motivation for external decisions is the national identity. They affirm that the national interest is constructed from identity elements. The assumptions are that, if the issue-area involves historical matters, it is probable that Mexico could embrace an idealist stance. As Mexico has had a historical experience full of interventions, invasions, and loss of territory, it is expected that the government uses traditional tenets in foreign affairs. If Latin America is involved in the agenda, then the administration in turn could apply Idealism since Mexico identifies itself with the Latin American culture and there are several cultural similarities, such as history, language, religion, and social customs. Traditionally, Mexico has projected a policy of cooperation and solidarity towards this region. In the case of United States, there are not many cultural similarities with Mexico, but both share a border and have common problems. Therefore, different administrations have resorted to principled pragmatism to deal with the northern neighbor.

In the systemic level, four factors will be considered (see Table 2.2). The first one is balance of power. The assumption is that, if the international system is favorable (low polarization, absence of invasions, stable international economy, and absence of deep conflicts), then Mexico could adopt a pragmatic foreign policy. With an optimal external condition, Mexico could increase its international bargaining power and easily achieve foreign policy objectives. Nevertheless, if the balance of power is not favorable (high international polarization, international conflicts, economic crisis, and interventions), then Idealism would be the best option because Mexico would need a defensive foreign policy. However, the Second World War and the Cold War were favorable for Mexico because

Table 2.2 External variables

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Variations</i>	<i>Expected policy</i>
<b>Balance of power</b>	<i>Favorable</i>	Principled pragmatism
	<i>Unfavorable</i>	Principled
<b>Pressure from other states</b>	<i>High pressure</i>	Principled pragmatism
	<i>Low pressure</i>	Pragmatism
	<i>Leftist-wing states</i>	Principled
	<i>Right-wing states</i>	Pragmatism
	<i>Combination right and leftist</i>	Principled pragmatism
<b>Geopolitics and regions</b>	<i>United States</i>	Principled pragmatism
	<i>Latin America</i>	Principled
	<i>Other regions</i>	Combination depending on the topic and domestic and external factors
<b>International organizations</b>	<i>Economic and financial</i>	Pragmatism
	<i>Security</i>	Principled pragmatism
	<i>Social</i>	Principled

world powers paid more attention to the conflict and the Mexican government had a broader leeway in foreign policy matters.

The second factor is the pressure exerted by other states. In the case of Mexico, geopolitics has permanently marked its foreign policy. The immediate vicinity with the United States has determined Mexico's behavior in foreign affairs. The argument here is that when Washington applies high pressure toward the southern neighbor, Mexican foreign policy is limited. Therefore, principled pragmatism would be needed to counterbalance the weight of the bilateral relation with the United States. However, when the pressure is low, the nation could then adopt a pragmatic stance since its leeway is wider. If there are other actors involved, then the assumption would be as follows. If it is a leftist-wing state, then Mexico would apply a principled strategy. For example, Mexico has traditionally used this policy with Cuba, Venezuela, and other cases. If it is a right-wing state, pragmatism could be an option. However, when the issue-area involves both

wings, then principled pragmatism would prevail. The clear example of this assumption is the case of the Cuba exclusion from Organization of American States (OAS) in 1962. Since the formula combined the United States (right-wing) and Cuba (leftist-wing) at the same time, then Mexico needed to apply principled pragmatism to satisfy both countries and avoid conflict.<sup>23</sup>

The third factor is geopolitics and regions. In short, Mexico normally uses principled pragmatism when the United States is involved. If Latin America is the core issue-area, then Idealism could be the alternative. For other regions (Europe, Asia, and Africa), the choice would depend on different variables, such as the matter, personal preferences, and domestic and international conditions. In these cases, a combination could be expected. Finally, the last systemic factor is the international organization. Traditionally, Mexico has projected a principled foreign policy regarding global institutions. However, when it comes to a financial organization, pragmatism would be an accurate option, especially when there are economic difficulties at home. As has been said, bare Idealism could hardly resolve economic crises. Therefore, Mexico needs to implement pragmatism to face this kind of challenges. In security international organizations, principled pragmatism could be a good option. Equally, external threats cannot be overcome with mere Idealism. But, as it is a world organization, Mexico also needs a dose of Idealism in these cases. In social international organizations, the logic dictates that Idealism would prevail. However, as has been said previously, these assumptions are not constant. They could vary depending on other combination of variables.

Finally, the last factors are inserted in the individual level of analysis (see Table 2.3). The first actor is the president himself. In the case of Mexico, the Constitution grants ample formal powers to the president in foreign affairs. On one hand, article 89 establishes that the president is in charge of “directing” Mexico’s international relations. On the other, article 76 points out the Senate must “analyze” the president’s foreign policy. There is a huge semantic difference between “directing” and “analyzing.” In short, the president has the power to make decisions without Senate’s consent in many cases. Senators can only approve treaties, ratify diplomatic appointments, and authorize to send military troops abroad. In

<sup>23</sup> Rafael Velazquez, “El ‘Pragmatismo Principista’ de la Política Exterior de México en los Votos sobre Cuba en la OEA (1962-1964),” in *Foro Internacional*, Vol. LXI. No. 3, 245, 2021, pp. 687–765.

**Table 2.3** Individual and group actors

<i>Actor</i>	<i>Variations</i>	<i>Preferred policy</i>
<b>President</b>	<i>Highly interested and high-profile issues</i>	Pragmatism
	<i>Low interested and low-profile issues</i>	Principled
<b>Foreign Affairs Secretary and SEM</b>	<i>Highly interested and high-profile issues</i>	Pragmatism
	<i>Low interested and low-profile issues</i>	Principled
<b>Pressure groups</b>	<i>Right-wing</i>	Pragmatism
	<i>Leftist-wing</i>	Principled
	<i>Combination</i>	Principled pragmatism

Source: Own elaboration.

other issue-areas, the president has all the power to make any decision. Therefore, in foreign policy matters, there is not a check and balance system. Besides, the Mexican political system is characterized by a highly strong presidentialism. That is, the president has informal power to dominate the political scenario. Under this consideration, the president's interests in international relations, perceptions, ambitions, and other personal variables could greatly impact in foreign policy decisions. Therefore, the notion of pragmatism or Idealism would depend on the president.

The assumptions are as follows. On one hand, if the president is highly involved and interested, and it comes to a high-profile issue,<sup>24</sup> pragmatism could be an alternative. It would depend on the issue and the domestic and external conditions. However, if pragmatism was the choice, the president could cover his decision with a principled discourse. That is, he would declare that the decision was based on Mexico's principles, even though it was really pragmatic. This is the doubled game that is depicted by the

<sup>24</sup>The degree of interest would be measured in the inauguration speech and the number of international trips that were carried out by the president. If the number is high, it is evident that the interest was high. The information will be collected from several sources, speeches, and documents.

Putnam's two-level game. The fact could represent a contradiction, but it is really what principled pragmatism is all about. On the other hand, if he is not highly interested, it is likely that the president delegates the decision to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs (SRE in Spanish) or to the Mexican Foreign Service (SEM in Spanish). If so, Idealism could be highly expected since these institutions normally adopt and defend principled positions in world politics. For the second factor, assumptions are similar. If the Chancellor is highly interested in the topic, pragmatism could be the choice. If he is not, it is more probable that Idealism would be applied. However, in this area, the Secretary and the SEM follow president's instructions and normally obey and apply the orders.

Lastly, other elements that determine Mexico's foreign policy are domestic groups. On several occasions, external decisions are oriented to satisfy domestic interests, as Putnam points out. In the case of Mexico, a special characteristic is that many times those interests are divided. For instance, on one side, right-wing groups (such as entrepreneurs, conservative political parties, and church) pressure the government to adopt pragmatic decisions, especially in economic issues and in anti-communist topics. On the other, leftist-wing groups (such as workers, leftist political parties, nationalistic associations, some students, and intellectuals) prefer a principled foreign policy. They normally demand that the government show autonomy from Washington, respect Mexico's views, protect Mexicans abroad, and defend the causes of leftist-wing nations, such as Cuba. For the Mexican government, this policy helped construct domestic consensus. Thus, the group in power could have more control in the political system, get legitimacy,<sup>25</sup> and consolidate its power. Therefore, this principled policy also had a high ingredient of pragmatism since it was carried out for political interests. This could be classified as realist because the obtention of power was at the core, as this paradigm points out. Nonetheless, when both groups are interested in the same issue at the same time, the tendency could be the use of a principled pragmatism. The best case that illustrates this assumption is when OAS wanted to expel Cuba in 1962. Conservative sectors pressured the administration of Adolfo Lopez Mateos to vote in favor to show an anti-communist face. However,

<sup>25</sup>For almost seventy years, PRI won the presidential election every six years. In most of the cases, the government resorted to fraudulent mechanisms to win the election. Since it did not obtain democratic legitimacy in the polls, the government used the principled foreign policy to gain it.

nationalistic groups defended the opposition vote. In the end, the Lopez Mateos administration abstained their vote. This is a clear example of a principled pragmatism. With this election, Lopez Mateos was trying to satisfy both domestic groups at the same time, which is a central argument of Putnam’s logic of the two-level game.

In the next chapters, these variables will be applied to analyze Mexico’s foreign policy in each historical period, providing empirical evidence for each assumption. In the nineteenth century and part of the twentieth, quantitative data will not be supplied since it is not available. Therefore, the analysis will be qualitative basically. From 1934 to 2018, statistical information will be provided. The methodology is as follows. In the first part of each chapter, the set of variables will be presented according to the three levels of analysis: systemic, statal, and individual factors. Then, key actions of Mexico’s foreign policy will be described in each historical period. Finally, at the end of each chapter a brief analysis will be provided, which summarizes key findings and conclusions.