



# Mexico Election Report

Claudia Sheinbaum elected president in a landslide

General elections took place in Mexico on Sunday, June 2. The candidate of the ruling coalition, Claudia Sheinbaum, won in a landslide. She will serve a single, six-year term, beginning on October 1.

Six years ago, President López Obrador beat the combined total of the current opposition coalition by just over 14 points. Sheinbaum's expected margin of 28-30 points is unprecedented in modern Mexico. According to preliminary figures, the ruling coalition seems to have secured two-thirds majorities in both houses of Congress. This would enable constitutional reforms without negotiation with the opposition. The ruling coalition also won seven of the nine state governorships up for grabs. They will head 24 of the 32 states.

## **Will there be a reckoning for institutions?**

A new Congress will be sworn in on September 1, one month ahead of the presidential transition.

López Obrador will get one month with a supermajority. He may get to push through constitutional amendments he has long insisted on, placing autonomous institutions under political control and making Supreme Court Justices be elected by popular vote. The president-elect would find checks and balances in Mexico re-set before taking office.

Sheinbaum will inherit this power — and be able to place her own stamp on the reform agenda.

## **Could we still see a turn to pragmatism?**

Sheinbaum has simultaneously sought to underscore her credentials as a climate scientist committed to technically-sound policies and to align herself with López Obrador's political and ideological decisions. This duality clearly proved a very effective campaign tool, but the balance could be much harder to maintain in office.

The energy sector may be the main test. Sheinbaum has doubled down on giving state-owned companies a leading role but will need to attract investment, as energy infrastructure development is visibly lagging.

### How will policies be developed and adopted?

Policymaking in the current administration has been mostly driven by impromptu answers in the President’s daily morning press briefings. The government’s structure was severely pared down.

Sheinbaum is widely seen as a disciplined and methodic leader. The mandate she got at the polls seems strong enough for her to reprioritize expertise and perhaps attract capable, non-partisan individuals into public service, and to restart the dormant inter-agency processes on polarization or attempts to build up an inclusive new national consensus will define her legacy.

### What’s next in the social agenda?

Sheinbaum will be Mexico’s first female president — an overdue milestone. One of her core campaign promises was to expand social programs, currently based on direct cash transfers.

However, she will face fiscal constraints. Spending will have to be cut back after this year’s fiscal deficit was the largest in at least a quarter century. Other challenges loom, such as the short-term debt burden of the state-owned oil company, Pemex, which has led Sheinbaum to speak of an imminent “refinancing.”

Governance issues add to the tension. Rule of law is weak, and insecurity and violence are at very high levels. And, of course, political polarization remains.

*“We will respect business freedom and will promote and facilitate with honesty private investment, national and foreign, that supports social welfare and regional development, always caring for the environment”*

— President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum

### Will Mexico look to North America (and beyond)?

Sheinbaum will inherit a reduced global footprint and tensions with various governments, including Spain, Perú, Ecuador, Argentina, and Israel. Yet, she will also find partners around the world eager to regain Mexico as an active and constructive player on global issues. As a candidate, she described nearshoring as “great opportunity” and declared that “with either President

Trump or President Biden we’re going to have good relations.”

Foreign policy definitions will have to come quickly. Incoming officials will jump into the fray just one month before election day in the United States. Moreover, the G20 summit and climate COP29 will both take place in November.

With a historically strong mandate, Sheinbaum will get a unique opportunity to redefine the relationship with key ‘stakeholders’, or societal actors. Whether she doubles down on polarization or attempts to build up an inclusive new national consensus will define her legacy.

**Figure 1 — Projected composition of Congress (ranges)**

	Chamber of Deputies		Senate	
	Minimum seats	Maximum seats	Minimum seats	Maximum seats
<b>Ruling coalition</b>	346	380	66	88
<b>Opposition coalition</b>	94	129	34	43
<b>Movimiento Ciudadano</b>	23	32	4	8

### Stakeholder Positioning

Critics of Sheinbaum have accused her of mimicking López Obrador. She has indeed been careful not to distance herself from a popular president, but her positioning with most groups within society is quite different.

**Political parties:** Just as being pro-López Obrador had been the defining feature of the ruling coalition, being anti-López Obrador had defined the opposition. New cleavages will inevitably emerge as he moves on to private life — and as the opposition deals with the fallout of their historic defeat.

**Private sector:** Six years ago, the biggest question was how business leaders would mend fences with a president-elect with whom they had openly clashed. This time around, effective communication channels do exist. Sheinbaum has acknowledged the need to broaden areas of collaboration.

**NGOs:** Public funding dried up and Mexican civil society organizations had to adjust their financing structures and operational priorities to survive. Most clashed with the

government and remain critical of it. Whether the NGO ecosystem doubles-down on the watchdog model or reclaims an ‘ideas lab’ function remains to be seen.

**Academia:** An unexpected twist of the López Obrador administration was his open confrontation with academics — a traditional left-wing lynchpin. The president-elect has mended fences with some, but much work remains.

**Media:** Traditional outlets were overwhelmingly critical of Lopez Obrador. As they recalibrate their editorial lines, some will see the election’s result as a strong societal signal. Niche digital outlets are likely to double-down on their core viewers. With the impact of the ‘mañanera’ likely paired down, there will be room for more voices.

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