

UC San Diego

SCHOOL OF GLOBAL POLICY AND STRATEGY  
Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies



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# Democratic Integrity: Mexico 2024



# Presentation

**"Over- and under-representation affects the equal right to vote of each voter and the equal right to representation of each inhabitant. It also has political consequences in governance, altering the weight and influence of the districts in the public policy decision-generating advantages in favor of some political parties or ideological movements to the detriment of others."  
– Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Electoral Dictionary.**

**This newsletter issue on "Democratic Integrity: Mexico 2024" explains how electoral districts are designed to allow a similar representation of the population in each district, without political biases.**

**In addition, it provides information on the precautionary measures that the National Electoral Institute has issued to the President of Mexico at the beginning of the 2023-2024 federal electoral process.**

**The equal right to vote is at the basis of democratic life, therefore it is of extreme importance that each vote has a similar weight to determine political representation.**

**The Dictionary of Electoral Law of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights states: "One of the basic principles of representative democracy is that of the equal vote: each person has a vote and every vote has equal value. This principle is consistent with the basic standards and values of democracy, such as its inclusive nature, citizen equality and universal suffrage. For the vote to be equal, its value/weight should not vary significantly based on the district in which each person votes."**

**In Mexico, popular representation is expressed in the composition of the Chamber of Deputies and in the local congresses of the 32 states while the Senate reflects the federal pact. Deputies are elected under two principles: (1) plurality vote in each electoral district and (2) proportional representation.**

# Mexico without “Gerrymandering”

In Mexico, the elections of June 2, 2024 will renew the Chamber of Deputies, as well as 31 local congresses. The Federal Chamber is composed of 500 Deputies, of which 300 are of plurality vote – elected in the same number of federal electoral districts – and 200 of proportional representation. In the local congresses, 663 elected deputies will be elected through plurality vote –elected in the same number of electoral districts– and 435 deputies elected through proportional representation.

In the 2024 election, for the first time, the electoral districts approved in 2022 and 2023 by the National Electoral Institute (INE), an authority that is autonomous from the government and independent from political parties, will be applied.



Source: Compiled by authors based on article 53 of Mexican Constitution

The Mexican Constitution defines the country's electoral geography, which states that both federal and local electoral districts must be updated by INE every ten years based on the results of the population census carried out at the beginning of each decade. This census is conducted by a public, autonomous institution: the National Institute of Geography and Statistics (INEGI).

With a total of 126 million Mexicans, each district must contain 420 thousand inhabitants (with a deviation from the average of up to +-15%). The same criteria applies in each state: the population census is divided by the number of local districts defined by the Constitution of each state with the same deviation.

In addition, to guarantee population balance among districts, it is necessary that their geographic design does not contain biases that favor any political actor. In Mexico, unlike what happens in other countries, the design of the electoral geography is made without taking into account the electoral results. Thus, the districts are designed objectively and technically, with pre-established and transparent rules, so that they adopt simple geometric shapes and not atypical ones such as those resembling a salamander (known as "gerrymandering", when the outline of a district responds to political interests).

Figure 1



Example of Mexico City's federal district designation.  
Source: National Electoral Institute. Agreement INE/CG875/2022

Figure 2



Example of "Gerrymandering" or "salamander effect".  
Fuente: <https://presidentialsystem.org>

In order to guarantee electoral impartiality, the Mexican model of redistricting is distinguished by three main characteristics:

- a) The rules are mandatory and are defined by the Constitution (articles 41 and 53);
- b) The district configuration is carried out by an autonomous and independent Electoral Management Body, with robust technical expertise: the National Electoral Institute (INE);
- c) The electoral preferences of the population are not taken into account.

Therefore, compared to other countries where redistricting is politicized, the Mexican model has four advantages:

- 1) There is no political bias in the conformation of the electoral geography;
- 2) Population census takes into account all the inhabitants and not only citizens or voters since political representation is for all inhabitants;
- 3) It is updated every ten years. Demographic changes are reflected in the configuration of the districts; and,
- 4) Rules also apply in each of the 32 states. Equal representation is also guaranteed in the composition of local congresses.

Although INE is responsible for carrying out the federal (300 districts) and local (32 states, 679 districts) redistricting, several entities participate in the process: a committee of specialists – in geography, demography and mathematics – which issues technical opinions to INE; the political parties (which oversee the process in each state and at the national level but do not have a vote in decisions); the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples; a guarantor body that oversees the referendum with indigenous peoples – so that they can give their opinion – as well as the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary, which can hear complaints and resolve disputes regarding district designation.

In Mexico's current district design, which will be used in the 2024 elections and in the electoral processes throughout the current decade, no political party filed a complaint against the new electoral map, which reflects the broad consensus that has been achieved in this matter.

## Redistricting rules:

The rules of redistricting are transparent. There are seven criteria to understand and enforce:

1

### POPULATION BALANCE

The population should be divided into **300 districts**

Ex. 2022:  $126,014,024$  (censo 2020) /  $300 = 420,047$  people per district.



A deviation from the average up to  $\pm 15\%$  is allowed.

2

### MINIMAL REPRESENTATION

No entity may have **less than two districts** and, therefore, **less than two deputies** of relative majority (plurality vote) in Congress.



3

### INDIGENOUS AND AFRO-MEXICAN DISTRICTS

Efforts will be made to **group the indigenous and African-American population** in districts to enhance their representation.



Indigenous districts = at least 40% of the population

4

### MUNICIPAL INTEGRITY

Districts will preferably be configured within complete municipalities. **Dividing districts will be avoided.**



5

### COMPACITY

Districts should take a geometric shape, **as close to a square** as possible.



6

### TRAVEL TIMES

The **accessibility and communication** of citizens, as well as that of the electoral authority, should be facilitated. The shortest time between localities to the district seat should be ensured.



7

## GEOGRAPHICAL CONTINUITY

There must be **no “islands”** within a district



8

## POLITICAL AGREEMENT

Applies **if all political parties agree on an alternative scenario** to the one proposed by INE.



Mexico's population, regardless of their place of residence, has the same weight in the political representation in the Chamber of Deputies (Table 1).

**Table 1: Ratio between population and federal electoral districts by state**

Entity	Population	Percentage	Districts	Percentage
México (country)	126,014,024	100.0%	300	100.0%
Aguascalientes	1,425,607	1.1%	3	1.0%
Baja California	3,769,020	3.0%	9	3.0%
Baja California Sur	798,447	0.6%	2	0.7%
Campeche	928,363	0.7%	2	0.7%
Coahuila	3,146,771	2.5%	8	2.7%
Colima	731,391	0.6%	2	0.7%
Chiapas	5,543,828	4.4%	13	4.3%
Chihuahua	3,741,869	3.0%	9	3.0%
Ciudad de México	9,209,944	7.3%	22	7.3%
Durango	1,832,650	1.5%	4	1.3%
Guanajuato	6,166,934	4.9%	15	5.0%
Guerrero	3,540,685	2.8%	8	2.7%
Hidalgo	3,082,841	2.4%	7	2.3%
Jalisco	8,348,151	6.6%	20	6.7%
México	16,992,418	13.5%	40	13.3%
Michoacán	4,748,846	3.8%	11	3.7%
Morelos	1,971,520	1.6%	5	1.7%
Nayarit	1,235,456	1.0%	3	1.0%
Nuevo León	5,784,442	4.6%	14	4.7%
Oaxaca	4,132,148	3.3%	10	3.3%
Puebla	6,583,278	5.2%	16	5.3%
Querétaro	2,368,467	1.9%	6	2.0%
Quintana Roo	1,857,985	1.5%	4	1.3%
San Luis Potosí	2,822,255	2.2%	7	2.3%
Sinaloa	3,026,943	2.4%	7	2.3%
Sonora	2,944,840	2.3%	7	2.3%
Tabasco	2,402,598	1.9%	6	2.0%
Tamaulipas	3,527,735	2.8%	8	2.7%
Tlaxcala	1,342,977	1.1%	3	1.0%
Veracruz	8,062,579	6.4%	19	6.3%
Yucatán	2,320,898	1.8%	6	2.0%
Zacatecas	1,622,138	1.3%	4	1.3%

Source: Compiled by authors based on the Annual Report of Activities of the Technical Committee of the National Districting 2021-2023. National Electoral Institute.

## Inclusion of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican Communities.

A feature of the Mexican model is the inclusion of indigenous and – more recently – Afro-Mexican districts. A constitutional reform in 2001 recognized indigenous rights in order to improve their political representation.

An "indigenous district" is defined as a district that includes municipalities whose indigenous population represents at least 40% of the inhabitants. In Mexico, the criteria to be considered indigenous is self-adhesion.

The current district map includes 44 federal indigenous districts and 115 local districts.

**Table 2: Number of federal and local indigenous districts in Mexico.**

Entity	Indigenous Districts (Federal Distritation)	Indigenous Districts (Local Distritation)	Entity	Indigenous Districts (Federal Distritation)	Indigenous Districts (Local Distritation)
Campeche	1	13	Nayarit	0	2
Chiapas	6	10	Oaxaca	10	25
Chihuahua	0	1	Puebla	4	7
Durango	0	1	Quintana Roo	1	1
Guerrero	3	9	San Luis Potosí	1	3
Hidalgo	2	6	Sonora	1	3
México	3	3	Tabasco	1	1
Michoacán	1	1	Veracruz	4	6
Morelos	0	2	Yucatán	6	21
			<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>115</b>

Source: Compiled by authors based on the Annual Report of Activities of the Technical Committee of the National Districting 2021-2023. National Electoral Institute.

### On the road to the June 2 election

Mexico has an updated federal and local electoral geography, which is ready to be used in the 2024 elections and those to be held until the next population census takes place in 2030. In a country with frequent political disputes like Mexico, electoral geography is a key part in providing certainty in the electoral process. In addition, it ensures the principle of equality in political representation and the cornerstone democratic principle that each person has a vote and every vote has equal value.

**If you wish to expand your knowledge of Mexico's district designation, we recommend that you consult the INE's Agreement on Federal District Designation 2022 and the report of the Technical Committee of Specialists 2023:**

<https://repositoriodocumental.ine.mx/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/147331/CGex202212-14-ap-24.pdf>

<https://repositoriodocumental.ine.mx/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/150591/CGex202303-27-ip-6.pdf>

# Last glance

The Mexican Constitution (Article 134) states that public servants must remain neutral in political and electoral contests. The INE has the power to issue precautionary measures to avoid any damage to the integrity of elections. In September and October 2023, the INE issued precautionary measures to the President of Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

1

**September 14, 2023:** Citizen Xóchitl Gálvez files a complaint against the President of Mexico for undue use of public resources and for violations to the principles of neutrality, impartiality and fairness in the competition. In particular she points out that in his daily conferences the president declared:

- "Claudia [Sheinbaum, the future pre-candidate for the presidency of Mexico of Morena, the government political party, for presidency] is an honest person, with principles, with ideals..."
- "She is going to continue the transformation..."
- "Conservatism is not going to return..."
- "The PRI members are corrupt, but so are the PAN members..."
- "To transform a country you need congruence and Xóchitl doesn't have it..."

2

**September 21, 2023:** INE orders the Mexican President to remove audio, audiovisual and/or stenographic versions filed from any platform about the daily conferences of September 8 and 13.

- They contain expressions that benefit Morena party and Claudia Sheinbaum politically and electorally;
- They harm opposition parties and virtual pre-candidate Xóchitl Gálvez;
- They violate the principles of impartiality and equality in the electoral contest.

Due to the fact that the president has recurrently made statements of an electoral nature in his morning press conferences, the INE also ordered him as a preventive measure to include a message at the beginning of his daily conferences to remind of the principles of impartiality and neutrality.

"In accordance with the provisions of Article 134 of the Mexican Constitution...public servants have at all times the obligation to apply impartiality the public resources under their responsibility without influencing the fairness of the competition between political parties."

3

**26 September 2023:** The president complied with incorporating the message but also included a postscript with the following message:

"If you are conservative person ... we recommend you not to watch this program because it may cause you some psychological, emotional damage or it could affect the interests you defend."

4

**October 3, 2023:** The INE ordered the withdrawal of the postscript and considered that its content included words that could violate the principles of neutrality, impartiality and equality.

The INE reminds the president to avoid making political statements or comments of an electoral nature.

5

**October 10, 2023:** The postscript was eliminated and the INE's order was complied with.