México y los Convenios Internacionales contra la corrupción

Mexico and International Conventions against Corruption

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Resumen

En este artículo se realiza un análisis sobre el cumplimiento de los compromisos internacionales adquiridos por los Estados Unidos Mexicanos en la Convención Interamericana Contra la Corrupción, la Convención para Combatir el Cohecho de Servidores Públicos Extranjeros y la Convención de las Naciones Unidas Contra la Corrupción. Para lograr el objetivo propuesto se plantea una investigación dividida en cuatro apartados: en primer lugar, se discute el concepto de corrupción más allá de un término simplista que acuña sólo los delitos que forman parte de los actos de corrupción; en segundo lugar, se analizan los convenios internacionales como instrumentos de gobernanza global; en el tercero, se identifican los convenios ratificados por México en su lucha contra la corrupción, y por último, se realiza un análisis sobre cuáles han sido las medidas diseñadas por México para combatir la corrupción a nivel nacional basadas en los instrumentos de cooperación internacional. A manera de conclusión se puede afirmar que México ha cumplido con los compromisos adquiridos en los tres convenios internacionales, al menos a nivel legal, no obstante, el problema se centra en la falta de una supervisión eficaz de las medidas adoptadas.

Palabras claves: Corrupción, México, Convenios Internacionales, Naciones Unidas, OCDE.

Abstract

This article analyzes Mexico's compliance with its international commitments under the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. In order to achieve the proposed objective, the research is divided into four sections: first, the concept of corruption is discussed beyond a simplistic term that only includes crimes that are part of acts of corruption; second, the international conventions are analyzed as instruments of global governance; third, the conventions ratified by Mexico in its fight against corruption are identified; and finally, an analysis is made of the measures designed by Mexico to combat corruption at the national level based on the instruments of international cooperation. As conclusion, it can be stated that Mexico has complied with the commitments acquired in the three international conventions, at least at the legal level; however, the problem is centered on the lack of effective supervision of the measures adopted.

Key words: Corruption, Mexico, International Conventions, United Nations, OECD

1. Introduction

The international community has paid particular attention to the political, economic, and social imbalances that corruption within states has caused since the late 20th century. Such irregularities are characterized by institutional deficiencies, overregulation, and a lack of trust in institutions, undermining democratic political systems. Corruption is associated with "direct repercussions on the daily lives of citizens, regardless of their nationality, gender, age, economic status, or level of education, as it is deeply rooted in the functioning of governments" (Bautista-Farías, in 2013). Simultaneously, it reinforces monopolies by means of fragile political decision-making processes and weak competition systems for businesses and products, which are further exacerbated by profound uncertainty, thereby resulting in additional corruption (Malem, 2000).

As warned by Villoria, M. (2006). Among other consequences, corruption erodes trust in the state, causes damage to the economic and social systems, undermines the Rule of Law, nurtures political apathy, increases poverty, and leads to irregularities in public investments. Businesses, politicians, and individuals are all subject to incentives that the administrations of the respective states establish. Economic stagnation, political instability, civil conflicts, and coups d'état were the consequences of this divergence in establishing societal incentives, as various groups competed for the benefits associated with power". (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012).

The Rule of Law is weakened, human rights are violated, the quality of life is harmed, and the development of organized crime, terrorism, and other threats to human security is facilitated by corruption.[1].

For all these reasons, the international community has decided to intervene to address the global issue of corruption through global governance, which encourages countries to adopt measures to prevent and combat corruption without compromising their national sovereignty, always to strengthen democracy, foster bilateral and multilateral relations, and benefiting societies themselves.

The fight against corruption has shifted paradigms; it is no longer regarded solely as a matter of national interest but has gained such significance that it is now an integral part of the international agenda. Cooperation among States has become a guiding principle for effective combat against corruption. Consequently, they have expanded responsibilities, as they must now also ensure that their corruption-related issues do not extend to or infringe upon other sovereign States.

Based on these premises, the objective of this article is to analyze whether the United Mexican States has fulfilled the international commitments undertaken in the Anti-Corruption Conventions: the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACAC), the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (OECD Convention), and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

To attain the proposed objective, the international commitments contained in each of Mexico's signed agreements have been individually analyzed, as this analysis enables the oversight of the administrative institutions and legal frameworks that the Mexican State is

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[1] United Nations Convention Against Corruption, 2004

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required to adhere to in their implementation and operation.

The article comprises four sections: initially, it investigates the notion of corruption, transcending a simplistic definition that solely includes the offenses associated with corrupt acts; subsequently, it analyzes international conventions as mechanisms of global governance; thirdly, it delineates the conventions ratified by Mexico in its anti-corruption efforts; and ultimately, before the conclusions, it offers an analysis of the measures adopted by Mexico to address corruption domestically, grounded in international cooperation instruments.

2. The Concept of Corruption

The issue of corruption has outgrown the ability of individual states to address it through public policies, transforming into a rapidly disseminating issue that has garnered international attention. Despite the ongoing, albeit isolated and independent, endeavors of some countries, significant progress in combating this offense in political, economic, and social spheres remains elusive. This is partly due to the lack of a universally adopted concept that comprehensively and integrally defines corruption.

When it comes to discussing corruption can be as complex as compelling, given the absence of a univocal definition. While it is widely understood as a term that detracts from value and carries various connotations—such as sin, noncompliance, immorality, or illegality, among others (Vásquez and Montoya, 2011)—its interpretation varies across different fields. For instance, the economic field focuses on the impact of corruption on domestic economic development or on international transactions between countries (Artaza, 2016), which

contributes to the lack of consensus in defining the concept.

To address the question, What is corruption? it is essential to transcend the analysis of a single field of study. Meanwhile, the only viable response is that it depends on "the networks of concepts and contexts within which the term is employed" (Vásquez and Montoya, 2011).

Vásquez and Montoya (2011) have already pointed out that "the concept of corruption commonly used by national and international institutions, whether public or private, that fight against corruption is highly variable in its content and flexible in its application, making it difficult to establish a univocal definition." This variability can "lead to numerous issues, perhaps the most significant of which arises in the legal domain."

Thus far, legislation has confined itself to developing the concept of corruption through conflict-of-laws norms; in other words, it has not provided a strict definition but has instead deferred its definition to other types of norms, such as criminal law provisions (Cárdenas et al., 2017).

This task is of such significance that efforts have been made to address it in international mechanisms. Nonetheless, these instruments frequently utilize it, in a broad sense, and, at best exemplified by the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption—attempt to delineate specific acts deemed corrupt, thereby constraining the idea.

The term "corruption" is not expressly defined either in the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). Rather, they solely mandate that signatory states implement measures to prevent and combat corruption.

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Conversely, the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions tackles the problem of active corruption. However, it fails to offer an exhaustive definition of corruption in a broader context.

To sum up, international conventions delegate the task of defining the offense to national legislations, based on the doctrinal and jurisprudential framework unique to each state. Yet, "[...] this approach is of little utility if it does not clarify what is being addressed, that is, what will be understood as corruption" (Artaza, 2016). Consequently, the definition of corruption cannot be confined to a strictly legal perspective, as some conceptual frameworks attempt to do. Extortion and embezzlement cannot be regarded as the exclusive indicators of corruption, as these are merely the visible tip of the iceberg. Such criminal acts are distinct examples of corruption but do not constitute its definition.

An act of corruption does not necessarily constitute a criminal offense. "This is the case with so-called 'facilitation payments,' 'expedited payments,' or 'toll payments.' Whether such payments are prohibited is reliant on the specific legal system; corruption and criminal illegality are distinct and independent concepts" (Malem, 2016). For this reason, it is essential to define corruption from a doctrinal perspective, even though this proves complex due to the imprecise and, at times, ambiguous characterization it has been afforded within this framework (Cárdenas et al., 2017).

Some authors, such as Bakre (2007) and Sikka (2008), assert that "corruption is fundamentally associated with the activities of politicians, presidents, dictators, bureaucrats, and public officials" (Cárdenas et al., 2017). Similarly, Salinas and Salinas suggest that "corruption centers on activities in which public employees, bureaucrats, legislators, or politicians abuse the power derived from their positions to pursue their own interests" (Salinas and Salinas, 2007). Andvig and Fjeldstad (2000) conceptualize corruption as an interaction between the public and private spheres, that is, between "government" and the "market economy."

These definitions inherently involve the abuse of power derived from public office, aimed at securing private and personal gains, either for oneself or for third parties. However, this perspective continues to personalize corruption, presuming that "it is the involvement of public agents that characterizes corruption" (Salinas and Salinas, 2007). Cárdenas et al. (2017) emphasize the necessity of considering the private sector, noting that "corruption exists within and among private corporations, with or without the involvement of state agents" (Cárdenas et al., 2017). Accordingly, the concept should not be limited exclusively to the public sector but must include the dynamic interplay and mutual influence between the public and private domains.

Thus, corruption should be conceptualized not merely as the misappropriation of public resources for private gain but as a mechanism fundamentally driven by the abuse of power to secure benefits that are otherwise prohibitively expensive or unattainable (Malem, 2000), which underscores that private actors may also be implicated, as the exercise and abuse of power are not confined to any specific sector.

Transparency International (2009), in turn, provides a definition that is both succinct and precise.

As far as this international organization is concerned, corruption is defined as the misuse of power for personal benefit. This definition deliberately removes the personalized characterization often associated with the concept, seeking to promote a broader

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understanding that corruption transcends a finite and frequently inadequate list of criminal offenses.

A unified definition of corruption should seek to reconcile the dichotomy between public and private corruption, as proposed by Cárdenas et al. (2017). The authors conceptualize corruption as "[...] an act or omission in the course of decision-making authority (whether in the public or private sector) aimed at securing a benefit of any nature (economic, social, political, etc.) for oneself or for third parties, which may be subject to legal sanctions (whether criminal, civil, or administrative).

In this article, corruption will be defined as an unlawful activity involving the abuse of power exercised from a position, whether in the public or private sphere, within the framework of social organization, and which is characterized by deliberate and rational practices, whether through action or omission of duties, conducted directly or indirectly, to obtain specific benefits, (whether economic, political, social, legal, or otherwise) for personal or group advantage. In certain instances, these benefits may be otherwise unattainable due to the significant costs associated with their acquisition.

3. Context of Corruption in Mexico

Corruption remains a pervasive issue across the majority of Latin American countries, and Mexico is no exception. According to the most recent report on the Americas published by Transparency International on 25 January 2022, of the thirty countries analyzed, most have demonstrated minimal or no progress, and over the past decade, many have regressed in their efforts to combat corruption. The region maintains an average score of 43 on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), meaning that nearly two-thirds of the countries scored

below 50 on a scale of 0 to 100, (where 100 represents the lowest perceived level of corruption). Throughout this period, only two countries (Guyana and Paraguay) achieved notable advancements. Conversely, since 2012, the United States has fallen out of the top 25 positions.

Mexico, similarly, has not advanced significantly in its anti-corruption efforts, despite having undertaken this international commitment over twenty years ago. Over the past ten years (2012–2021), Mexico's score on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) has ranged between 28 and 35 points, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for Mexico, 1995–2011 Source**:** Transparency International

While Enrique Peña Nieto and Andrés Manuel López Obrador were in office, a slight uptick was observed during the early years; yet, this slight improvement has been consistently noted at the outset of each federal administration, followed by a subsequent decline midway through their terms, as illustrated in Figure 2. Therefore, this does not constitute a substantial or structural change, as Mexico continues to exhibit a persistently low average score on the Corruption Perceptions Index.

During the period from 2012 to 2021, Mexico has not achieved a score exceeding the 35 points obtained in 2014. In comparison, from 1995 to 2011, the highest score was 3.7 on a scale of 0 to 10 in 2001, at the beginning of the political

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transition from the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) to the National Action Party (PAN) under the leadership of Vicente Fox. In fact, based on a comparison of the two graphs, the highest ratings were recorded during this first PAN administration.

Similarly, it is important to note that the year with the lowest score in the first graph corresponds to 2018, with a rating of 28, during the administration of Enrique Peña Nieto (2012–2018). In the second graph, the lowest score occurred in 1997, with 2.66 points, during the administration of Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León (1994–2000). Both administrations were led by the PRI, which governed Mexico for 70 uninterrupted years.

Gráfica 2. Índice de Percepción de Corrupción (IPC) de México 1995-2011

Figure 2. Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for Mexico, 1995–2011 Source**:** Transparency International

In relation to other rates, such as the Global Corruption Barometer, over the past decade, two studies have been issued concerning the Latin America and Caribbean region: the first in 2017 and the second in 2019[2].

As reflected in Table 1, in 2017, 51% of individuals surveyed in Mexico reported paying a bribe to a public institution, while in 2019, this percentage decreased to 34%. In this regard, the highest proportion of bribes in 2017 was directed toward public clinics and health centers, representing 39%, to gain access to their services. By 2019, the institution most frequently implicated in such transactions was the police, accounting for 52%.

Table 1. Bribery indices are based on individuals who accessed these public services in the past 12 months.

INSTITUCIÓN	2017	2019
Índice general de soborno	51%	**34%**
Escuelas públicas	33%	**19%**
Clínicas públicas y centrosde salud	39%	**16%**
Documentos de identidad	37%	**25%**
Servicios públicos	32%	**30%**
Policía	30%	**52%**
Jueces	7%	**35%**

Fuente: Source: Global Corruption Barometer, Latin America and the Caribbean 2019

In table 2, it can be observed that. respondents in 2017 and 2019 perceived an increase in corruption over the preceding 12 months, with 61% and 44%, respectively. It is important to highlight that the administration of Andrés Manuel López Obrador took office in 2018, distinguished by its consistent anti-corruption discourse.

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[2] Both studies were published by Transparency International. These reports are part of the Global Corruption Barometer series and are designed to identify direct experiences with corruption in public services, as well as perceptions regarding the scale of this illicit practice. The 2017 report, titled. "*People and Corruption:*

Latin America and the Caribbean", was compiled from a series of surveys conducted with 22,302 citizens across 20 countries in Latin America. The 2019 report, titled *"The Global Corruption Barometer in Latin America and the Caribbean",* was based on surveys of over 17,000 citizens in 18 countries in the region.

Table 2. ¿Have corruption levels changed in the past 12 months?

LEVEL	2017	2019
Increased	61%	**44%**
Decreased	6%	**21%**
Stayed the same	27%	**34%**
Do not know	**7%**	**1%**

Source: Global Corruption Barometer, Latin America and the Caribbean 2019

Table 3 indicates that in 2019, the President was regarded as the third most corrupt institution in Mexico, with 63%. In 2017, at the end of Enrique Peña Nieto's administration, this percentage was approximately 51%, 12 percentage points lower than that of his counterpart López Obrador. These figures underscore a critical element of the corruption scenario in Mexico, thereby highlighting the significance of the ongoing fight against this pervasive issue.

Table 3. Percentage of people who believe that most or all individuals in these institutions are corrupt.

INSTITUTION	2017	2019
President/Prime Minister	51%	**63%**
Members of Parliament	56%	**65%**
Public Employees	57%	**58%**
Local Public Employees	64%	**63%**
Police Corps	63%	**69%**
Judges and Magistrates	50%	**58%**
Religious Leaders	41%	**44%**
NGOs		**44%**
Business Executives	48%	**47%**
Bankers		**45%**
Journalists		**36%**

Source: Global Corruption Barometer, Latin America and the Caribbean 2019

It can be affirmed that Mexico has maintained a high level of corruption for decades, which has not improved despite the political commitment of the current government. Corruption, alongside violence, remains the primary concern for Mexican citizens, which underscores that any anti-corruption policy, whether originating from national or international sectors, is a step forward in addressing this scourge. However, such policies must not only be appropriate but also accompanied by effective oversight in their implementation and personal commitment from the authorities tasked with their enforcement. Without this, they will remain yet another ineffective and inefficient anti-corruption measure.

4. International Conventions as Instruments of Global Governance and the International Conventions Ratified by the United Mexican States

Global governance has been crucial in maintaining pressure on governments and intergovernmental organizations to enhance the ways in which conflicts, transnational threats, and, consequently, problem resolution are tackled. In an interdependent world, events (at any local, national, or regional level) can result in far-reaching consequences across all other levels, whether positive or negative, depending on the intentions of the actors involved. Therefore, it is imperative to raise awareness that numerous issues extend beyond the individual resolution capacities of any state, regardless of its decision-making and action capabilities. An example of such an issue is corruption.

Thus, there has been a significant expansion of intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations (non-profit), and transnational corporations, which have become key actors not only in problem-solving through increasingly active roles in policy formulation, norms, and lawmaking, but also in the creation and perpetuation of conflicts (perhaps unconsciously) arising from the mere existence

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of a large number of actors with divergent interests, typically centered on the pursuit of private benefits.

Similarly, the most prominent actors in the international society: States, have, over the course of recent history, established and joined intergovernmental organizations that serve as forums for dialogue on issues such as national and international security and peace. These topics, therefore, become the focal point of all States.

Examples of such organizations include the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Organization of American States (OAS), among others. In line with their role as intergovernmental forums, these organizations, adhering to the concept of global governance, that is, serving as channels for communication, discussion, and the resolution of transboundary issues, which have become essential subjects of international concern, have facilitated the creation of certain intergovernmental legal instruments, which include conventions aimed at addressing issues such as corruption, which undermine the political-economic systems and societal frameworks of any nation.

On acknowledging that corruption has evolved into a transboundary issue and poses greater risks than ever before, and considering that "democratic governance in the Americas is an indispensable condition for the stability, peace, and development of the region" (Ortegón and Yaya, 2018), the Organization of American States (OAS) has recognized the critical importance of addressing this enduring public challenge. Accordingly, in 1997, the OAS adopted the first intergovernmental legal instrument specifically designed to combat this pervasive threat: the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACAC).

Moreover, in 1999, the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, supported by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), entered into force. Later, in 2005, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) was adopted, with the primary objective of facilitating cooperation among signatory nations in establishing binding obligations within the framework of international law.

It is noteworthy that all these intergovernmental organizations have increasingly emphasized their concern about corruption due to its demonstrated international impact, particularly in destabilizing development and peace, which are key elements for maintaining international social order.

Mexico, in turn, has ratified three international conventions aimed at combating corruption. While their objectives are inherently commendable and aligned with the overarching cause, their implementation often encounters significant challenges due to institutional weaknesses within the country, particularly when such efforts conflict with the vested interests of high-ranking government officials or prominent political figures.

Yet, this commitment is reinforced by Article 89, Section X of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, which designates international cooperation as a cornerstone of foreign policy. This provision obliges and empowers the Executive Branch to enter into international treaties aimed at fostering "international cooperation for development; the respect, protection, and promotion of human rights; and the pursuit of peace and international security." Within this constitutional framework, the fight against corruption becomes a requisite to uphold and fulfill the State's constitutional mandate.

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These conventions include the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACAC), the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

4.1. Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACAC)

The IACAC is the first intergovernmental instrument designed to combat corruption at the regional level. It emerged after the Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) recognized that corruption poses international implications, as it hinders the comprehensive development of nations, undermines the legitimacy of public institutions, and threatens moral order, justice, and, consequently, society as a whole.

Upon recognizing the extensive implications of corruption beyond its traditional scope, awareness has increased regarding the severity of its existence. Corruption is not merely a domestic issue confined to national boundaries; it also has substantial international consequences, affecting all States politically, economically, and socially. Within the region, the necessity has arisen to prevent and combat corruption with the active participation of civil society and transnational corporations, while underscoring the primary responsibility of States to eradicate it and fostering cooperation among them to implement effective measures for preventing, detecting, sanctioning, and eradicating corruption within public administration. To this end, the Convention comprises two principal objectives: to promote and strengthen mechanisms for combating corruption, and to encourage and facilitate cooperation among the States Parties. In alignment with these objectives, the IACAC was adopted by 33 Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) on March 29, 1996, in Caracas, Venezuela, and became effective on March 6, 1997.

4.2. Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions

This Convention, established under the sponsorship of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), constitutes the first and only legally binding international instrument specifically targeting the party offering, granting, or promising a bribe. It focuses on the offense of bribery by public officials in the context of international transactions. In this regard, States Parties undertake to develop and implement measures aimed at preventing, detecting, investigating, and sanctioning this international offense. The Convention underscores that the acceptance of bribes in exchange for awarding contracts to foreign businesses for public services—such as infrastructure, electricity, or water—has profound implications: politically, by undermining governance structures; economically, by distorting competitive markets; socially, by eroding moral standards; and environmentally, by compromising sustainable economic development.

Accordingly, to address the issue of international bribery, signatory States are obligated to establish accountability mechanisms for both natural and legal persons through their respective national legal systems. The effectiveness of the Convention relies on the full and comprehensive implementation of its provisions by all States Parties, ensuring strict compliance with its established standards. To do so, the OECD has implemented a monitoring mechanism for the Anti-Bribery Convention, designed to facilitate peer review and evaluation

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among States Parties. Under this framework, States undergo assessments while simultaneously serving as evaluators for other States. The primary objective of this evaluation process is to exert peer pressure, thereby incentivizing States to adopt concrete measures in the fight against corruption and to achieve the highest standards of accountability in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention.

4.3. United Nations Convention Against Corruption

Although anti-corruption conventions had existed since 1996, these were primarily regional in scope or narrowly focused on specific issues, leaving other continents and activities associated with corruption unaddressed. In this context, the United Nations Convention emerged as a multilateral international agreement encompassing all regions of the world, including Asia and the Middle East. It thereby achieved a truly global reach, aimed at preventing and combating corruption in all its forms.

The Convention comprises 71 provisions, structured into eight chapters. Among these, the provisions deemed most significant for adoption as legislative measures and actions by States Parties are grouped into four principal pillars: prevention, criminalization, asset recovery, and international cooperation.

5. The Implementation of Anti-Corruption Measures in Mexico as a result of the Ratification of International Conventions

Corruption is a phenomenon that predominantly occurs in countries marked by institutional fragility, as exemplified by Mexico. In response, the State has sought to establish and reinforce its institutional framework through the ratification of international anti-corruption conventions. These commitments, coupled with

increasing public discontent, have prompted the development and reform of legislation, as well as the design of public policies aimed at preventing, investigating, prosecuting, and sanctioning corrupt practices. Despite notable advancements in Mexico's federal normative framework, significant challenges remain in achieving full implementation of IACAC, the OECD Convention, and the UNCAC, becoming particularly evident in the technical, legal, legislative, and oversight domains.

Yet, the measures implemented by Mexico as a result of its obligations under the three conventions to which it is a State Party could result in an extensive enumeration. Consequently, a selection of these measures is presented in Table 3. This approach has been adopted because these conventions, which collectively aim to combat corruption, establish action guidelines that are aligned and harmonized with one another, as reflected in the other conventions analyzed in this study.

It is important to note, however, that the specific evaluation of each measure falls outside the scope of this research, as a comprehensive analysis of individual measures would require a distinct and independent study.

Table 3. General Guidelines of the Anti-Corruption Conventions Signed by Mexico and the Measures Adopted

General Guidelines of the IACAC, OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, and UNCAC	Anti-Corruption Measures Designed by Mexico
Standards of Conduct for the Proper, Honorable, and Adequate Fulfillment of Public Functions	Code of Ethics for Public Servants of the Federal Government of Mexico
Mechanisms to ensure the effective compliance with these codes of conduct.	Secretariat of Public Function
Systems for the Declaration of Income,	DeclaraNet System. Articles 108, final

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Assets, and Liabilities by Public Officials	paragraph of the Constitution, and Articles 32, 33, 46, and 49, section IV, of the General Law of Administrative Responsibilities	transparency and accountability in the management of public finances.	
Sistemas para la contratación de funcionarios públicos y para la adquisición de bienes y servicios por parte del Estado que aseguren la publicidad, equidad y eficiencia de tales sistemas	Systems for the Recruitment of Public Officials and the Procurement of Goods and Services by the State to Ensure Transparency, Equity, and Efficiency	Each State Party, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system, shall adopt measures to prevent money laundering.	Federal Law for the Prevention and Identification of Transactions Involving Illicit Funds
Laws Eliminating Tax Benefits for Individuals or Entities Engaging in Assignments in Violation of Anti-Corruption Legislation by State Parties	Decree Committing to Refrain from Granting Waivers, Exemptions, or Partial or Total Forgiveness of Taxes and Related Charges to Large Taxpayers and Tax Debtors	The bribery of a foreign public official shall be punishable by effective, proportionate, and dissuasive criminal sanctions.	Federal Criminal Code. Book Two, Title Ten - Crimes of Corruption, Chapter XI - Bribery of Foreign Public Officials. Article 222 bis.
Systems for Protecting Public Officials and Citizens Who Report Acts of Corruption	-Program for the Protection of Whistleblowers in Mexico - Initiative with a draft decree for the issuance of the Federal Law for the Protection of Whistleblowers and Informants of Acts of Corruption	Each State Party shall take the necessary measures to maintain books and accounting records, disclose financial statements, and use accounting and auditing standards.	-General Law of Governmental Accounting -Federal Law on Budgetary Oversight and Accountability -Law on Internal Auditing and Control of the Public Administration of Mexico City
Supreme Control Bodies for Developing Modern Mechanisms to Prevent, Detect, Sanction, and Eradicate Corrupt Practices	-National Anti-Corruption System -Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office		
Mechanisms to Stimulate Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Participation in Efforts to Prevent Corruption	National Anti-Corruption System		
Each State Party, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system, shall adopt appropriate measures to promote	-Federal Transparency and Access to Governmental Public Information Act -Federal Auditing and Accountability Law		

Source: self-made based on content extracted from the official websites of the Government of Mexico.

Although Table 3 demonstrates substantial progress in legal matters, the enactment of new laws and the reform of existing ones do not always produce the anticipated outcomes. In this context, Tacitus posited that "corruptissima respublica plurimae leges" ("in a highly corrupt republic, there are numerous laws") (Tacitus in Rodríguez, 2016). Thus, the effectiveness of combating corruption does not solely depend on the multiplicity of laws, but rather on the development and consolidation of values, and on ethical judgment in both social life and the selection of public officials (Rodríguez, 2016). The rules must be grounded in principles of effective accountability, transparency, and clear objectives, among others, to ensure the proper application of the Rule of Law and the principles of good governance (Myers and Rouzaud, 2016).

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Furthermore, the 2018 report by Transparency International and Transparencia Mexicana, which assessed the compliance of 44 countries with the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, indicated that Mexico, along with other nations such as Korea, China, Singapore, India, Russia, and Turkey, is part of a group of 22 countries demonstrating minimal implementation levels. The report categorizes Mexico as a state with inadequate performance in the investigations conducted by its Public Prosecutor's Office and with limited, if any, sanctions imposed by its judiciary, despite the nearly 20 years elapsed since the ratification of this international convention (Transparencia Mexicana, 2018).

It is frequently understood that the creation and reform of laws, along with the development of public policies, enhance the potential to reduce corruption, due to the costs associated with their violation. However, the fight against this public scourge requires a more holistic approach, which must also involve the proper implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all public measures designed to combat it.

Following the initiation of constitutional reforms in the signatory States aimed at combating corruption, a critical and recurring challenge in public policy and governance became evident: ineffective implementation. As noted by Aguilar Villanueva, L. (2007) in the fourth volume of his anthology The Application of the Policies, this challenge arises from a lack of human, material, political, and economic resources, insufficient organizational communication, and limited governmental interest and commitment to anti-corruption programs.

In addition, the Inter-American Convention further recognizes that ineffective implementation undermines public institutions' legitimacy, moral authority, and justice. It hampers the development of nations, democratic systems, and institutional structures; fosters social instability; exacerbates economic distortions; and entrenches public administration inefficiencies, which ultimately erodes societal values and moral frameworks.

The ineffective implementation of these conventions has significantly limited their success within the region. Corruption persists as a deeply entrenched and multifaceted issue, mainly due to a lack of political commitment. Peter Hakim, President of the Inter-American Dialogue, aptly stated: […] "Despite the rhetoric of political leaders from across the ideological spectrum, reinforced by regional treaties, national plans, and countless campaigns, the region has made minimal progress in eradicating or even modestly curbing corrupt practices over the past 20 years" (Hakim, 2014).

In this regard, it becomes evident that key stakeholders play a critical role in this fight. Their actions are influenced, on the one hand, by the exchange of economic interests among a diverse array of actors, including politicians, public officials, prosecutors, judges, and citizens, on the other hand, by prevailing political or social dynamics in the short, medium, or long term. Therefore, legal frameworks designed to combat corruption "must be supported by organized interests" (Monsivais-Carrillo, 2019). In this sense, these frameworks must be underpinned by influential and decisive stakeholders who can positively impact the contexts that foster corruption. Such actors may include politicians, labor unions, public officials, members of the judiciary, corporate entities, and even social movements, as their active engagement is essential for ensuring the success of it.

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6. Conclusions

The struggle against corruption has been recognized as one of the most pressing challenges since the late 20th century. In an effort to counteract this illicit phenomenon, States have committed to international conventions aimed at preventing, investigating, prosecuting, and eradicating corrupt practices. For this reason, these conventions underscore the critical global importance of combating corruption and reflect the collective efforts of States, as well as formal and informal organizations, to institutionalize values, norms, rules, procedures, practices, policies, and initiatives to enhance predictability, stability, and order in addressing cross-border challenges effectively.

Corruption, as a transnational phenomenon, necessitates a comprehensive and robust legal framework for its effective mitigation. Through the adoption of international instruments, referred to as conventions, grounded in the principles of global governance, signatory States are equipped with a framework to enhance cooperation and establish mechanisms aimed at preventing, prosecuting, and sanctioning corrupt acts.

Thanks to the guidance provided by these conventions, Mexico has established a well-founded legal framework, encompassing laws that range from transparency and access to public information to professional civil service regulations and legislation on the responsibilities of public officials. The design of this legal framework represents an essential initial step in the fight against corruption. However, while progress is evident, it is equally undeniable that further efforts are required both to ensure the effective implementation of these measures and to combat simulation and impunity to achieve the desired outcomes.

As previously stated, the issue of combating corruption in Mexico does not stem from a lack of existing legal frameworks, as mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of conventions have provided recommendations to Mexico in areas requiring further legal progress. Rather, the challenge lies in the inadequate implementation of these frameworks, a situation exacerbated by the systemic nature of corruption. Therefore, the value of this study lies in its recognition that addressing corruption goes beyond the creation of laws, codes, and regulations as a sole solution to this pervasive issue.

The approach taken by governmental authorities in addressing this problem is a reflection of the commitment, strength, and capacity of Mexico's institutions to eradicate corruption. Accordingly, it is crucial to emphasize the need for both institutions and civil society to play pivotal roles in constraining the actions of political actors, public officials, business leaders, and citizens who often exploit corrupt practices for personal gain.

Therefore, a cooperative approach among stakeholders, involving the exchange of best practices to enhance the implementation of laws and policies aimed at combating corruption, is indispensable for achieving a reduction in corruption, not only in Mexico but also globally.

Examining the impact of international conventions on the reduction of corruption in Mexico is pivotal to contributing to the understanding of this pervasive issue and the methods of combating it. While it is acknowledged that this research alone does not provide a comprehensive understanding of why corruption has not been effectively tackled despite Mexico's robust legal framework, this study lays the groundwork for future avenues of research.

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