

Denouncing the Right, Defending the Left: A Content Analysis of the Declarations and Communiqués of CLACSO's Working Groups (2018-2026)

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Abstract— For more than half a century, the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) has represented the largest network of social research institutions in Latin America. However, although it emerged seeking to protect academic freedom and the rights of intellectuals persecuted during the Southern Cone dictatorships between 1960 and 1980, today the institution gives differentiated treatment to Latin American governments depending on their ideological orientation and political system. This article argues that CLACSO's institutional discourse presents a systematic ideological bias in the evaluation and attribution of responsibility to governments in the region, harshly denouncing the policies of democratic right-wing governments while discreetly favoring left-wing authoritarianisms. Based on a content analysis of the declarations and communiqués of its Working Groups published between 2018 and 2026, a corpus of 443 pieces from which 130 mentions of eight countries in the region were extracted, the research identified patterns of thematic selection, frequency, tone, and discourse among the different political regimes and determined that between 87% and 90% of the mentions directly hold right-wing governments responsible, while only between 0% and 5% denounce left-wing governments and authoritarianisms.

Keywords— CLACSO, academic freedom, ideological bias, authoritarianism, left-wing governments, right-wing governments, and Latin America.

Introduction

The Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) was founded in the late 1960s in Buenos Aires, Argentina, amid the Southern Cone military dictatorships that persecuted, harassed, and disappeared left-wing intellectuals and university professors (López, 2026). At that time, CLACSO took on the mission of protecting and defending academic freedom, granting research fellowships and helping exiled intellectuals find employment outside their countries. In the early 2000s, the organization became the largest and most recognized social research network in the region, bringing together multiple research institutes and affiliated professors.

Today, the institution holds associate status with UNESCO, brings together 927 research groups, and operates in 56 countries around the world. Likewise, the organization has acquired great influence over academic and political debate in the region,

thanks to the work of its Working Groups, interdisciplinary networks of researchers from different countries in the region who convene around a relevant social problem and issue declarations, communiqués, and public policy alternatives. Given its size, prestige, and formative role, what CLACSO denounces and what it omits carries real weight in Latin American public debate.

However, following the changes in internal funding sources toward the end of the 1990s and the spread of “Marxist-Leninist” ideas in the region, the organization's vocation lost validity insofar as public denunciations are reserved for democratic right-wing governments, while left-wing governments and authoritarianisms are justified. In the same vein, the declarations of CLACSO's working groups maintain a double standard toward violations of academic rights and freedoms, singling out governments depending on their ideological orientation and personal affinities. Therefore, this article argues that the organization repeatedly holds democratic right-wing governments responsible, as in the cases of Iván Duque in Colombia and Javier Milei in Argentina, but not left-wing authoritarian governments and regimes, as in the cases of Miguel Díaz-Canel in Cuba and Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, where accusations are shifted toward foreign actors, subnational powers, and non-governmental third parties.

Accordingly, the article is divided into three parts. First, it offers a brief literature review on ideological bias in global academic production and the mechanisms through which authoritarian regimes have propagated sympathetic intellectual networks to gain regional influence. Second, it addresses the methodology used for the design and systematization of the database analyzed. Third, it presents the results obtained through the findings on attributed responsibility, the vocabulary analysis, and the quantitative classification by type.

Literature Review

The literature on intellectuals and academic production in the social sciences has pointed out that research is not ideologically neutral, but rather reflects interpretive frameworks

and institutional dynamics subordinated to the dominant ideology. Along these lines, various studies have analyzed, first, the overrepresentation of left-wing professors and publications in global academia; second, the mechanisms through which left-wing authoritarian regimes, particularly Cuba, have articulated networks of intellectual and academic influence in Latin America; and third, the internal transformations and ideological biases of CLACSO. In sum, the literature reviewed identifies general trends regarding the ideological orientation of academia and authoritarian networks, as well as CLACSO's institutional and political transformation. Prior to the publication of this work, there was a gap regarding the analysis of the public declarations of its working groups, which limited the definition of differentiated patterns of ideological positioning toward left-wing and right-wing governments in the region.

The Primacy of the Left and Ideological Bias in Global Academia

In recent years, some authors have analyzed the ideological tendency of academia and intellectuals toward the left. In his most recent study, James Manzi (2026) analyzed 600.000 academic abstracts from 11 social disciplines published between 1960 and 2024, finding that around 90% of politically and socially relevant articles held a left-wing position. The asymmetry does not stem from a surge in left-wing texts, but from the limited academic production of the right, registering a rate of 16% in "Economics" and between 0% and 6% in the remaining social science disciplines. In other words, the ideological bias recorded by CLACSO is part of a disciplinary trend in which left-wing ideas and academic production predominate.

Furthermore, there is a direct relationship between the author's stance and the gap in the number of publications. Globally, the proportion of left-wing professors relative to right-wing professors has expanded steadily over recent decades (Klein & Stern, 2005; Gross & Simmons, 2014). In the United States, multiple analyses of the party registration of faculty at different universities, including history, journalism, law, economics, and psychology departments, indicate an overrepresentation of Democratic faculty and an underrepresentation of Republican professors (Hamilton & Hargens, 1993; Gross & Simmons; Stolzenberg et al., 2019). In fact, Nathan Honeycutt (2024) brought together the scattered measurements, taken at different points between 1969 and 2022, and systematized them into a single long-term series, determining that the ratio of left-leaning to right-leaning faculty went from 1.7 to 1 in 1969 to 6.9 to 1 in 2022, which suggests that as a discipline shifts to the left, right-wing positions not only lose proportional weight, but tend to disappear from academic debate.

In the same vein, the ideology of the authors directly affects the research topics selected and the public policy proposals put forward. In this regard, Jelveh et al. (2024) indicate that the author's affinity with the left helps explain why the discipline's shift is not limited to individual positions, but extends to the very agenda of what the discipline perceives as worthy of study. Likewise, Fraser (2019) and Manzi (2026) propose that the overrepresentation of left-wing intellectuals influences the economic and sociocultural sphere in various ways, since, under "progressive neoliberalism" left-wing authors advocate for the radicalization of social movements, but at the same time support free-market policies.

Cuba's Influence on Academia and Networks of "Authoritarian Gravity"

The mechanisms through which left-wing regimes have projected great influence over academic production, intellectuals, and the agenda have also been analyzed. Chaguaceda and Santos (2026) draw on the definition of "authoritarian gravity" to describe regimes that, despite lacking economic and military power, acquire regional influence through the dissemination of ideas and the articulation of networks of ideological solidarity. Autocratic alliances become asymmetric instruments among political actors oriented toward promoting agendas opposed to the democratic order and right-wing sociocultural policies (Bank & Weyland, 2019). Weyland (2017), in turn, distinguishes between two types of regimes, those that pursue a merely defensive alliance and those that adopt a stance of active promotion around the world.

Specifically, Cuba represents a paradigmatic example of ideological and authoritarian solidarity in the region, given that its influence does not depend on its economic and military size, but on a sustained strategy of "medical diplomacy", academic exchanges, study scholarships, and sympathetic media outlets (Chaguaceda & Santos, 2026). In the academic sphere, Armando Chaguaceda (2026) notes that CLACSO's working groups and its Network of Intellectuals in Defense of Humanity have been bubbles for the dissemination of revolutionary discourse and Marxist-Leninist ideas. This observation, drawing on Kennan's (1947) warning, suggests that the working groups' stance toward left-wing governments and regimes is not a set of isolated positions, but the result of a strategy that seeks to gradually degrade and delegitimize democratic institutions.

The relationship between the left and authoritarianism in academia has also been documented. Drawing on the traditional typology of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, Chaguaceda and Gratius (2026) identify the presence of "nuclei of totalitarian power", including one-person leadership, the political police, and ideological propaganda, which have not

disappeared despite internal transitions of power and the emergence of new types of authoritarianism. This alludes to what Del Panta (2019) calls “autocratic transitions”, the moment when a regime moves from one autocracy to another, losing all possibility of returning to democracy. Finally, Levitsky and Way (2022) argue that autocracies of left-wing and revolutionary origin are unusually durable because they forged, during the revolutionary struggle itself, party and repressive apparatuses far more solid than those of a military coup, making them more resistant to dismantling even after the death of their leaders and parties.

CLACSO’s Ideological Shift and Its Repercussions for Academia

The suspicion that CLACSO applies a double ideological standard in its declarations and denunciations does not arise suddenly. In the late 1990s, following Hugo Chávez’s rise to power in Venezuela and changes in the way the institution was financed, the organization underwent an ideological shift, altering its internal incentives and becoming sympathetic to left-wing projects. In its early decades, institutes affiliated with CLACSO paid a modest annual fee, on the order of a thousand dollars, but due to the regional debt of the 1980s, most institutes stopped contributing to the organization, which led the Executive Secretariat and the working groups to depend on funding from international agencies, losing the democratic incentives of internal financing and limiting regional transparency mechanisms (López, 2026).

According to Margarita López, CLACSO, under the administrations of Atilio Borón, Emir Sader, and Pablo Gentili, adopted a “Marxist-Leninist-pro-Cuban” orientation, receiving and allocating greater budget to projects on social movements and protest (López, 2026). In the same period, the institution readmitted the Cuban research groups, which had been excluded in the 1990s following direct intervention by the regime in one of its institutes, which expanded the regime’s influence over the organization’s leadership and internal functioning. In total, the regime managed to secure a bloc of 15 votes that, unlike the rest of the affiliated groups, was not exercised independently and autonomously, but was instead subordinated to the interests and designs of the Cuban government.

In fact, under this logic of vote instrumentalization, the Executive Secretariat never publicly denounced the authoritarian drift of the governments of Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela, or Raúl Castro and Miguel Díaz-Canel in Cuba. In 2019, for example, Margarita López asked the Secretariat to publish a declaration in defense of Edgardo Lander, a Venezuelan academic persecuted and attacked by the regime, but the response was limited to a letter of solidarity

offered privately (López, 2026). It is important to note that, although the declarations analyzed in this article do not come from the Executive Secretariat, the body most instrumentalized by ideology and internal incentives, but rather from the working groups, this serves to show that the documented pattern, lenient toward the left and reactive toward the right, manifests itself even at the institution’s most “interdisciplinary” and “open” level.

Methodology

The study is based on a content analysis of the institutional communication of CLACSO’s Working Groups, through a mixed strategy that combines a quantitative component, the coding and statistical aggregation of the pronouncements, and a qualitative component, the lexical analysis of the discursive frameworks employed. The dependent variable is the attribution of responsibility made by each pronouncement; the explanatory variables are the ideological orientation of the government referred to (right or left) and the type of regime (democratic or authoritarian). The working hypothesis holds that the attribution of responsibility to governments varies systematically according to ideological orientation, and not according to the severity of the events denounced or the country in question.

Data collection was carried out using web scraping techniques applied to the declarations and communiqués section of the Working Groups on CLACSO’s institutional website¹. The automated procedure extracted, for each piece published between 2018 and 2026, the full title, the issuing Working Group, the permanent link, and the publication date, records that were subsequently verified manually to remove duplicates and inconsistencies. The resulting corpus comprises 443 declarations and communiqués, which constitute the universe of public pronouncements by the Working Groups during the study period.

From that universe, a purposive sample of eight Latin American countries, Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador, was delimited, selected under a comparative logic of maximum variation, the set includes left-wing authoritarian regimes, democratic left-wing governments, democratic right-wing governments, and countries with alternation between both orientations within the same time window, which allows the organization’s discursive behavior to be contrasted across each configuration under a single systematization procedure. The unit of analysis is the country-mention, not the declaration itself: a single communiqué may refer to more than one country and be counted for each of them, so the sum of mentions exceeds

¹See the declarations and communiqués of the CLACSO working groups: <https://www.clacso.org/grupos-de-trabajo-3/declaraciones-y-comunicados/>

the number of distinct pieces. Under this criterion, the sample consisted of 130 mentions, distributed as follows, Colombia (39), Argentina (28), Mexico (21), Venezuela (20), Cuba (9), El Salvador (5), Nicaragua (4), and Honduras (4).

The quantitative component rests on the manual coding of two categorical variables for each mention. The first, the type of pronouncement, is operationalized into eleven mutually exclusive categories: sovereignty and external interference; state repression and police violence; persecution and criminalization; democracy and the rule of law; electoral processes; adjustment and public policy; assassinations and attacks; support for mobilization and protest; solidarity and support; tribute and memory; and other or general situation. The second, central to testing the hypothesis, is the actor held responsible, operationalized into six categories, the sitting national government, provincial and local authorities, external actors, non-state actors (paramilitary groups or companies), explicit defense of the incumbent government, and absence of an identifiable party responsible. The coding relied on explicit attribution rules that distinguish the date of issuance from the target of the criticism: a denunciation published under the Petro administration that holds paramilitary groups responsible does not constitute criticism of the national government, nor does condemnation of repression carried out by an opposition provincial governor; conversely, defense of the incumbent government against external “interference” is coded as support. Each mention was assigned to the corresponding presidential term according to the publication date and the year each leader took office, with individual review of the pieces in countries that experienced a change of government (Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, and Honduras). The results were aggregated by administration and expressed as proportions of the total mentions for each one, direct attribution of responsibility to the national government, defense or support, and attribution to other actors or no identifiable party responsible, a measure that allows comparison across administrations of different orientation and different volumes of communiqués.

The qualitative component consisted of a lexical analysis of the titles of the communiqués, aimed at identifying the interpretive frameworks with which the organization names the conflicts. After text normalization, the removal of stop words, and the exclusion of place names, lexical frequencies were calculated by administration and by ideological bloc, represented through word clouds in which the size of each term is proportional to its frequency. This exercise makes it possible to examine not only who is held responsible, but how responsibility is framed, in particular the shift of the internal party responsible toward an external enemy. The design nonetheless presents three limitations worth making explicit, the coding relies on the title and the general sense of each piece, not on the full text, and therefore retains a debatable and improvable

interpretive component; some administrations concentrate a small number of mentions (Mauricio Macri, Juan Orlando Hernández, Claudia Sheinbaum, and Xiomara Castro), so their results should be read as indicative rather than conclusive; and, as this is a cross-sectional snapshot of a continuously updated index, the figures may vary marginally with new publications. The complete database, with each communiqué classified by country, type, and actor held responsible, is available on the research site for replication and empirical scrutiny.

Results

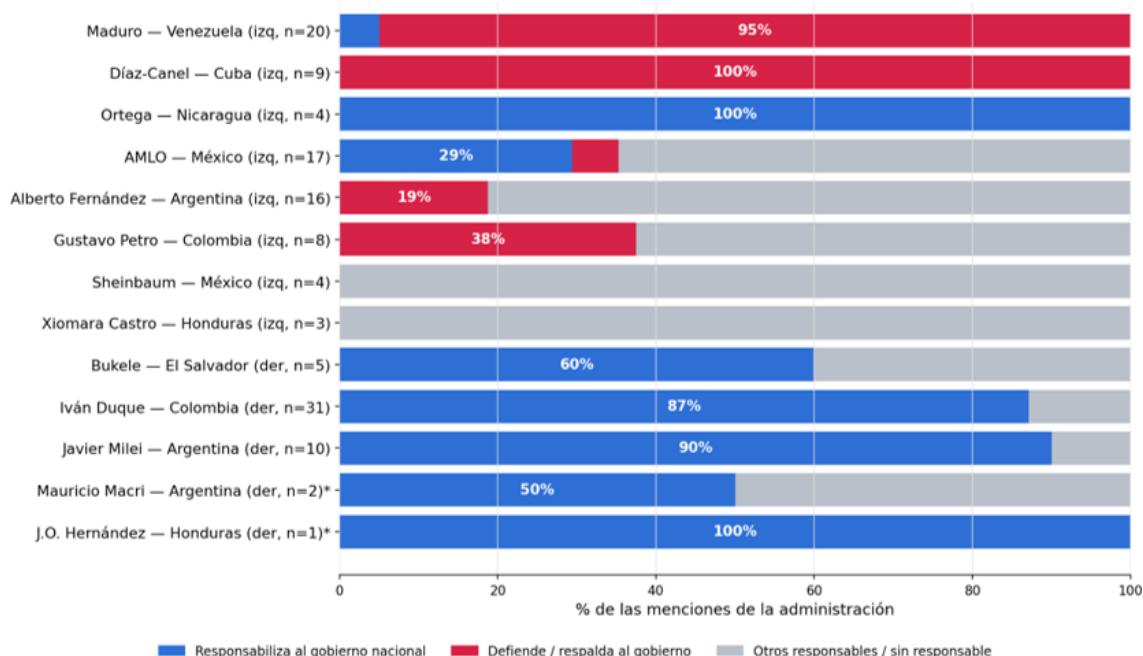
This section presents the findings in four parts. The first presents the overall results regarding who is held responsible in the communiqué. The second examines the vocabulary of the communiqués, the “Battle of Ideas”, showing how the lexicon accompanies and reinforces the pattern of responsibility. The third traces the geography of loyalties across the two left-wing blocs: the authoritarian left of Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, and the democratic left of Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, and Honduras. The fourth, finally, analyzes right-wing governments and ideological transitions in Colombia, Argentina, Honduras, and El Salvador, where alternation makes it possible to observe how responsibility toward the government is activated and deactivated within the same country.

Who Do the Declarations and Communiqués of CLACSO’s Working Groups Hold Responsible?

After analyzing the 130 mentions of eight countries in the region contained in the declarations and communiqués published by CLACSO’s Working Groups between 2018 and 2026, it was found that the organization systematically holds democratic right-wing governments responsible and denounces them, while shifting or suppressing responsibility when the left governs. When the right governs, the state is the accused party, 87% of the mentions issued under the presidency of Iván Duque in Colombia directly hold his government responsible, as does 90% under the administration of Javier Milei in Argentina. Right-wing administrations with few mentions point in the same direction, although their value is only indicative: under Mauricio Macri, one of the two mentions found points to his government, and the single mention recorded under Juan Orlando Hernández in Honduras also holds it responsible. In no case is there a single mention that defends or supports a right-wing government; the sitting government is, in the vast majority of pronouncements, the explicit subject of the denunciation.

The pattern is reversed when the democratic left governs. The mentions do not hold the administrations responsible,

Figure 1. Actor Held Responsible in the Mentions of CLACSO's Working Groups



Note. The chart shows the actor held responsible by administration (2018, 2026), ordered from top to bottom by political bloc: authoritarian left, democratic left, and right-wing governments. Blue: holds the national government responsible; red: defends and supports the government; gray: other actors responsible and no identifiable party responsible. The asterisk marks a reduced n (indicative value). Own elaboration.

but instead offer messages of silence, support, and solidarity regarding the problems presented, shifting the accusations onto subnational, foreign, and non-governmental actors. Of the eight mentions concerning the administration of Gustavo Petro in Colombia, none holds him responsible. The 62% points to third parties, tributes, paramilitary groups, Mexican immigration authorities, and 38% explicitly supports his government project. Likewise, none of the sixteen mentions referring to the presidency of Alberto Fernández in Argentina holds him responsible. The 81% points to the opposition and to third parties, mainly the opposition governor of Jujuy, and 19% defends the government against alleged lawfare. The same shift is observed in Mexico under Claudia Sheinbaum and in Honduras under Xiomara Castro, where the mentions are split between tributes and accusations against third parties. In sum, under the right, the party responsible is the government; under the democratic left, the party responsible is always someone else.

The most problematic finding of the sample is concentrated, however, in the region's two consolidated authoritarianisms, namely Cuba and Venezuela. Toward them, the organization neither remains silent nor shifts responsibility, but instead assumes it in defense of the two regimes. Under Miguel Díaz-Canel, 100% of the mentions defend the Cuban regime against

the “interference” and “blockade” of the United States, with not a single one holding the government responsible for internal repression, arbitrary detentions, or human rights violations. During Nicolás Maduro's dictatorship, 95% of the mentions support the regime against the “aggression” and “military attack” of the United States, while only the remaining 5%, a timid defense of critical academia, refers to the government. Nicaragua constitutes the sole exception to the pattern, the four mentions found hold the regime of Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo responsible and call for the restoration of the rule of law (Figure 1).

The “Battle of Ideas”: The Vocabulary of Silence and Denunciation

Under right-wing governments, a vocabulary of state action exercised upon society predominates. In the titles issued under Iván Duque, “violence”, “repression”, “protest”, “strike”, and “militarization” stand out, along with “rejection” and “people”; under Javier Milei, “repudiation”, “government”, “defense”, and “university”, in reference to the adjustment of the scientific and university system. It is a lexicon that names the state as the aggressor and attributes direct responsibility to it. Under the democratic left, by contrast, the vocabulary shifts

Figure 2. Vocabulary of Silence and Denunciation in the Declarations of CLACSO's Working Groups



Note. Word clouds of the titles of the communiqués by administration, where blue indicates right-wing governments and red indicates left-wing governments and regimes. The size of the term is proportional to its frequency. Own elaboration.

toward celebration or excuse. In the titles under Gustavo Petro, “social”, “environmental”, “activism”, and “memory” predominate; under Alberto Fernández, the most visible term is “Jujuy”, the province of the opposition governor, accompanied by “repudiation”, “repression”, and “province”. Under Xiomara Castro, “support”, “communities”, and “memory” predominate. Even in mentions referring to widespread violence, left-wing governments do not appear as the object of scrutiny, but as allies, and the repression, when named, is always someone else’s.

The distinction deepens when these headlines are contrasted with those referring to left-wing authoritarianisms, where the words radically reframe the party responsible and the nature of the problem. In the Nicolás Maduro word cloud, “United States”, “attack”, “military”, “intervention”, “aggression”, and “imperialist” predominate; in the Miguel Díaz-Canel cloud, “people”, “solidarity”, “revolution”, “United States”, “condemnation”, and “aggression”. This is the same semantic field of

violence that appears under Duque or Milei, but with the subject inverted. The aggressor is no longer the state that governs, but an external enemy that threatens it. This lexical shift means that the “enemy” ceases to be internal and becomes external, so that domestic repression, arbitrary detentions, and institutional deterioration disappear from the vocabulary used to name Cuba and Venezuela. The available literature further suggests that right-wing vocabulary and interpretive frameworks not only lose relative weight, but tend to disappear entirely from academic debate.

This discursive differentiation was institutionalized and propagated by the Cuban regime, from the beginning of the century, under the name of the “Battle of Ideas”, a strategy of ideologization and media mobilization that sought, precisely, to sustain the regime’s internal legitimacy through the figure of an external enemy rather than through the acknowledgment and resolution of internal deficiencies (Chaguaceda & Gratiús, 2026). The dispute over vocabulary and ideas matters insofar

as language is not a neutral vehicle, but the instrument through which an institution and a society decide whom to hold responsible and under what parameters. Therefore, imposing the interpretive framework under which an event is read means, in practice, winning the debate before it begins, since if the regimes are victims of aggression, the question of their internal responsibility is placed beyond discussion.

The Geography of CLACSO's Political Loyalties and Denunciations in the Region

This section goes through the eight countries of the analysis one by one, organized into three blocs whose selection is not accidental. The first bloc brings together the authoritarian left, Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, regimes without effective alternation or competitive elections, where the organization's conduct toward repression exercised by ideologically aligned governments can be observed. The second groups the democratic left (Colombia under Petro, Argentina under Fernández, Mexico under López Obrador and Sheinbaum, and Honduras under Castro), governments that came to power through elections and under constitutional frameworks, which make it possible to distinguish whether favorable treatment responds to the type of regime or to ideology. The third comprises right-wing governments and countries with alternation (Colombia, Argentina, Honduras, and El Salvador), which offer the decisive counterfactual by establishing that if the pattern is thematic rather than ideological, it must remain constant when the political sign of the government changes within the same country.

The Authoritarian Left in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua

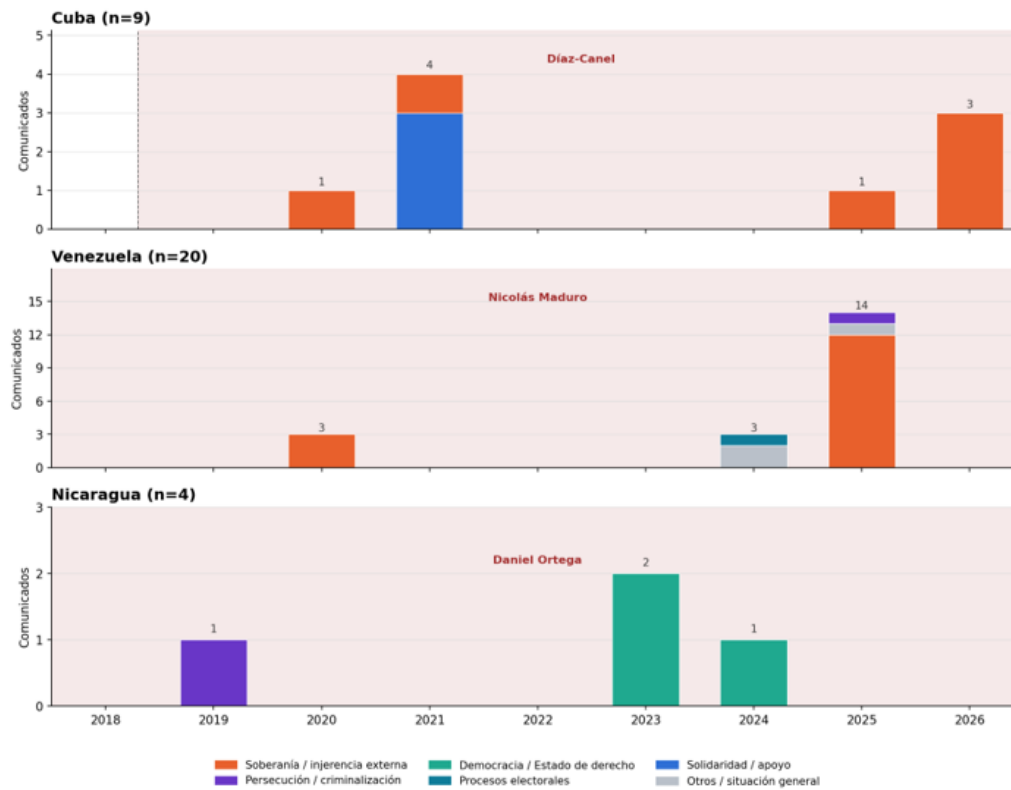
Of the countries analyzed, Cuba represents the most alarming paradigm in the sample, given that 100% of the declarations referring to the country defend Miguel Díaz-Canel's regime against "interference" and North American "aggression", with none holding the government responsible for internal repression and the deterioration of living standards. The most revealing episode is that of the protests of July 11, 2021 (11J), the largest demonstrations recorded on the island in decades, followed by summary trials, more than a thousand political prisoners documented by human rights organizations, and sustained abuses against civil society (Angel et al., 2023). That year's communiqués did not stand with the protesters; quite the opposite, the four mentions from 2021 are declarations of solidarity with the "Cuban people" against the "blockade" and denunciations of external "interference"; that is, the organization sided with the regime at the exact moment it was repressing its population. This finding takes on additional weight in light of the academic literature, which confirms that the island keeps intact its nuclei and networks of authoritarian power despite

moving into a post-totalitarian phase (Chaguaceda & Gratiús, 2026). At the same time, the regime continues to reproduce its apparatuses of repression and retains the title of Latin America's oldest and strongest autocracy.

Venezuela shows a pattern practically identical to that of the island, since 95% of the publications defend Nicolás Maduro's regime against the United States, and only a moderate defense of academia against pressure from the ruling party is recorded. The Venezuelan parallel to 11J is the presidential election of July 28, 2024 (28J), whose official results were not recognized by a large part of the international community given the regime's refusal to publish the vote tallies, and which was followed by a wave of post-electoral repression against opposition members and protesters. Far from standing with Venezuelan society, the subsequent communiqués multiplied in defense of the regime. The database records its historic peak in 2025, with fourteen mentions dominated by "sovereignty" and denunciations of "interference" and the military escalation by the United States, without a single reference to internal repression. According to Chaguaceda (2026), since Hugo Chávez's rise to power in 1999, Cuba transferred to Venezuela a comprehensive model of intelligence advising, political training, and social surveillance that included the training of militants of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela and assistance to intelligence services in identifying and neutralizing dissent. In the face of a repressive regime, the absence of direct and repeated denunciations by CLACSO is revealing and troubling.

Nicaragua represents an atypical case within the bloc. Despite registering only four communiqués, all of them directly hold Daniel Ortega's government responsible and call for the restoration of the rule of law. The most plausible explanation for this exception is not doctrinal but relational, Ortega's rule has repressed not only the right-wing opposition, but also sectors of the left itself, social movements, and academics and intellectuals once allied with Sandinismo, who constitute CLACSO's natural base. That the denunciation appears precisely when the repressor strikes its own suggests that these denunciations do not follow an abstract division between left and right, but rather a geography of political loyalties within the Latin American left. In this sense, the Nicaraguan situation does not refute the pattern documented in Cuba and Venezuela, but rather confirms it by contrast, adding variables of affinity and political ties to the analysis. Figure 3 allows the temporal distribution of these communiqués to be visualized. The Cuban peak of 2021 coincides with 11J and is made up of declarations of solidarity and sovereignty, not denunciation; the Venezuelan peak of 2025, the highest in the entire database, follows the post-electoral crisis of 28J and is dominated by the defense of sovereignty against the escalation with the United States; while the few communiqués

Figure 3. Communiqués by Year and Type for the Authoritarian Left in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua



Note. The charts show the declarations by year and type for Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, with the bands indicating the presidential term and red referring to the authoritarian left. Own elaboration.

on Nicaragua, by contrast, call for democracy and the rule of law.

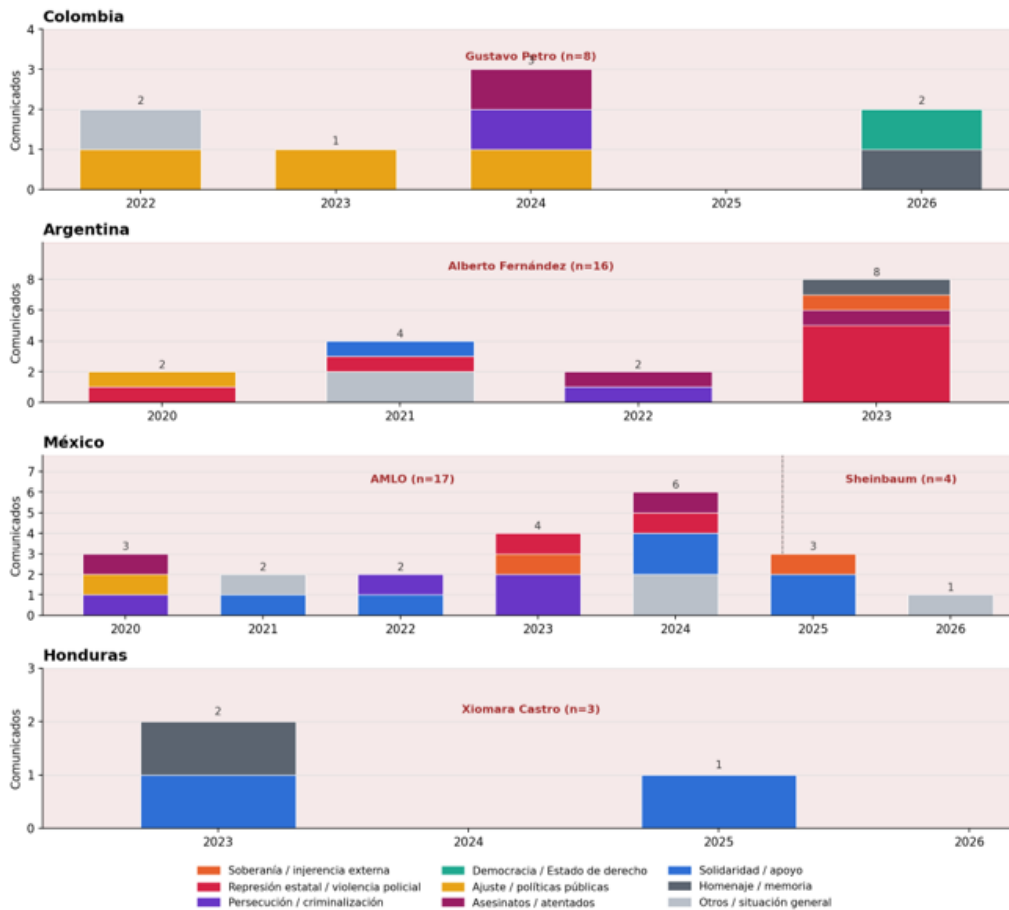
The Democratic Left in Colombia, Argentina, Honduras, and Mexico

Among the left-wing governments that came to power through elections and under democratic frameworks, the pattern of zero attribution of responsibility is repeated, though with some nuance in Mexico. Initially, in Colombia, under Petro, none of the eight pronouncements found holds the government responsible, since 25% are tributes, another 25% denounce paramilitary groups, 12.5% point to Mexican immigration authorities, and the remaining 37.5% explicitly support his political project. Likewise, in Argentina, under Alberto Fernández, none of the sixteen declarations holds him responsible, since 56.2% are directed at the opposition governor of Jujuy, 18.75% defends Cristina Fernández de Kirchner against alleged *lawfare*, and the remaining 25% denounces non-state actors.

Mexico offers the only nuance within the bloc, and it also makes it possible to observe the pattern across two successive administrations of the same ideological sign. Under Andrés Manuel López Obrador, 29% of the publications do directly hold the government responsible, a figure substantially lower than that recorded for right-wing governments, but higher than the zero attribution observed under Petro and Fernández. Under Claudia Sheinbaum, AMLO's successor, the declarations found maintain the same general orientation as her predecessor, with no shift identified toward more direct denunciations. Therefore, favorable treatment does not depend on a specific individual leadership, but persists across presidential succession as long as the government's ideological orientation is maintained.

Finally, in Honduras, under Xiomara Castro, the few declarations found likewise do not hold the national government responsible, replicating the bloc's general trend. These silences are all the more telling given that several of these governments were protagonists of episodes of tension with democratic institutions that have been widely documented in regional public

Figure 4. Communiqués by Year and Type under the Democratic Left Governments of Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, and Honduras



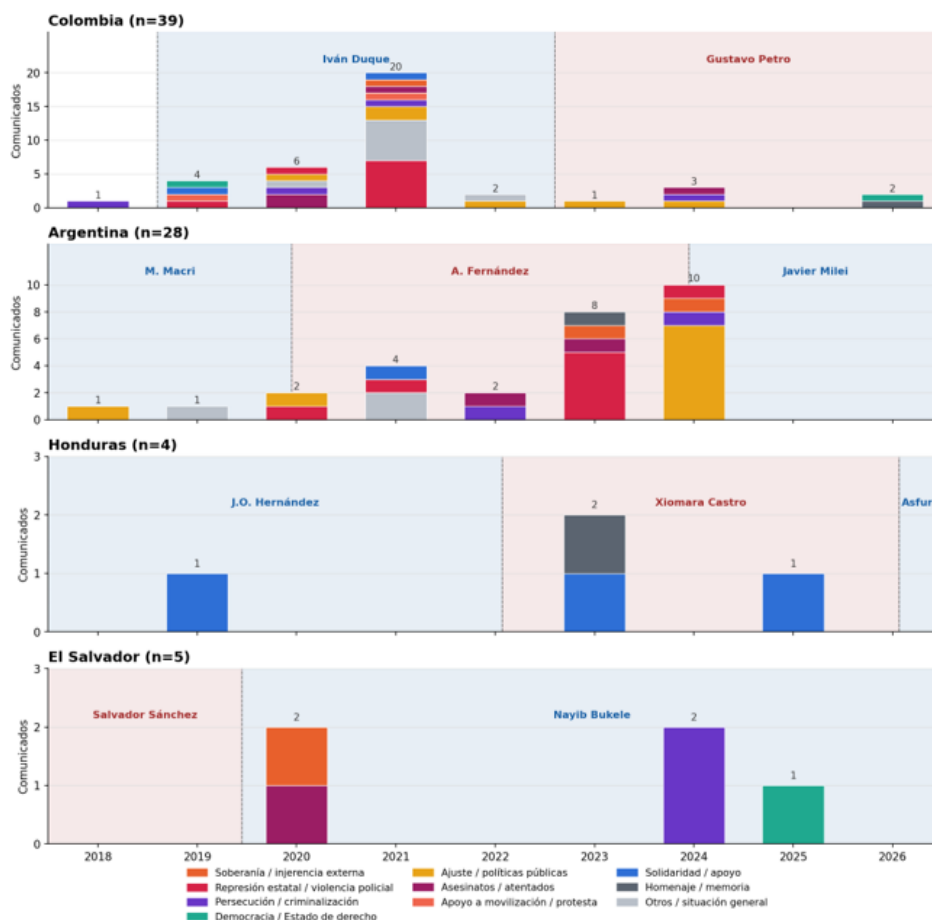
Note. The chart shows the communiqués by year and type under the democratic left governments, Petro (Colombia), Fernández (Argentina), AMLO and Sheinbaum (Mexico), and Castro (Honduras). The panels show only the period of each respective left-wing term. Own elaboration.

debate. These include the clashes of the Petro government with the courts and oversight bodies in Colombia, as well as with the press and the opposition; López Obrador's pressure on the National Electoral Institute, the critical press, and the judiciary in Mexico, deepened under Sheinbaum with the reform that subjected judicial posts to popular election; and the Castro government's disputes with the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Supreme Court in Honduras. None of these episodes, which, under a right-wing government, would have fit the categories of democracy and the rule of law that the organization itself uses, generated a single communiqué of denunciation.

In this bloc, responsibility tends to be ignored, minimized, or shifted onto third parties, with a frequency of denunciation far lower than that observed under right-wing administrations. Figure 4 shows the year-by-year pattern within each left-wing term. In Argentina, the 2023 peak under Fernández is

composed mostly of denunciations of repression attributed to the provincial government of Jujuy; in Colombia, the communiqués from the Petro period are split between tributes, persecutions attributed to third parties, and explicit support for the government's political project; and in Mexico, the continuity between AMLO and Sheinbaum is visible in the persistence of solidarity and tributes as the dominant types. It is also worth noting that academia groups the governments described here under the generic label of "Democratic Left", which simplifies their internal ideological heterogeneity, since projects such as Petro's in Colombia and those of AMLO and Sheinbaum in Mexico belong to a more radical left, "Far Left", than traditional social democracy, closer in several of their tenets to the Bolivarian ideology that inspires Cuba and Venezuela than to the moderate left of other countries such as Chile and Uruguay.

Figure 5. Communiqués by Year and Type under Right-Wing Governments and Alternation in Colombia, Argentina, Honduras, and El Salvador



Note. Communiqués by year and type in Colombia, Argentina, Honduras, and El Salvador, with presidential terms shaded according to the government's orientation (blue: right; red: left). Own elaboration.

Right-Wing Governments and Ideological Transitions in Colombia, Argentina, Honduras, and El Salvador

The following lines present the results for the countries that had right-wing governments and alternation between left and right, the most demanding counterfactual in the analysis. In Colombia, 87% of the publications directly held Iván Duque responsible, compared with 0% for his left-wing successor, Gustavo Petro. In Argentina, government responsibility went from 50% under Mauricio Macri to 0% during Alberto Fernández's government and rose again to 90% under Javier Milei's administration. Honduras replicates the sequence on a small scale, showing a single mention under the government of Juan Orlando Hernández, in which his government is held responsible, while none of the three mentions found under

Xiomara Castro hold hers responsible, split between tributes and messages of support.

In all three countries, and under the same categories of analysis, direct responsibility is activated and deactivated in sync with the political tint of the sitting government. Figure 5 illustrates this clearly. In Colombia, the historic maximum of communiqués is recorded in 2021, in the midst of the state's response to the national strike under Duque, and production collapses following Petro's arrival; in Argentina, the 2024 upturn under Milei is dominated by adjustment and public policy, while the mentions from the Fernández period were directed at other parties responsible; and in Honduras, the contrast between the mention holding Hernández responsible and the tributes and support under Castro reproduces the sequence on a small scale.

El Salvador confirms the same pattern from another angle. Under Nayib Bukele, direct denunciations are indeed recorded, 60% of the mentions hold his government responsible, but with a strikingly lower volume than that devoted to the other right-wing governments of the period. Five mentions across seven years in office, compared with the thirty-one issued under Duque in four years or the ten under Milei in just over two years. The denunciation exists, but with a reduced intensity that contrasts with the magnitude and duration of the state of exception in force in the country. This finding takes on additional relevance because Bukele tends to define himself outside the traditional left-right axis, even though CLACSO in practice treats him according to the pattern reserved for the right.

Taken together, the governments analyzed show that the variable that activates CLACSO's direct attribution of responsibility is neither the severity of events nor the country itself, but the ideological orientation and personal affinity of the government in question. The analysis of the three blocs, the authoritarian left of Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, the democratic left of Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, and Honduras, and the right-wing governments and instances of alternation in Colombia, Argentina, Honduras, and El Salvador, reveals that the documented pattern cuts across different moments, decades, and regimes of a different nature, and that, ultimately, the guiding principles of CLACSO's Working Groups are not the academic freedom and human rights the institution claims to defend, but selective political loyalty.

Limitations and Discussion

Regarding the thesis developed here, at least three reasonable objections can be raised concerning its nature, historical moment, and scope. Against the first objection, it can be argued that solidarity is not equivalent to endorsement, since defending a country against "blockades" and military threats represents a legitimate anti-imperialist position, not necessarily an endorsement of the internal policy and repression of left-wing regimes. However, the argument loses force in light of the documented pattern, since if anti-imperialist solidarity were truly independent of judgment regarding internal policy, one would expect at least some of the declarations to denounce domestic repression, but the total absence of publications that combine direct denunciations of the government with denunciations of third parties suggests that solidarity functions as a substitute for denunciation rather than as a complement to it.

The second objection worth highlighting concerns the historical moment and the actions of third countries during the period analyzed, since it could be argued that the weight

of the defensive declarations regarding Venezuela stems from the diplomatic and military pressure exerted by the United States on Nicolás Maduro's regime. However, this claim does not account for the pattern observed in the years prior to the escalation, a period during which internal repression in Cuba and Venezuela was extensively documented by human rights organizations and social organizations. Indeed, CLACSO did not speak out against the intensification of systematic rights violations and the persecution of dissidents in the two regimes, yet it does shift responsibility onto third countries.

The third objection suggests that the organization does not speak with a single outlook or voice, since it is an interdisciplinary network of autonomous intellectuals and academics that lacks a defined and homogeneous editorial line in its pronouncements. However, this objection reverses itself, since, despite being independent and dispersed groups, a systematic pattern of ideological and political affinity with the left is recorded. The same groups that directly denounce a government, such as those of Duque and Milei, choose not to do so with respect to Petro, Fernández, and Sheinbaum. Therefore, systematically demanding accountability from some governments while protecting others does not represent academic and political pluralism, but the negation of pluralism itself.

Conclusions

This article tested the suspicion that CLACSO applies a double ideological standard in its public pronouncements, finding substantial and documented evidence in its favor. The analysis of the 130 mentions of eight Latin American countries contained in the declarations and communiqués published by CLACSO's Working Groups between 2018 and 2026 shows that between 87% and 90% of the declarations concerning democratic right-wing governments directly hold the sitting government responsible, compared with 0% under democratic left-wing governments and the authoritarian regimes of Cuba and Venezuela, systematically substituting domestic responsibility with denunciations of North American interference and pressure. The country-by-country analysis, including Colombia, Argentina, El Salvador, Mexico, Honduras, Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, confirms that the pattern repeats itself across different political contexts, Nicaragua being the sole exception, though far from refuting the general pattern, it adds variables of ideological and political affinity to the personality of the sitting government.

According to Magdalena López (2026), the change in funding sources, which dismantled accountability and transparency processes, allowed, over the years, the accumulation of power under an ideologically homogeneous leadership linked to left-

wing authoritarian regimes. This finding is further connected to the academic literature documenting the deliberate linkage of intellectual and academic networks sympathetic to revolutionary ideology and authoritarian projects, together with the fact that an ideological bias favoring left-wing ideals and to the detriment of right-wing ideas prevails in the social sciences.

It remains for future research to extract and systematize the full text of the 443 declarations and communiqués of the Working Groups indexed on CLACSO's website, not only the 130 mentions concerning the eight countries analyzed here. Likewise, analyses could be developed that include other regional academic networks, allowing determination of whether the documented pattern is reflected in other institutions and regions of the world. Ultimately, the analyzed and verified suspicion that an organization created to defend academic freedom and the rights of intellectuals holds governments responsible according to their ideological tint and personal affinities sets a precedent for the importance and necessity of demanding the same standards from the democratic right, the democratic left, and the authoritarianisms that claim to represent it.

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