Environmental governance in Latin America: a comparative analysis of the region's countries' adherence to the Escazú Agreement

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the factors that influence the adherence of Latin American countries to international environmental treaties, using the Escazú Agreement as a case study. It used Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to identify the conditions for both signing and ratifying the agreement. The study argues that global environmental governance faces challenges in the region due to domestic political and institutional factors, such as the relationship between the executive and legislative branches. The analysis of the Escazú Agreement's signing revealed that the most relevant factors are the government's left-wing ideological alignment and an energy matrix that uses clean sources. Ratification, in turn, is associated with a more specific set of conditions: Amazonian countries governed by left-wing parties and countries with a large territorial extension. The study concludes that ratification is a high-risk political act that reflects domestic dynamics and the executive's ability to build consensus in Congress.
KEYWORDS: environmental governance; Escazú Agreement; Latin America; international treaties; ratification.

1. Introduction

The global environmental crisis transcends the capacity of individual states to respond. In this scenario, international law, and in particular the regime of international treaties, has emerged as a relevant mechanism for promoting cooperation and building a global environmental governance system.

Despite the normative importance of environmental treaties, which translate political cooperation into concrete legal obligations, their effectiveness is limited by challenges inherent to the international system, as they fundamentally depend on the political will of States and their capacity for internal implementation.

In Latin America, the formulation and conduct of foreign policy are complex processes in which the entry into force and binding of treaties to the domestic legal system depend, to a large extent, on approval by the Legislative Branch, where international negotiations can be approved or rejected based on domestic political and institutional considerations.

This article, therefore, seeks to answer the following research question: "What conditions favor the adherence of Latin American countries to international environmental standards?"

The relevance of this study lies in its qualitative configurational approach, which examines the adherence (or non-adherence) of the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to the Escazú Agreement. Analyzing each nation individually as a case study, the research evaluates the two stages of adherence: the signing, which reflects the foreign policy agenda, and the ratification, which indicates whether this agenda has been incorporated into the domestic policy and institutional design of each country.

The main contribution of this work is the comparative analysis of Latin American countries, which reveals how the ratification process is particularly challenging due to a confluence of institutional and political factors. By applying the *crisp-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis* (csQCA) method, the study seeks to identify the logical configurations between conditions (such as government ideological alignment, presence of agribusiness, country size, among others) and the results of signing and ratification.

Research shows that the ratification of an international treaty, far from being a mere technical-legal act, is in fact a high-risk political act that tests the Executive Branch's ability to build consensus and manage the tensions inherent in domestic politics, especially in relation to the Legislative Branch.

2. The Emergence of the Global Environmental Crisis and the Response of International Law: Environmental Governance through Treaties

The global environmental crisis, in its multiple facets, represents one of the most complex and urgent challenges for the contemporary international order. Its transboundary nature, evidenced by phenomena such as climate change and ocean pollution, transcends the individual response capacity of states.

In this context, international environmental law, and in particular the regime of international environmental treaties, has emerged as the main mechanism for promoting cooperation and building a global environmental governance system. Its development as an autonomous field of increasing relevance is a

relatively recent phenomenon, originating from the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm (1972), which catalyzed its formalization.

International environmental treaties act as the cornerstone of global environmental governance through various functions, because they address the "problem of the common good", or *free-rider problem,* in international relations.

In the environmental context, treaties provide a formal framework for cooperation, encouraging states to internalize the costs of their environmental actions. Without a binding agreement, states would have little incentive to reduce their emissions or pollution if other states do not, as they will bear the costs of mitigation but benefit from the overall reduction regardless of their actions.

The normative importance of treaties is undeniable. They translate political cooperation into concrete legal obligations: the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1985) and the subsequent Montreal Protocol (1987) are widely considered the most successful example of global environmental cooperation. The Montreal Protocol, for example, established a binding timetable for reducing the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances (ODS), leading to their near-complete elimination.

This success is often attributed to its structure of "common *but differentiated responsibilities*" where developed countries assume more ambitious goals and timelines (Stone, 2004).

The structure of treaties has also evolved to address the complexity of environmental challenges. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1992), and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES, 1973) are examples of "umbrella conventions," which establish an institutional and principled framework but depend on specific protocols for the implementation of binding targets. The Paris Agreement (2015), within the framework of the UNFCCC, represents a new governance model based on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that are submitted to and reviewed by each State, reconciling state sovereignty with the need for a collective effort.

International treaties are the backbone of the global environmental governance regime, providing the legal framework, norms, and institutions neces-

sary to implement environmental protection measures, and are therefore a relevant instrument for guiding public policies of this nature.

The effectiveness of environmental treaties, however, is limited by challenges inherent in the international system. Although international law provides the framework, its application fundamentally depends on the political will of States and their capacity for implementation (Sands, 2012).

3. Difficulties in Treaty Ratification in Latin America: A Comparative Perspective Analysis

Formulating and conducting foreign policy in Latin America, as in any democratic system, is a complex process involving multiple actors and arenas. Although the prerogative to negotiate and sign international treaties typically belongs to the Executive Branch, their entry into force and their binding effect on domestic law (ratification) depend, to a large extent, on approval by the Legislative Branch (Faria Nunes, 2010).

Institutional barriers to the ratification of environmental treaties include both the design of the treaties themselves and the national political and legal systems of participating countries. Treaties with strong legal obligations, precise commitments, and robust monitoring or enforcement mechanisms are less likely to be ratified, especially in countries where explicit legislative approval or qualified majority voting is required, as these high constitutional hurdles impede participation (Spilker; Koubi, 2016).

Globally, persistent inequalities in development and the absence of perceived benefits from environmental treaties also discourage ratification, especially among the least developed countries. The complexity of national institutions, the division of governments, and the need for consensus among diverse political actors further delay or prevent ratification, particularly in the case of multilateral agreements with broad or stringent requirements (Mazzega, 2024).

The empirical effectiveness of international environmental regimes is contingently dependent on the existence of coercive mechanisms. This is because compliance with treaties does not derive from abstract norms, but from extra-normative variables, notably interstate diplomatic pressures, diffuse social coercion and, decisively, the degree of internalization of these guidelines in domestic legal systems (Frank, 1999).

Here is the challenge: the ratification of treaties and conventions by their respective parliaments therefore constitutes a bottleneck *or* Level I of the diplomatic game, where international negotiations (Level II) can be approved or rejected by domestic political and institutional considerations (Putnam, 1988).

This approach highlights that compliance with an environmental treaty is not merely a legal act, but a political and social process, dependent on the will and capacity of States to internalize the obligations to which they have committed themselves. The validity of an international treaty, therefore, is not absolute, but mediated by the legal and political architecture of each country, which requires a comparative analysis to understand how international norms are transformed into national political agendas (Frank, 1999).

The need for ratification by Congress, or one of its Chambers, of diplomatic acts concluded by the Executive Branch, through its delegates, is an achievement, or even a direct consequence, of democratic governments (Cavalcanti, 1961). Taking Latin America from a comparative perspective, it is possible to see that this ratification process is particularly challenging, due to a confluence of institutional and political factors.

> Understanding the general conditions under which nation-states ratify international environmental treaties can contribute to a more general understanding of the 'environmentalization' of nation-states (Frank, 1999, p. 524).

This is due to the structure of government in Latin America, which is predominantly presidential, a system that can generate serious impasses in democratic governance, especially in contexts of separation of powers (Linz, 1990). Presidentialism establishes a rigid separation between the executive and legislative branches, where the president, elected independently, does not need a parliamentary majority to remain in power. However, to govern and, in our case, to advance his foreign policy agenda, the president needs the cooperation of Congress (Abranches, 2018).

The constitutions of almost all countries in the region grant the legislature the exclusive prerogative to approve or reject international treaties, with rare exceptions. This institutional design creates a potentially fundamental *veto point*. The more *veto players* (opposition parties, interest groups, etc.) a system has, the more difficult it becomes to change the *status quo* and approve a new policy, such as one foreseen in a treaty (Tsebelis, 2002).

Even in countries where the president enjoys broad prerogatives, international treaties, by their nature, require the approval of the legislature. In systems where the president does not have a majority party, which is the rule rather than the exception in Latin America (Mainwaring, Shugart, 1997), negotiation with parliament becomes a complex exercise in coalition building, concessions, and bargaining.

Beyond formal rules, the dynamics of party politics are a crucial factor. Most Latin American countries have highly fragmented multi-party systems. This fragmentation makes it difficult to form stable and cohesive majorities, making the president's government dependent on fragile parliamentary coalitions (Linz, 1990).

In many cases, the parties that make up the governing coalition are more united by agreements on the distribution of positions than by a common political agenda, including the foreign policy agenda. In contexts of high ideological polarization, the parliamentary opposition may use the non-ratification of treaties as a tool to obstruct the government's agenda: a trade treaty, for example, which for the government may represent an opportunity for growth, may be rejected by the opposition on the grounds that it threatens national industry or is ideologically unacceptable (Binder, 1999; Alter, 1998).

The Escazú Agreement serves as an exemplary case of this dynamic. In countries like Chile and Peru, non-ratification was not based solely on technical or sovereignty issues, but on a conscious political maneuver. Business *lobbies* and conservative sectors, acting as *veto players,* used disinformation narratives about supposed losses of sovereignty and risks to investments to create domestic opposition: the rejection of the treaty, in this context, was not an act of economic caution, but a strategy to weaken the progressive government and its international environmental agenda, demonstrating how a treaty can be transformed into an ideological battleground in domestic politics.

The case of human rights or environmental agreements can generate friction with conservative sectors or economic interest groups that have representatives in parliament, as specifically occurred in debates on the ratification of the Escazú Agreement, the subject of this article. A signed environmental treaty can take a long time to enter into force, and its potential universality can be compromised by the small number of contracting parties that manage to ratify it (Maffei *et al.,* 1996).

The Escazú Agreement faced serious ratification difficulties because it was wrongly associated with alleged losses of national sovereignty and risks to investment, especially in countries like Chile, Colombia, and Peru, where business *lobbies* and conservative sectors led disinformation campaigns.

In Latin America, the ratification of treaties often depends on frequently unpredictable domestic dynamics, where factors such as electoral cycles, political crises, or divergent legislative priorities postpone the internalization of international norms.

The difficulties of ratification are not uniform across the region: their intensity varies according to the institutional configuration and party system of each country.

Table 1 – Ratification difficulties in a comparative perspective

Countries with high fragmentation and weak presidency.	The absence of a consistent support base can lead to the shelving of treaty proposals, or to delayed ratifications with substantial amendments that may weaken the original commitment (Brazil, Peru and Ecuador).
Countries with a strong presidency and a legislative majority.	The ratification of human rights treaties or treaties of a constitutional nature (those that require a qualified quorum, as in Mexico) can be a longer and more controversial process.

Source: author's own work.

The difficulties faced by Latin American governments in getting their international relations agenda ratified by parliaments reflect the intricate interaction between the presidential institutional design and the complex dynamics of their party systems.

The main reason for the failure of international agreements is not in the negotiation phase, but rather in the "post-commitment policy phase." At this stage, leaders need to build domestic political consensus to sustain the commitments made, facing institutional challenges such as lack of party unity, lack of consensus within the coalition, subsequent electoral performance, or public opposition to the treaty's subject matter (Lantis, 1997).

The difficulties in ratifying the Escazú Agreement follow geopolitical patterns: countries with progressive governments tend to support it, while nations with conservative alliances or dependence on extractive industries have resisted internalizing its content.

The ratification of an international treaty, far from being a mere technical-legal act, is in fact a high-risk political act that tests the capacity

of the executive branch to build consensus and manage the tensions inherent in domestic politics. Failure to obtain ratification not only compromises the international credibility of the State, but also demonstrates the internal political weaknesses that persist in the democratic governance of Latin America.

Obtaining ratification of environmental treaties and conventions can be a sequential, complex, and time-consuming process, as failure to ratify is often linked to the political insecurity of leaders or to agreements that generate asymmetrical costs, both within and outside the country (Lantis, 1997).

4. On the Research Design

What conditions favor the adherence of Latin American countries to international environmental norms? The research that gave rise to this article sought to verify, within a qualitative configurational logic, what conditions are important for the engagement of Latin American countries in environmental foreign policy agendas, especially with regard to each nation's adherence to international environmental treaties and conventions.

In this regard, the adherence (or not) of the 33 countries of the Latin America and Caribbean region to the Escazú Agreement was considered. This regional agreement was signed with the objective of guaranteeing greater transparency of environmental information, access to justice mechanisms, greater social participation in the construction of environmental public policies, and protection for environmental defenders.

This accession necessarily involves two stages: an external one (signature) and an internal one (ratification). The first reflects a foreign policy agenda, and the second shows whether this agenda has been incorporated into the domestic policy and institutional design of each country that signed the international treaty.

In the analysis, each country in the region was considered individually as a case study, based on the results (signature and ratification) and the conditions tested in the model.

Chart 1 – Representation of the cases analyzed

Countries in the region	Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Bolivia; Chile; Colombia; Ecuador; Guyana; Mexico; Nicaragua; Panama; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Uruguay; Belize; Brazil; Costa Rica; Dominica; Grenada; Guatemala; Haiti; Jamaica; Paraguay; Peru; Dominican Republic; Cuba; Venezuela; Honduras; El Salvador; Trinidad and Tobago; Bahamas; Barbados; Suriname.
Countries that **signed** the Escazú Agreement	Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Bolivia; Chile; Colombia; Ecuador; Guyana; Mexico; Nicaragua; Panama; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Uruguay; Belize; Brazil; Costa Rica; Dominica; Grenada; Guatemala; Haiti; Jamaica; Paraguay; Peru; Dominican Republic.
Countries that **ratified** the Escazú Agreement	Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Bolivia; Chile; Colombia; Ecuador; Guyana; Mexico; Nicaragua; Panama; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Uruguay; Belize.

Source: author's own work.

In all cases, information was extracted on both outcomes (signature and ratification), as well as on the presence (or absence) of the conditions whose influence was intended to be tested, coded in a dichotomous matrix (0/1), in order to construct the model that is the object of this research.

Chart 2 – Conditions included in the model

Condition	**Content**	**Nature**
Signature	The country signed the treaty (1) or did not sign the treaty (0).	Result 1
Ratification	The country has ratified the treaty (1) or has not ratified the treaty (0).	Result 2
Left	Ideological alignment of each country's government: left (1) or right (0).	Condition 1
Amazon	The country is part of the Amazon region (1) or is not part of the Amazon region (0).	Condition 2
AgroGDP	Agriculture accounts for a significant percentage of the country's GDP (1) or agriculture does not account for a significant percentage of the country's GDP (0).	Condition 3
Extractive EITI	Country adherence (1) to the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) or non-adherence (0) of the country to the EITI.	Condition 4
HDI (>0.7)	Country with HDI above 0.7 (1) and country with HDI below 0.7 (0).	Condition 5
Size	Country with large territorial extension (1) and country with small territorial extension (0). For the purposes of this work, countries with large territorial extension were considered to be those whose territory is equal to or greater than that of Paraguay.	Condition 6
Fossil Energy	Country with influence of fossil fuels in its energy matrix (1) and country without influence of fossil fuels in its energy matrix (0).	Condition 7
Clean Energy	Country with clean energy influence in its energy matrix (1) and country without clean energy influence in its energy matrix (0).	Condition 8

Source: author's own work.

In the set of cases studied, the variables detailed above were subjected to the *crisp-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis* (csQCA) technique, as it is the appropriate qualitative research instrument to identify any logical configurations between the given conditions and the results, in order to test whether such conditions are sufficient and/or necessary for the occurrence of the results observed in the cases (Gomes Neto; Albuquerque; Barbosa, 2025).

5. Method and Analysis

Qualitative *Comparative Analysis* (QCA) is a sophisticated and common qualitative empirical research technique, developed by Ragin (1987), which posits that socially relevant facts are products of the interaction between multiple causes: eventual variations in contextual factors would be capable of producing variations in causal configurations, which he called "multiple conjunctural causality".

Applying QCA to solving empirical research problems promotes a deeper understanding of social complexity, highlighting contextual factors and allowing qualitative causal inferences about the phenomenon studied (Gomes Neto; Albuquerque; Barbosa, 2025).

Thus, the interaction between two or more causal conditions can produce different configurations that determine the occurrence (or non-occurrence) of the phenomenon studied – the "result of interest" (Ragin, 1987; Rihoux; Ragin, 2009).

> Ragin's method was conceived as a way to perform comparative analyses, seeking associations between certain conditions and the *outcome,* taking into account the set of case configurations and not only the particular effect of a variable on the *outcome.* Due to this particularity, this type of analysis is also called the configurational method, having been initially developed for the study of a small or intermediate number of cases. (Sandes-Freitas; Bizarro Neto, 2015, p. 107)

Through this tool, this research sought to understand the necessary and/or sufficient conditions for the alignment of Latin American countries with the international environmental policy agenda, both in the initial signing phase and in the conclusive phase of internal ratification, taking as the unit of analysis the adherence of each country to the Escazú Agreement.

The investigated results and their respective conditions were subjected to comparative qualitative analysis (QCA), using the *crisp-set*[1] (*csQCA)*[2] *method*, employing the causal conditions of the analysis, firstly, in relation to the *outcomes* tested in the model.

For the interpretation of causal configurations generated by QCA analysis, it must be assumed that the conditions presented in "UPPERCASE" (capital letters) are *present* in the configuration, while the conditions presented in "lowercase" (lowercase letters) are *absent* from the configuration found (Rihoux; Ragin, 2009; Gomes Neto; Albuquerque; Barbosa, 2025).

In the first phase, the qualitative associations between conditions 1 to 4 and the *Signature result were tested.*

Chart 3 – Results of the first block test (*csQCA)*

Results (solution)	Cases (covered by the solution)
AMAZON * AGROGDP * EXTRACTIVE-EITI	Bolivia, Guyana, Ecuador and Brazil
+	
LEFT * AGROGDP * EXTRACTIVE-EITI	Bolivia, Guyana, Nicaragua, Dominica and Haiti
+	
LEFT * AMAZON * AGROGDP * EXTRACTIVE-EITI	Argentina and the Dominican Republic

Source: author's own work.

The results from the first block of analysis indicate that three configurations contributed to the signing of the Escazú Agreement:

> a) the countries of the Amazon region, with a high representation of agribusiness in the GDP and without adherence to the EITI;
>
> b) countries governed by left-wing parties, with a high representation of agribusiness in GDP and without adherence to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI);
>
> c) countries governed by left-wing parties that have joined the EITI, that are not in the Amazon region, and that do not have a high representation of agribusiness in their GDP.

1 *Crisp-set* analysis (csQCA) employs conditions that are dichotomous, organized into so-called "raw sets," admitting values that can be translated into 0 or 1 (true or false, low or high, small or large, etc.). This type of analysis is used to obtain "minimal formulas," with the challenge being the dichotomization of variables (Sandes-Freitas; Bizarro Neto, 2015; Gomes Neto; Albuquerque, Barbosa, 2025).

2 Comparative empirical tests of the QCA were performed using *Tosmana software*, version 1.6.1.0.

Chart 4 – Truth chart for the first block (*csQCA)*

QCA	LEFT	AMAZON	AGROGDP	EXTRACTIVE EITI	SIGNATURE
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA (1), SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES (1), SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS (1), SAINT LUCIA (1), URUGUAY (1), BAHAMAS (0), BARBADOS (0)	0	0	0	0	C
BELIZE (1), COSTA RICA (1), GRANADA (1), GUATEMALA (1), JAMAICA (1), PARAGUAY (1), HONDURAS (0), EL SALVADOR (0)	0	0	1	0	C
ECUADOR, BRAZIL	0	1	1	0	1
CHILE (1), MEXICO (1), PANAMA (1), CUBA (0), TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (0)	1	0	0	0	C
ARGENTINA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	1	0	0	1	1
Nicaragua, Dominica, Haiti	1	0	1	0	1
VENEZUELA	1	1	0	0	0
BOLIVIA, GUYANA	1	1	1	0	1
COLOMBIA (1), PERU (1), SURINAME (0)	1	1	1	1	C

Source: author's own work.
Note: "C" represents a contradiction, that is, the same causal configuration presents two distinct results.

Applying Boolean reduction to the above configurations, excluding redundant conditions, yields the following minimal formula:

LEFT → SIGNATURE

The presence of a left-leaning government is sufficient to guarantee the signing of the aforementioned treaty, something expected given the international political agenda of the respective governments.

In a second phase, qualitative associations between conditions 5 to 8 and the *Signature result were tested.*

Chart 5 – Results of the second block test (csQCA)

Results (solution)	Cases (covered by the solution)
HDI (>0.7) * SIZE * CLEAN ENERGY	Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay and Ecuador
+	
HDI (>0.7) * FOSSIL ENERGY * CLEAN ENERGY	Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay, Panama, Uruguay and Costa Rica
+	
HDI (>0.7) * SIZE * CLEAN ENERGY	Nicaragua and Guatemala

+	
SIZE * FOSSIL ENERGY * CLEAN ENERGY	Panama, Uruguay, Costa Rica

Source: author's own work.

The results of the most relevant configurations in the second block of analysis indicate that four configurations contributed to the signing of the Escazú Agreement:

a) large countries with a high HDI and an energy matrix that employs clean energy sources;

b) countries with a high HDI and an energy matrix that employs both fossil fuel and clean energy sources;

c) small countries with low HDI and an energy matrix that employs clean energy sources;

d) small countries with an energy matrix that employs both fossil fuel and clean energy sources.

It is noteworthy that conditions relating to a high HDI (Human Development Index) and the existence of an energy matrix that employs clean energy sources are determining factors for the outcome of signing the Agreement.

Chart 6 – Truth chart for the second block (*csQCA)*

QCA	HDI (>0.7)	SIZE	ENERGY FOSSIL	ENERGY CLEAN	SIGNATURE
NICARAGUA, GUATEMALA	0	0	0	1	1
HAITI	0	0	1	0	1
HONDURAS, EL SALVADOR	0	0	1	1	0
BOLIVIA, GUYANA	0	1	1	0	1
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA (1), CHILE (1), SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES (1), SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS (1), SAINT LUCIA (1), BELIZE (1), DOMINICA (1), GRANADA (1), JAMAICA (1), DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (1), CUBA (0), TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (0), BAHAMAS (0), BARBADOS (0)	1	0	1	0	C
PANAMA, URUGUAY, COSTA RICA	1	0	1	1	1
ECUADOR	1	1	0	1	1
ARGENTINA (1), MEXICO (1), PERU (1), VENEZUELA (0), SURINAME (0)	1	1	1	0	C
Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay	1	1	1	1	1

Source: Author's own work.
Note: "C" represents a contradiction, that is, the same causal configuration presents two distinct results.

Applying Boolean reduction to the above configurations, excluding redundant conditions, yields the following minimal formula:

CLEAN ENERGY → SIGNATURE

The fact that countries have an energy matrix that employs clean energy sources is sufficient to guarantee the outcome of signing the treaty, demonstrating that less dependence on fossil fuels contributes to adherence to the international environmental agenda in the Latin American regional context.

In a third block, the qualitative associations between conditions 1 to 4 and the *Ratification outcome were tested.*

Chart 7 – Results of the third block test (*csQCA)*

Results (solution)	Cases (covered by the solution)
LEFT * AMAZON * EXTRACTIVE-EITI	Bolivia and Guyana

Source: author's own work.

The results of the third block of analysis (referring to the *Ratification outcome)* indicate only one relevant configuration for the internal ratification of the Escazú Agreement to occur: Amazonian countries governed by left-wing parties and that are not extractive industries.

This could be observed in Brazil itself, because, although Brazilian diplomacy signed the Agreement as part of an environmental foreign policy agenda, the Bolsonaro government (right-wing) never included the ratification of the document in the National Congress on its legislative agenda.

Chart 8 – Truth chart for the third block (*csQCA)*

QCA	LEFT	AMAZON	AGROGDP	EXTRACTIVE EITI	RATIFICATION
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA (1), SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES (1), SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS (1), SAINT LUCIA (1), URUGUAY (1), BAHAMAS (0), BARBADOS (0)	0	0	0	0	C
BELIZE (1), COSTA RICA (0), GRANADA (0), GUATEMALA (0), JAMAICA (0), PARAGUAY (0), HONDURAS (0), EL SALVADOR (0)	0	0	1	0	C
ECUADOR (1), BRAZIL (0)	0	1	1	0	C
CHILE (1), MEXICO (1), PANAMA (1), CUBA (0), TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (0)	1	0	0	0	C

QCA	LEFT	AMAZON	AGROGDP	EXTRACTIVE EITI	RATIFICATION
ARGENTINA (1), DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (0)	1	0	0	1	C
NICARAGUA (1), DOMINICA (0), HAITI (0)	1	0	1	0	C
VENEZUELA	1	1	0	0	0
BOLIVIA, GUYANA	1	1	1	0	1
COLOMBIA (1), PERU (0), SURINAME (0)	1	1	1	1	C

Source: author's own work.
Note: "C" represents a contradiction, that is, the same causal configuration presents two distinct results.

Finally, in a fourth and final section, the qualitative associations between conditions 5 to 8 and the *Ratification outcome were tested.*

Chart 9 – Results of the fourth block test (*csQCA)*

Results (solution)	Cases (covered by the solution)
HDI (>0.7) * SIZE * FOSSIL ENERGY * CLEAN ENERGY	Bolivia and Guyana
+	
HDI (>0.7) * SIZE * FOSSIL ENERGY * CLEAN ENERGY	Ecuador

Source: author's own work.

The results of the fourth analysis block (referring to the Ratification outcome) indicate two relevant configurations for the internal ratification of the Escazú Agreement to occur:

a) large countries with low HDI and dependent on fossil fuels;

b) large countries with a high HDI and an energy matrix that employs clean energy sources.

Chart 10 – Truth chart for the fourth block (csQCA)

QCA	HDI (>0.7)	SIZE	ENERGY FOSSIL	ENERGY CLEAN	RATIFICATION
NICARAGUA (1), GUATEMALA (0)	0	0	0	1	C
HAITI	0	0	1	0	0
HONDURAS, EL SALVADOR	0	0	1	1	0
BOLIVIA, GUYANA	0	1	1	0	1

QCA	HDI (>0.7)	SIZE	ENERGY FOSSIL	ENERGY CLEAN	RATIFICATION
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA (1), CHILE (1), SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES (1), SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS (1), SAINT LUCIA (1), BELIZE (1), DOMINICA (0), GRANADA (0), JAMAICA (0), DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (0), CUBA (0), TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (0), BAHAMAS (0), BARBADOS (0)	1	0	1	0	C
PANAMA (1), URUGUAY (1), COSTA RICA (0)	1	0	1	1	C
ECUADOR	1	1	0	1	1
ARGENTINA (1), MEXICO (1), PERU (0), VENEZUELA (0), SURINAME (0)	1	1	1	0	C
COLOMBIA (1), BRAZIL (0), PARAGUAY (0)	1	1	1	1	C

Source: author's own work.
Note: "C" represents a contradiction, that is, the same causal configuration presents two distinct results.

Applying Boolean reduction to the above configurations, excluding redundant conditions, yields the following minimal formula:

SIZE → RATIFICATION

The presence of the condition of being a country with a large territorial extension is sufficient for the ratification of the treaty, which shows a greater association between the result and larger countries, provided they are governed by left-wing coalitions. Among the countries with smaller territorial extensions, contradictory results were found, some ratifying the Agreement and others postponing the moment of internal ratification.

In summary, the research results, based on the causal configurations found, confirm that the ratification of environmental treaties is a more complex process than signing, as it depends on the government's ability to navigate internal political dynamics. While signing reflects an ideological alignment and initial economic viability, ratification is a test of a country's governance capacity, demonstrating whether the executive branch can build the necessary consensus to overcome institutional and political barriers.

6. Conclusions

The research reached significant conclusions that not only answered its central research question but also opened up new and promising research agendas in the field of environmental governance and international relations in

Latin America. It demonstrated a thorough understanding of treaty accession processes that go far beyond mere technical formalities.

The central question of the article, which sought to identify the factors influencing the adherence of Latin American countries to international environmental treaties, was answered categorically and in a multifaceted manner. Adherence, in its signing and ratification phases, is an intrinsically political process, shaped by a complex interaction of domestic factors. Specifically, the adoption of a configurational approach, through Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), allowed for the identification of the causal conditions that, together, lead to adherence, rejecting explanations based on isolated variables.

Regarding the signing phase of the Escazú Agreement, the study concluded that the ideological variable assumes a prominent centrality. The presence of left-leaning governments, combined with an energy matrix that already employs clean energy sources, creates the scenario most conducive to signing. This suggests that ideological affinity with the global environmental protection agenda and a lower economic dependence on fossil fuels are the main drivers of the initial commitment to the treaty. The signing, therefore, reflects a political alignment with an agenda and initial economic viability.

The ratification phase, however, proves to be a much more complex and restricted challenge: unlike signing, ratification is a "choke point" and a high-risk political act. The causal conditions for ratification are more specific and restrictive: ratification is associated with Amazonian countries governed by left-wing parties and possessing a large territorial extension. This demonstrates that ratification requires political consensus and an executive capacity to overcome internal barriers, which does not always materialize.

The ratification of environmental treaties, far from being a mere technical -legal procedure, is a political act that reflects the internal dynamics of a State, especially the capacity of the executive branch to build consensus and overcome political weaknesses. Presidentialism and party fragmentation, frequently present in Latin America, act as "veto points" that can undermine the implementation of international commitments. A possible failure in ratification not only highlights the ineffectiveness of domestic institutions but also compromises the State's international credibility.

Based on these conclusions, new research agendas emerge. First, replicating the configurational analysis model for other environmental treaties in Latin America, such as those related to biodiversity or pollution, could validate or refute the causal configurations found for the Escazú Agreement. Analyzing a

diversity of treaties would allow us to verify whether the same domestic political conditions (ideological alignment, energy matrix, territorial extent) are universally applicable in the region or whether adherence is idiosyncratic to each type of agreement.

Secondly, future research could explore the "post-commitment policy phase" in greater depth to trace the exact causal chain leading to the failure or success of ratification in specific cases. Such a proposal would allow for a more accurate understanding of how veto factors operate in practice, identifying the exact institutions and political actors who oppose ratification, as well as the strategies used to overcome (or not overcome) this opposition.

Finally, the research opened avenues for a broader comparative investigation, extending the scope beyond Latin America. Studying adherence to environmental treaties in other regions of the Global South (Africa, Asia) would allow us to determine whether ratification difficulties are a phenomenon particular to Latin America or whether they are common traits of political systems with similar institutional characteristics, such as presidentialism and high party fragmentation.

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