

# LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES



Call for Manuscripts for a Thematic Issue of *Latin American Perspectives*

## **Reimagining Democracy in Latin America**

## **Reimaginar la democracia en América Latina**

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In Latin America, most contemporary democratic regimes were consolidated in the 1980s, following the collapse of military dictatorships. This occurred in a context of defeat for the left, growing economic dependence in the region, and reinforced political subordination to the United States. The almost exclusive divide between democracy and dictatorship, although decisive for the recovery of freedoms, displaced the indigenous political and theoretical agendas of the left, which were focused on the structural transformation of the region and driven by a combination of anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist ideologies. As the ideologues of the “democratic turn” themselves acknowledged, the most significant fact about the actions of the actually existing democracies is that not only did they fail to solve the structural problems of dependent capitalism in Latin America, but they also largely accentuated them. This occurred despite the fact that very significant popular advances were made during the first decade and a half of the 21st century. The systemic impossibility of updating the old socialist and communist projects on the continent in the 21st century is shifting the horizon of expectations of the left toward the imagination of another democratic agenda, not subsumed by liberal democracy, anchored in the objective opportunities that are opening up in the new regional and global scenarios.

This dossier aims to contribute to the discussion on the current state of established democracies in Latin America, focusing on how they intertwine with regional capitalist forms. It also seeks to explore new visions of democracy for left-wing politics, liberating the concept from its liberal capture since the 1980s and reconnecting it with democratic agendas deployed in the Global South by national liberation movements since the mid-20th century. A first hypothesis we propose is that the relationship between capitalism and democracy—and, later, between neoliberalism and democracy—as theorized by the intellectual left to elucidate the central antagonisms of the 20th and 21st centuries in Latin America, today needs to be reimagined from a perspective that considers the opposition between competing historical-material

configurations of democracy. A democracy achieved in the region is not condemned to function as a political regime that reproduces inequalities within countries, nor inequalities between imperial powers and our continent.

Articles may be submitted in English, Spanish, and Portuguese and address, among others, the following topics:

- The scope, limitations, and problems of the liberal democracy agenda that took hold in the region beginning in the 1980s.
- The political economy of democracy in Latin America in contemporary capitalism, considering financialization, global value chains, concentration of wealth, job insecurity and informality, tensions in social protection, and the reconfiguration of sovereignty in the face of transnational corporations and platforms.
- The contemporary configuration of the digital public sphere and its effects on Latin American democracies, considering the role of platforms and artificial intelligence in the production of political subjectivities, the circulation of misinformation, polarization, and new forms of surveillance.
- The socio-ecological crisis as a structural challenge for formal democracies in the region, considering territorial conflicts associated with extractivism, energy transitions, climate justice, and disputes over the material production of life.
- Debates on “global democracy,” offering a critical interpretation of dominant liberal globalist views, with an emphasis on cosmopolitan perspectives.
- Alternative visions of national and global democracies, to reconceptualize—among other aspects—the forms of political organization of nation states in Latin America in recent decades.
- New perspectives for left-wing democracy in building a transformative political agenda for the region.

For full details about this and other calls for manuscripts and submission information, see:  
<http://latinamericanperspectives.com/current-calls-for-manuscripts/>

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