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The new rights in Latin America: ideas, actors, and political strategies

In Latin America, the progressive-populist cycle and the neoliberal order's crisis at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries reshaped political and ideological spheres. The idea of new rights (as well as new lefts) emerged in the field of social sciences, bringing up new and old questions. As left-wing forces developed, right-wing forces were also renewed and showed a greater presence, especially after the crisis experienced by many progressive governments in the region. Since 2008 there has been a shift in the correlation of forces in which, either through elections or new types of coups d'état, right-wing governments have ascended to State administration and demonstrated new strategies of entangling political and institutional spaces. According to Fabrício Pereira da Silva (2019), it is a reaction to the "excess of people," with its limitations and ambiguities, that marked the experiences of the progressive cycle.

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The right-wing forces that emerged in this historical context – both those that remained ruling and those that transitioned to opposing parties – adapted political intervention strategies, social alliances, discourses, and representation formats, as well as revisiting ideological interpretations and identities of the past, defining, therefore, some of its characteristics. The articles of this dossier approach some of these topics, particularly those linked to ideological perspectives, the political and institutional bonds of the right within the legislative and judicial powers, and the relationship established with corporate and economic actors.

Right-wing forces are not new in the world, nor in Latin America, but they have adopted a plurality of positions according to space and time. Upon examining the second half of the last century, it is possible to differentiate the dictatorial right (1964-1985) from the neoliberal right (1985-2000) and then what we call “new rights” that emerged from 2000 onwards. This category of “new rights” encompasses a series of concepts such as radical right, populist radical right, and ultra-right, which refer to an ideologically ambivalent right that participates in the democratic system, but which tensions it to the point of being against liberal democracy (Alenda y Escoffier, 2024; Bustamante, 2023; Mudde, 2021; Zanotti and Roberts, 2021). Furthermore, these new rights tend to pressure traditional rights and their political parties, competing for hegemony. However, we understand “new rights” as a historical stage of right-wing forces in Latin America that started with Piñera (2010-2014 and 2018-2022) in Chile; Federico Franco (2012-2013), Cartes (2013-2018) and Abdo Benítez (2018-2023) in Paraguay; Macri (2015-2019) and Milei (2023) in Argentina; Temer (2016-2018) and Bolsonaro (2019-2022) in Brazil; Lasso (2021-2023) and Noboa (2023) in Ecuador; Duque (2018-2022) in Colombia; Bukele (2019) in El Salvador; Lacalle Pou (2020) in Uruguay, and the de facto governments of Añez (2019) in Bolivia and Dina Boluarte in Peru (2022).

This dossier focuses on this heterogeneous third stage hereby referred to as the “new rights,” although there are some articles that

address other historical periods that inevitably dialogue with the present. In the years following Trump's victory in the United States, the right-wing in Latin America ascended to the center of the political scene, displaying its radical features. These dynamics have exposed that the new rights have grown differently in each country: in some cases it has been linked with governments like those of Piñera and Cartes (even when they sought to confront them, they ended up articulating with them), while the radical right grew outside the governments or against them, accusing these administrations of not being sufficiently right-wing oriented or of being reversals of progressivism. For example, in Argentina, the economist Javier Milei, an exponent of radicalized right, became president; in Chile, the lawyer José Antonio Kast left his traditional right-wing background behind and even disputed the second round of the presidential election against the later winner, Gabriel Boric; in Uruguay, the Partido de la Gente, the Cabildo Abierto or initiatives such as Un Solo Uruguay seek to overcome the cleavage between progressivism and center-right, which is a characteristic of the Uruguayan political system, but with different dynamics (and impact).

On the one hand, the right has been calling for the representation of interests through non-electoral strategies (corporations, media, technocratic networks, Think Thanks) and, on the other, it has developed anti-establishment or non-partisan (independent candidates who, soon after winning elections, congregate in political parties) electoral movements. In this sense, this dossier also addresses what some authors call [the "swarm"](#) of Latin American rights (Ubilluz; Bolo-Varela, 2024), with their terminological and ideological narratives, with their new variants, but also with their historical continuities.

The first two articles of this dossier focus on this historical perspective, particularly within the Cold War context, and in two geographical spaces in which it is possible to analyze the weight of the

nation and intellectuals when thinking about state imaginaries. The first by André Kaysel, ***The Nation and its Others: nationalism and counterinsurgency in the discourse of the Latin American Anti Communist Confederation (CAL)***, addresses the representations of the nation and nationalism in the ideological discourse of the Latin American Anti Communist Confederation (CAL) between the 1960s and 1980s. The author demonstrates how the CAL discourse, which combined an organicist conception of the nation based on the National Security Doctrine (DSN), disputes the very idea of the nation with its communist enemies in a critical scenario in which it also faced its traditional ally, the United States, discourse in defense of the Human Rights.

In the same timeframe and problematizing the weight of anti-Semitism in the memories of the Argentine nationalist right having the Adolf Eichmann case as the historical background, Celina Albornoz, ***National sovereignty and anti-semitism: the memories of the Argentine nationalist right in facing the Eichmann case***, focuses on the actions of youth groups such as the *Movimiento Nacionalista Tacuara* and the *Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista* against the Argentine Jewish community. According to Albornoz's hypothesis, protests over the violation of national sovereignty were the subterfuge to hide the racial nature of these anti-Semitism movements, acquiring special relevance as the anti-Zionism facade. In the memories revisited in the present, it is evident the intention to shade, omit, or silence the practice of anti-Semitic violence deployed in the past.

The next section presents four articles in the field of ideas and productions of meaning that share the time frame of current rights. Thiago Augusto C. Pereira and Ezequiel Saferstein, ***The new right and their books: right-wing authors, publishers, and best sellers in Brazil and Argentina***, analyze the editorial production of books written by self-styled new rightists in Brazil and Argentina, which generated a productive and profitable segment in the editorial industry and repercussions in the

cultural and political spheres. Understood as cultural, commercial, and ideological products, these books play an important role in consolidating a discursive structure associated with the “new right” in these countries. Furthermore, they illustrate how publishing markets are responsible for renewing the ideological references embodied by these authors.

In the same heuristic direction, Juan Jesús Morales, ***Libertarian movement and Prophets of the market in Chile: the ideas of Axel Kaiser***, explores a selection of best-seller books by Axel Kaiser, one of the most prominent representatives of the libertarian movement in Chile in recent years. Diving into the most representative ideas of this public intellectual and based on the sociology of intellectuals and the sociology of public interventions, the article problematizes how the libertarian movement in Chile is constituting an ideological alternative to cultural Marxism, building a new common sense based on economic liberalism, and appealing to emotions and economic education. In addition, the article reflects on how books work as cultural devices that provide meaning and make right-wing ideas available to the public.

Another venue that is also dedicated to spreading right-wing ideas is the *Think Tanks*. Ana Mercado in ***Right-wing think tanks as political intervention mechanisms during the pandemic in Latin America: their perception about the State in Chile, Colombia, and Argentina***, problematizes the idea that this ideological group has about the State in the face of the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The article analyzes the role played by right-wing *Think Tanks* as mechanisms of political intervention that have their strategies based on leveraging experts in the field, producing and circulating ideas and activism through the transnational networks they are part of. The author studies the production of perceptions about the State and the management of the COVID-19 pandemic from three *Think Tanks* in Argentina, Chile, and Colombia, as well as the activities of two transnational networks in 2020.

The next article presents an analysis of the scientific field during the government of Jair Bolsonaro. Enzo Andrés Scargiali, ***The political arm of the scientific field: The Brazilian Society for the Progress of Science during the government of Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022)***, explains political intervention in the scientific field in the context of Jair Bolsonaro's government (2018-2022) in Brazil. The article analyzes the relationship between the scientific and political fields in the country, recognizing the main political and economic agents that supported them and the policies promoted in the area of science and technology. The article focuses on the organization and political action of the Brazilian scientific community through the Brazilian Society for the Progress of Science (SBPC).

A third section of articles groups studies that observe the institutional dimensions of the rights and their corporate actors. Florencia Prego, ***Judicialization of politics and legal wars in the 21st century. an analysis of the cases of Argentina, Brazil, and Ecuador***, analyze legal processes within the framework of legal wars against political leaders and members of governments who led the processes of social change that took place in Argentina, Brazil, and Ecuador. The author's starting point is the idea that legal wars constitute a phenomenon typical of the 21st century and are a strategy supported by institutional and media mechanisms that appeal to legal formats (supported by criminal law and the rules of formal democracy) and illegal formats. (through the creation of exception norms) with the aim of conditioning electoral scenarios and generating a disciplining effect on the political system and state dynamics.

In the same realm of radical rights and the judicialization of politics, Ariel Goldstein, ***Peru: transition of the radical right towards authoritarianism***, focuses on a country less studied in social sciences. The author analyzes the period between Pedro Castillo coming to power, and his fall, followed by Dina Boluarte's presidency, demonstrating the transition to a type of authoritarian government supported by the radical right with the Congress, the military, and the police officers support. In

addition, it reflects on how these groups are also nourished by external support such as the Vox party in Spain.

Finally, Mónica Nikolaychuk, ***Right wings and corporate political action in the agricultural sector in Argentina (2015-2019) and Paraguay (2013-2018)***, researches the political action of economic corporations. The article reconstructs the link between the right and the economic elite in Argentina and Paraguay through the study of agricultural political-business action during the governments of Mauricio Macri (2015-2019) and Horacio Cartes (2013-2018), demonstrating how the dimension that determines the predominant type of political-business action in the agricultural sector is the ideology of the government that holds the national administration. During the populist-progressive governments, the main strategy of the agricultural business community in these countries was to intensify its corporate dimension and political conflict. On the other hand, when the right arose to power in Argentina (2015) and Paraguay (2013), the strategy of institutional articulation in the executive branch was prioritized through individuals who represented the private sector, relegating the business organizations to a secondary role. Finally, the book review presented by Martin Rafael Duarte Penayo, ***Radical right, global family of rights and Ibersphere. Vox's role in Latin America***, reflects on the work of Ariel Goldstein, *The authoritarian reconquest: how the global right threatens democracy in Latin America*, and how the European radical right builds ties and articulates global agendas with their Latin American right-wing counterparts.

In conclusion, we consider this dossier to be a contribution to the field of study of Latin American rights, given the articles present discourses, ideas, themes, and topics that characterize the regional specificity of these new rights. These studies also dialogue with a broader phenomenon such as the radicalization of the right at a global level. Authors such as Charles Tilly (2013) remind us that the processes of “de-democratization” are not

exclusive to one country or region. In any case, we invite you to carefully read this series of articles that help to better understand the political, ideological, intellectual, and economic forces that cause no small confusion in an already unstable Latin America.

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