From Revolution to Reform: Latin America's Transitions, Discontents, and Challenges in the 20th century

Selbin, E. & Roberts, K. M.

1Department of Public Finance, College of Business, Feng Chia University, Taiwan
2 Research scholar, University of Hyderabad, India
* Corresponding author: tangi.photi@gmail.com

Abstract

Throughout its New Era, the Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales has addressed, from different disciplinary and thematic perspectives , the transformations of politics at national , regional and global levels. Following this broad line of interest , this issue brings together diverse approaches to the new dynamics , expressions and spaces that make up and arise from the transitions and challenges in the region, as well as from the discontents. Our attention to the changes in politics has been directed towards a very varied range of processes and configurations associated with the challenges of and by democratization, concerns about the construction of a new political order, the uncertainty arising from exhausted models at the national and international level , the process of the European Union and the collapse of the Berlin Wall , the emergence of different and renewed interests that include the crisis of the parties, the limits of representation and disaffection , the decentralization of politics and the State , social movements , productive restructuring, decentralization , privatization , economic and financial deregulation , the trans nationalization of public policies and globalization, together with the emergence of new sociocultural identities , in which hybridization and diversity show their lights . In turn, marked by the directions of the first decades of this century, issues such as inequality, poverty, exclusion and vulnerability were combined with processes of growing social

conflict and institutional crises that gave rise to new forms of collective action by social movements and other forms of organization , as well as social struggles in the region , while the emergence of large Global problems have exceeded the limits and capacity of the state. Migratory avalanches, terrorism, organized crime , the economic and financial crisis have been structuring the transformations of the political world in the new century , which have inaugurated expressions, spaces and dynamics hitherto unknown .

Introduction

Once again, the transformations of power and social practices, new ways of thinking, actors and configurations call us to reflect on recurring and new dimensions, in three broad spaces or dimensions: international, national and local. This is how diverse our number is in the detection of the issues that outline the need to think about the new. Times of uncertainty, of unexpected dynamics and of searches. What yesterday seemed impossible, reality today registers as a new condition, as a reference to consider and under which to operate. It seems that the instruments of prediction and control have entered into unusual obsolescence and practices are multiplying. Paradoxes, outdated paradigms , impossible interactions , economic imbalances , astonishing social trends , unthinkable innovations by human beings .

In Latin America , the dynamics and uncertainties are becoming more intense , like successive changes. Almost 200 years of republican life have not been enough for the countries of the region and their communities to find their vocation and their paths and that sort of balance, stability and harmony that ensures a calm and peaceful history . The world cartography is not a clear beacon.

Despite the localist tradition , the local sphere is still an arena with efforts to limit the boundaries of public-private action. New actors are present in the municipal dimension to compete for factors for the generation of well - being , driven by the interest in taking away the powers that were once the exclusive competence of public affairs . Without clear and defined consensus, in the new visions and conceptions local development can

apparently be conceived as a convergence of presences and shared efforts. Of intermittent participations, of punctual contributions, as well as diffuse responsibilities.

In a framework of imperfect democracy , Latin American institutions and organizations stage their respective disputes. Actors pursuing their own interests, in their own name or through intermediaries , present their initiatives in the different arenas, create their alliances , and impose their resources in order to establish new rules and novel provisions. Private initiative, always attentive to official provisions, presents its own resources, puts forward its own arguments , and protects its own interests. Even so, it has been understood that disputes can occur within institutionalized frameworks and, with few exceptions, disputes can be resolved in the light of the law.

At the international level, asymmetries in Latin America are linked to national and regional regulations that impose harsh conditions on their populations . Population mobility is a rational solution to the difficult conditions of some social groups, with aspirations to influence the migration policies of other nations . Discourses of support and solidarity , as well as return policies , are not long in coming. Despite treaties, economic and political convenience , migration flows will always be on the international agenda as one of the factors of greatest tension and concern. Furthermore, migration processes emerge as one of the fundamental sources of social change .

The new conditions and complexities of the current times are undoubtedly transforming political action and the ways of dealing with public affairs. Political discourses and platforms embrace new and old possibilities of exercising public power .

political. In this sense, in the face of social, economic and political dynamics, populism, radicalism, left and right will be options that political actors must consider, who in their desire to capitalize on the circumstances as well as to face current times, will find in these discourses ideological supports with certain possibilities. In times of turbulence and uncertainty , any ideological formula can become an opportune response . This imprints and even accentuates change , crisis and uncertainty as current features of our Latin

America .

The transitions to democracy in the region continue , accompanied by citizen discontent stemming from the still unsatisfactory results produced; the effective and still pending development of an international cooperation policy that is up to the task of an increasingly interdependent system, where conflict and cooperation have ceased to be a matter of a State model to be framed in a global political system characterized increasingly by interdependence ; the never sufficiently dimensioned impact of the media on political life , from which electoral campaigns cease to be an exceptional communicative forum in which the multiple democratic dialogue between governors and governed is intensified and made more evident to emerge as an expression of a political market where the struggle of images categorically replaces the dispute between ideas and programs . Likewise , new exercises of collective action are needed that allow consolidating changes in the practices and frameworks of politics , the various mechanisms that outline decision - making in spaces of civil society ; the local level and development projects and programs , among others .

Renewed commitments to democratic qualities, in the plural (Morlino, 2007), [1] together with the democratic State and the identities that make up the national, can be recognized as determinants of the democratic identity of countries. Moderation and low radicalism, considered elements of democratic consolidation, are closely related to patterns of citizen involvement , moderation and even indifference that constitute (or lack thereof) political cultures , in light of the conditions that guarantee democratic functioning. Party institutionalization , consequently , is configured as an ingredient of democratic quality , but it is not the only one. Contrary to authoritarianism, democracy privileges the development of organized identities and interests . In this sense, it is possible to recognize that not only the presence of a democratic State and democratic quality contribute to the construction of democratic identity, but also collective identity and interests.

Contextualizing the above conceptually, four broad fields emerge: decision-making processes in state organizations and in civil society , clientelism , political decisions

individual and democratic identity. The works of this issue 229 of the Mexican Journal of Political and Social Sciences are focused precisely around the problems already mentioned in these fields .

In the set of articles we present , politics refers , in its spatial and practical dimension, to the distribution of power in a society, to the institutions of the patterns of behavior that its presence implies , and to the processes through which such configurations are modified. In each space or context, it is possible to identify common expressions – whether it be media unrest , populism, violence, the hope of emancipation or commitment – and new political dynamics – whether it be political parties and partisan institutionalization in their avatars, media or audiences , political mediators , among others.

From this perspective, the axes discussed in each of the works address some of the issues related to the processes of change in our societies and the visibility of new actors . As a whole, they reflect the diversity of disciplinary , conceptual and methodological approaches, as well as the schematizations that configure and result from the diversification and specialization of the social sciences .

Thus, in Mexican Responses to the Arizona Law and the Role of States in U.S. Immigration Management , Eduardo Torre Cantalapiedra analyzes one of the toughest laws against undocumented immigration , enacted in 2010 by the Arizona legislature , known as the Arizona Law s b 1070. Some experts argue that subnational entities should not approve immigration - related policies because of the negative effects that retaliation from third countries would have on the United States' diplomatic and economic relations with them and on its own economy. On the other hand, he highlights that, according to Spiro, states currently distinguish when a measure corresponds to a subnational entity , giving responses focused on it and not against

the country as a whole . In his detailed analysis , the objective of his work is to analyze to what extent the current panorama of relations between Mexico and the United States corresponds to one of these two perspectives . Likewise , this particular discussion is located in the broader debate on whether the states of the American Union could or should to take a more active role in migration management. To this end, the Mexican responses to the approval of SB 1070 AND its effects on relations between the two countries are analyzed. The importance and relevance of this work in light of the current situation of a change of presidency in the northern country is unquestionable.

For her part, the article by Perla Carolina Gris-Legorreta, The use of documentary evidence in the formulation of legislative initiatives: the case of the Social Development Commission of the Chamber of Deputies , analyzes the use of evidence from different sources as input to support legislative initiatives presented in the Chamber of Deputies in Mexico . She considers that in a highly politicized environment such as the one In the legislative sphere, the incorporation of monitoring, evaluation and auditing instruments represent useful tools not only for the development of initiatives and bill proposals, but also to inform and enrich the debate, in a context where different ideologies systematically converge . The working hypothesis is that the use of evidence continues to be an underused resource in legislative work in Mexico . Through a case study , it analyzes the main sources of information explicitly referred to in the bills presented to the Social Development Commission of the Chamber of Deputies , during the lx , lxi and lxii legislatures . The most relevant finding shows that , even though the use of evidence has increased in legislative work, there is still significant potential for the exploitation of sources of evidence of a different nature, particularly information generated by the very bodies linked to the Chamber, such as the Superior Audit Office of the Federation (asf) and study centers. Certainly territories to strengthen rationality and democratic institutionality.

In their work Decision - making and civic culture : the case of a non- political association

, René Millán and María del Rosario Esteinou present the results of an ethnographic study on public life, according to some institutional patterns and associative culture that they carried out in a sports club in Mexico City. Their objective is to establish whether as some theories maintain this type of non-political association promotes civic patterns, skills and the participation of its members, when addressing common problems. The study is based on information gathered through ethnographic work and interviews with different actors. The results show that this association has limited cultural and institutional resources to achieve these ends, mainly due to clientelist practices and negative practices that govern its administration. Interesting conclusions are presented in light of the analysis of the scope and limits of the dimensions that clientelist practices imply in non-political social spaces .

The first section also includes the work Local development and microfinance as strategies for addressing social needs: a theoretical-conceptual approach , by Louis Valentín Mballa, who considers that the phenomenon of poverty as a public problem invites us to reflect more and more on the responsibility that the State has towards citizens. In his article, Louis Mballa explores the different theoretical approaches to the notions of local development and microfinance to establish them as tools for addressing the socioeconomic needs of people with limited resources. From there, he starts from the hypothesis that local development and microfinance are fundamental instruments for responding to social needs , as causes of poverty . Thus , he considers that , outside of official banking and informal lenders , microfinance institutions have revolutionized the financing of economic and social development, especially in Asia, Africa and Latin America . Through an analytical review , he analyzes the different approaches to local development and microfinance as a tool for addressing social needs , as causes of poverty. From the literature, he concludes that the rationalization of microfinance is a conceptual (and practical) operation of utmost importance, which must go beyond the simple desire to support local development and combat poverty, since it results from a decision-making

process with multidimensional impacts .

The Journal 's dossier , as its title indicates, affirms and delves into the spaces, expressions and new political dynamics in Latin America. It begins with Roger Bartra's sharp and compelling work, The Battle of Ideas and Emotions in Latin America . In his vision , both universalizing and reconstructing singularity , he considers that the long and labyrinthine process that Latin America has experienced in its journey towards democracy has followed the same path of confrontations and quarrels present throughout the intellectual history of the West, which have sometimes been expressed as an opposition between "ideas and emotions." In Latin America, this intellectual quarrel can be described, in his opinion , in Cortazian terms, as the struggle between " a baroque cronopia " versus a " gothic famistic , " or as a war between two cultures : "that of blood and that of ink ," as a reflection of the erosion of the great theories and traditional ideologies. Thus, after the political and cultural developments resulting from globalization, the democratic transitions in Latin America and the disappearance of the socialist bloc, we know that we are facing the end of an era, but we cannot yet define the new times. Based on this , this article reflects on what the return of some romantic visions and emotions may mean at the beginning of the 21st century . In particular, Mexico faces a great political and cultural challenge , which is based on the fact that society is still immersed in the culture of revolutionary nationalism. Thus, it presents itself as a new expression of this perennial struggle between ideas and emotions, the dilemma of directing feelings towards an identity in crisis and trying to reconstruct it , or looking forward to give life to a new democratic civic culture . Horizon of thought to address the axes of the inquiry .

From there, we move on to the study of how a symbolic battlefield was defined in the media in which , on the one hand , the superiority of the republican liturgy was sought to be defended and, on the other, its current staging to be questioned . To this end, in Liturgia republicana y contra-performances: Protestas y pugnas en la investidura presidencia presidential de 2012 en México, Nelson Arteaga Botello and Javier Arzuaga

Magnoni analyze the confrontation of the performative narratives that arose on the occasion of Enrique Peña Nieto 's inauguration as President of the Republic , which gave rise to the questioned financing of his campaign . It is shown how the perspective of cultural sociology accounts for the agonistic structure of the civil and anti-civil codes of these performances. This allows us to understand the configuration of politics in Mexico and its inability to guarantee mechanisms for the representation of demands , free discussion and the autonomous organization of decision -making centers . The authors point out the need to carry out further work that develops the concept of the liturgy in Mexico. analytical tools to connect the different republican liturgies that allow us to understand the new symbolic configuration of national politics.

In The Effects of Political Communication on Youth Political Engagement in the 2012 Mexican Presidential Election , Oniel Francisco Díaz Jiménez and Carlos Muñiz ask whether modern forms of political communication generate political engagement or political disaffection among young citizens . While media discontent theories argue that media messages and campaigns have a negative impact on citizens ' political engagement , mobilization theories claim that the effect of such messages on political engagement is rather positive . In their article , the authors analyze the effects of media messages and campaigns on youth civic engagement during the 2012 presidential election in light of cognitive mobilization and media discontent theories, using multiple regression analysis, with data from the 2012 National Survey of Youth Political Culture . They find that , in general terms , the results of the analysis give greater support to mobilization theories than to media discontent theories . Hopeful views are thus opening up to the practices and dynamics that incorporate the new generations as actors in reality .

The relevance of communication from the perspective of public television in Latin America : its transition to the digital era is analyzed by Florence Toussaint, who applies the theoretical-methodological approach of the Political Economy of Communication to study the history and consequences of the digital convergence of public television in Latin

America. The author analyzes how the logic of industrialization and maximum profit, a feature of the current capitalist system, is projected with greater force from digitalization and how, in this context of search for greater profitability, public television has seen its possibilities of diffusion reduced on the new platforms. Dr. Toussaint first delves into the features of television in Latin America to note the specificities of each geography and then analyzes the digitalization processes that have marked the industry in recent years . As a third step, she lists the legal guidelines that govern television in our continent. As an industry, television markets content that is openly linked to Latin American media culture , and this is where the importance and value of the author's analysis lies. Studying television and its accidents also represents an approach to the cultural character of our society. Finally, the author considers that digital convergence means that public television must reconvert itself in order to continue existing; that it must overcome changes in the State, technological innovations and changes in culture , tastes and habits . and the audiences.

In a turn to the specific field of social and political theory , Paula Biglieri offers us , in An approach (with variations) to the thought of Ernesto Laclau, a tour of the work of the famous philosopher and theorist of post-Marxism to link two elements.

The author proposes the following two distinctive features of her political proposal: on the one hand, her idea of radical politics as the "end of emancipation" to make way for the possibility of emancipation , in the plural , and on the other hand, her notion of populism. In this sense, the author raises the question of whether both proposals are not inconsistent when they appear together in the same theoretical framework. To answer this, Biglieri reconsiders the category of demand, analyzing not only the distinction that Laclau proposes between popular demands and democratic demands, but also whether these have (or do not have) a radical character . The radical demand would be one that contains an egalitarian claim. Thus, the author argues, populism can become the form of radical politics as long as it articulates emancipatory demands of a different nature, unleashing an

anti- status quo movement in pursuit of an egalitarian claim .

Certainly, the analysis of populism in Latin America in terms of democracy, excluding its specific authoritarian trajectory or subsuming it in an emancipatory clamor, raises serious questions about a theory that cannot be fully understood outside of specific historical developments .

For her part, investigating the practice of clientelism from new perspectives, Victoria Ortiz de Rozas examines and questions this category in its instrumental meaning , in light of the empirical study of the activities of political mediators in a province in northern Argentina. In Clientelism or political representation? The "program" of political mediators. Reflections from Argentina, through a qualitative methodological approach, Victoria Ortiz studies the daily activity of leaders with different elective positions. She shows how the role of mediators involves not only individuals and particular groups , but also social and territorial collectives, the object of the distribution of public goods that produce collective benefits . The author argues that the choice of the recipients of the goods hardly coincides with the simple cost-benefit evaluation that the instrumental notion of clientelism supposes , since it rather implies a work of reconstruction and production of the specific problems of the members of the electoral bases. The way in which resources are distributed is filtered by the mediator, who assigns them according to his knowledge of the territory represented and general policy orientations . Thus, the dualism between clientelistic and programmatic ties is questioned, showing that the distribution of public goods by political mediators is always guided by symbolic and/or programmatic criteria. In this way, the author proposes a reconceptualization of the notion of clientelism that takes into account the dimension of political representation . that involves.

Qualities of democracy is the topic that Marcos Ernesto Pérez Talia develops in The institutionalization of parties and its relation to the quality of democracy : Paraguay and Uruguay in comparative perspective , with an examination of the relationship between the

institutionalization of political parties and the quality of democracy . The central argument of the research that feeds it and that focused on the study of the main political parties in Paraguay and the main reason why Uruguay is concerned is that this relationship is not always direct and that, beyond what some political studies maintain , party institutionalization cannot always be considered a sufficient condition to raise the quality of democracy . To test the hypothesis , the five most relevant political parties in terms of electoral strength of two Latin American political systems that present different levels of quality of democracy were analyzed . This analysis shows that party institutionalization does not coincide with the degree of quality of democracy, because, if it were, both countries would have shown high values of quality of democracy , since they have similar levels of party institutionalization . Thus, to understand the relationship between the levels of party institutionalization and the quality of democracy in the countries, the author considers that it will be necessary to review and examine other features of the functioning of political parties, of other actors and other elements of the political system, and even to study the historical trajectory of the party political system. The issue closes with two interesting and pertinent reviews: The survival of undemocratic governors in Argentina and Mexico , by Danilo Degiustti , a commentary on the book by Agustina Giraudy (2015), Democrats and Autocrats: Pathways of Subnational Undemocratic Regime Continuity within Democratic Countries , and the one by Alonso Vázquez Moyers on the book Minimal History of Neoliberalism by Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo (2015) , a book that is part of the collection Historias mínimas.