

# Introduction

*Juan Russo*

On the twentieth century, Latin America was crossed by three main ideas: modernization, project that overlapped the second half of the last century and the first decades of the next one. This involved, to a large degree, the incorporation of infrastructure for a greater integration into the world market, the urbanization growth, and the first sections (with dissimilar results) of the transition process from oligarchic regime towards a mass democracy. At this stage, *modernization* was frequently Europeanization and the *democratization* involved a strong conflict with the oligarchic order, usually with fatal outcomes for the nascent democracy.

Since the crisis of the 30s, the matrix idea of modernizing was replaced by the idea of *national development*, which had as main support, the model of industrialization by import substitution (ISI model). The development of the internal market and national sovereignty became the priority. Democracy was in the background and the debates, in Latin America, focused on how to achieve greater independence from the central powers, as well as producing an own model of self-maintenance development.

The globalization process began in the 80s and the main ISI model countries (Mexico, Brazil and Argentina) began their mutation. After the brutal authoritarianisms of the 70s in the Southern Cone, democratization became the new matrix idea and it spread to the whole region. For the first time, democracy became the articulator shaft of consensus (and neither revolutionary socialism nor political projects which prescind from the vote) were sustainable for Latin America as a whole. The political equation of the first moment of democratization was simple and solid: *any democracy* is preferable to *any authoritarianism*. Democracy resulted from a collective effort with predominantly endogenous roots, therefore, linked to the circumstances of each national political process. The initial objective for the successful transition and the democratic consolidation was followed by the construction of a *good democracy*.

This was not limited to mere political engineering from a common idea of democracy, but to the search for better *types of democracies* instead. Alternative institutional designs, economic crises, social dissatisfaction, short and long term postponed demands, and leaderships with different conceptions and strategies on how to achieve more egalitarian and more liberal democracies, led to alternations (or political blocks); not only of parties, also types of political order, as well as national and international strategies. The research gathered here, discuss around social dimensions and policies of democratization in contemporary Latin America and lead the reader to the trace of the main lines of substantive problems. All these authors rethink problems (from different angles and disciplines) linked to democracy in the region. The monographic dossier about Latin America begins with the work by Fernando Calderon related to the change in the idea of modernity from globalization in Latin America. Latin American modernity is no longer constructed from the Europeanization (nineteenth-century aftertaste), but through regional integration, from the Bolivarian dream rethought from globalization. The research by Leonardo Morlino carries out a balance of the main dimensions of democratic quality in Latin America; he was one of the main developers of this concept. In his consideration, Morlino took into account sub-regions and prominent national cases. In a region where democracy leads, with more or less difficulties, for more than three decades, and possesses a sufficient level of consolidation; democracies could improve in terms of greater legitimacy and performance, implementing anti-corruption policies in favor of improving the administrative capacity and strategies to increase and strengthen individual security. International partnerships could contribute to the effectiveness of these policies. The impact of democratic deficit also affects the quality of citizenship. In the work about *Citizenships and sub-citizenships*, discrepancies are analyzed in terms of distribution of rights/duties. Starting from a combination of the typology by TH.Marshall and Stein Rokkan, regions are established where deficit citizenships predominates in terms of opportunities (social, political, and economic) to which deficits of recognition to the cultural origin are added (root sub-citizenships). Thus, the most widespread inequality factors in the first decades of the 21st century are presented: poverty and indigence, ethnic groups and gender, and there is a positive (albeit delayed) balance of the democratization processes in favor of equality. On his side, Hugo Quiroga takes a tour over the main characteristics of democracies in the region, revaluing the role of the liberal political tradition and the multiple illiberal responses in the last era. He explains the divergence of democratic projects, in political cultures of transgression, State deficits and long-standing social debts. Maria Ollier analyzes, in particular, the problems of institutional

instability in Latin American democracies (with less emphasis in the case of Uruguay, Costa Rica, and Chile) proposing the concept of pendular democracy. From considering actors and relationships between actors and institutions, she proposes to invert the explanatory axis: it is not the institutional weakness which generates dominant leaders or unstable leaders; on the contrary, it is the type of leadership which produces and feeds the institutional weakness. The pendular democracy is fed by weak party systems, citizenships indifferent to the collective actors of representation but polarized with respect to the political leaders, leaderships positioned on the whole of the State (Justice and Congress), centrality of the presidential figure and a mixture of differentiated from State, regime, government, and president. From this framework, cases of weak presidents (who did not finish their period of presidency) and strong presidents are analyzed. The relationship between democracy and the State is analyzed by Osvaldo Iazzetta, who starts from the State delegitimization in the early stages of democracy, and from its subsequent reevaluation (from the 90s onwards). The contribution of Guillermo O'Donnell is analyzed in relation to the indispensable role of the State to democratize society and guarantee citizen rights, the importance of everyday democracy linked to a micro approach that qualifies the relationship of the State with differentiated groups of society and of current subnational studies. From this balance he proposes to reexamine the democratization in extra-political regime spheres. Ana Díaz Aldret, addresses the question of the legitimacy of democratic institutions based on the culture of legality in the region; showing a perception of discouragement due to the poor progress in solving major problems such as corruption, and little variation (in spite of institutional reforms) in the trust of societies towards institutions. The advancement of democracy in civil citizenship is not encouraging either; particularly the state of human rights in the region. Alejandro Anaya inquires about, to what extent, adhesion of Latin American countries to international deals has been translated into an implementation of those norms and a consequent improvement of human rights. The answer is negative, and among the factors that contribute to the coexistence of the democratic regime and violations of human rights in Latin America, he finds the existence of armed conflicts, the "war" against drug trafficking that involves the army in the streets, including the diffuse support of the population for hard-line policies, State institutions with little control capacity, and the existence of political elites little interested in respecting human rights. The article by Alex Caldera reviews the institutionalist political literature paying attention to the factors which favor stability, representativeness, accountability and effectiveness of policies; betting for a focus on institutions, but including contextual, socio-economic and cultural dimensions that ex-

plain, fully, the limits and opportunities present in the ongoing processes of democratization. Cesar Teach starts from an event of great historical and cultural significance: the university reform of Córdoba, analyzing its impact on the political systems of Latin America. In the context of modernization and mass democratization, the reformist movement which started in Córdoba, Argentina, spread according to peculiar characteristics in each country, according to the collective demands of the new generations and the political proposals of democratic expansion. The works of Claudio Tognonato and Federico Sandoval advance in the analysis of the weight of economic resources and international politics for the deterioration of the current democracies. Claudio Tognonato finds in the current processes of political dismissal (case Dilma Rousseff) and justice and mediatic strikes, to guarantee neoliberal policies. These new strategies would replace traditional coups d'état and they would coexist with electoral democracy. Federico Sandoval analyzes the crucial challenges of Latin American democracies facing the interests posed by transnational corporations in relation to strategic resources such as water. The tensions between the market and democracy are evaluated, translated into a growing concentration and change in the citizens rights. The role of the democratic State emerges as central to the struggle between citizenship and corporate interests.

Valentina Delich analyzes the evolution of an unavoidable aspect of economic development: intellectual property regimes. The transition, from national ownership regimes to regimes of a global order, affects aspects related to democratic quality, such as access to information, freedom of expression and cultural diversity. The combination of distribution of resources, institutional strength and negotiation sites, shows accumulation trends and domination of the main economic powers. Therefore, the need for concerted regional action, as well as institutional improvement and a sustained policy of production and knowledge transfer.

Latin American societies are transformed and new actors emerge. Alejandro Klein pays attention to demographic changes that imply new challenges to the construction of citizenship: the articulation of the elderly (including the centennial emergence for the upcoming decades) as a new class. Faced with the practices of urban segregation and de-citizenization, the political participation of the elderly is a fact and a hope to culturally resignify and give new power to a segment that has been increasingly marginalized.

The works by Olivia Leyva, Edilberto Gallardo, and Vania Marin, deal with gender and democracy. Leyva and Gallardo show, that although, there is a positive evolution in terms of gender equity, democratization suggests scenarios that are difficult to apply and develop. Added to regulatory develop-

ments, there are obstacles linked to institutional effectiveness and the performance of the rule of law. Marin states that women have advanced in a relevant field: the Catholic religion. A facilitator is to have a shovel in the region: the first Latin American pope in history, in the continent with the largest number of Catholics in the world, and who advances positions to review the role of women in the church, positively impacts on equity of gender in general. Added to this, she finds the role of Catholic social movements and feminist theologians who question previous positions.

Eduardo Espinosa analyzes a lacerating but still exerted practice in Latin America: racism. From the World Conference against Racism held in 2001 in Durban, attention is paid to the end of the denial of racism as a basis for implementing policies of overcoming. Four “breaking points” of collective and state denial are required; that is, the recognition of violence against indigenous and afro-descendant peoples; the violation of the rights of those ethnic groups; the invisibility or impairment of cultural identity rights; and its situation of extreme inequality in the region. From a review of the anthropological literature, several problems are realized, such as discrimination in the daily life of countries with important portions of Afro-descendants and original populations, as well as of the low representation in vertice positions in the State and structures of representation of the civil society. Finally, Esteban Torres problematizes from what is considered a deterioration of the left and a Marxism crisis in Latin America. Two kinds of intellectuals with a Marxian reference are investigated: the participatory scientific-social and the social-scientific translator. The first proposes a project and the second assumes a theory and puts the emphasis on interpretation and criticism. At present, the left preserves a dose of sociological utopianism that hinders the adoption of realistic positions from which to build new positions of improvement. As it emerges from the previous reviews, the menu of topics proposed to the reader is vast and represents plural positions, both in the angles adopted, as in the problems raised and in the disciplines used. We hope that this variety of topics and approaches can reflect at least part of the current labyrinthine mirror of Latin America.

The interview that we propose, was carried out by Fernando Calderón to the sociologist Francisco Delich. This election has a double importance, on the one hand, Delich played a fundamental role in the promotion of the social sciences, as well as in the pioneering introduction of problems on democracy in the region. On the other hand, it established links between Argentina and Italy, which resulted in prolific exchanges of scholars as well as in common publications. An important role played in this, was Alberto Spreafico and his successful creation, AMELA (*Associazione Mediterranea Latinoamericana*)

per la ricerca, la formazione e la documentazione), later turned into ARELA (directed by Maurice Aymard and Anna Spreafico).

Finally, I want to emphasize the importance of a monographic issue on Latin America in the important Italian Journal of Sociology. Italy, a country with close ties to the region (due to the perennial ties produced by mass migration), can today interact with this Latin America, which in the last decades, has grown steadily in the quantity and quality of academic production of social sciences. This is manifested in the prestige and maturity of publications and institutional structures for training human resources, as well as the presence of social scientists who have led studies and academic institutions around the world. We hope that the initiative of this prestigious journal will contribute to revive the interest and reinforce the collaboration between the social science of both continents, benefiting both regions in the understanding of a global and interdependent world.