CALL FOR PAPERS

LASA2024

Reaction and Resistance: Imagining Possible Futures in the Americas

JUNE 11–15, 2024 • BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

Countervailing trends of reaction and resistance are evident in the Americas today. Declining support for democratic values and institutions and resurging authoritarianism, the rise of extremist right-wing movements and parties, and economic inequality and insecurity, aggravated by the pandemic, are generating anxiety and fear. At the same time, grassroots efforts to strengthen rights, promote more inclusive political and economic systems, and roll back the legacies of colonialism, combined with the return of progressive governments in many countries in the region, spark hopes that new futures are possible. Exploring these countervailing trends will be the focus of the next International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, which will take place June 11–15, 2024 in Bogotá, Colombia. Academics, practitioners, and activists are encouraged to participate with their reflections and analyses of the forces of reaction that are generating apprehension about the future, and the collective forms of resistance and progressive social change that seek to dream of new futures based on equality, justice, and inclusion.

Regressive trends are evident across the Americas. We have seen the rise of right-wing populists such as Nayib Bukele in El Salvador and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, democratic backsliding from Guatemala to Peru, and hardening authoritarian regimes such as that of Ortega-Murillo in Nicaragua. Right-wing ideologies are on the rise as well, from proto-fascist movements to groups promoting "culture wars" tropes such as "gender ideology." These movements, which are often transnational in nature, are fundamentally shaping the way local politics are playing out in many parts of the region. At the same time, the pandemic laid bare the deep inequalities, faltering public services, enduring racial hierarchies, and systemic violence that characterize the Americas. We are still evaluating the long-term impact of the devastation wrought by COVID-19 and how it is reshaping our way of thinking about work, well-being, and the organization of our social and political orders. The climate crisis and the ongoing exploitation of natural resources without regard for the impact on indigenous communities and the environment is also a cause of anxiety about the future of the Americas.

By contrast, several countries in the Americas have seen progressive governments come into office, and in others, broad-based social movements are demanding democratic deepening and the construction of more inclusive, just societies. Examples include Chile, where social movements have demanded changes in the political and economic system inherited from the Pinochet dictatorship, and a left-leftist, "millennial" president is promising to implement sweeping reforms, and Brazil, where Lula's return to the presidency raises hopes that the democratic backsliding and other regressive policies, including the devastation of the Amazon, can be reversed. In Peru, mass social movements, with indigenous communities taking the lead, are challenging a system that has historically excluded their voices and interests; while in Colombia, after decades of civil conflict, a former guerrilla and an Afro-Colombian woman were elected to lead the nation on a platform of progressive social change and consolidation of the peace process. Across the region, women continue to demand bodily autonomy and reproductive rights, winning important gains in places such as Argentina and Mexico. Indigenous peoples from Chile to Brazil to Central America are organizing to protect their land, the environment, and their cultural autonomy. These collective forms of resistance, combined with progressive political movements at the national level in many countries in the region, are helping to articulate new ways of imagining possible paths toward progressive political, social and economic change and the construction of new models of governance that are more inclusive and representative, and that prioritize human dignity and well-being.

In this context of heightened anxiety about the state of our world and raised expectations for progressive change, we invite proposals from academics, practitioners and activists that reflect on these questions: How are collective forms of resistance and progressive forces for change imagining new futures for the Americas? How do we understand the countervailing trends in the region, including democratic backsliding, the rise of authoritarian populism, continued inequality and the climate crisis? How do we as academics, activists and practitioners contribute with knowledge production, collaborative research and the interventions towards challenging these regressive trends and building new progressive futures in the region? We hope that this LASA Congress in Colombia, where a new government is trying to implement a progressive political platform with the backing of diverse social movements, will be a space for productive reflection about these countervailing trends and the challenges and hopes they present for imagining possible futures in the Americas.

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LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

THE DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS IS **SEPTEMBER 15, 2023 AT 5 P.M. (ET)**

For more information go to www.lasaweb.org

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