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*Topic/Challenge Headline*

Global Challenges for Democracy

*Description*

The practice of democracy assumes new challenges every day. Perhaps the most important of these is defining what democracy is, establishing adequate mechanisms of accountability, as well as with the growing demands for participation. Many of the problems that put democracy at stake cannot be properly assessed and addressed from a single discipline or by studying a single country, because they tend to be transnational in nature, for example: corruption in international economic relations, organized crime in networks that cross borders, migratory movements, protection of the environment, the citizen participation, social movements, etc. Therefore, assessing the challenges of democracy today requires a transdisciplinary and international approach. Along the spectrum of the more or less robust western liberal democracies, and particularly among Latin American democratic governments, it is possible to verify the existence of the following common patterns: The risk of a “democratic regression”; massive violations of fundamental rights associated with a process of post-colonization of political institutions through the deregulated displacement of capital; the threat of corruption in the exercise of both political and economic power; the challenges to state’s sovereignty vis the expansion of the financial and military capacity of terrorist organizations; the poverty; the reappearance of massive migratory movements, accompanied by human trafficking; the marginalization of ethnic, religious, sexual or other minorities, and the tension between the cosmopolitan pluralism and the recognition of collective identities; the climate change, and the lack of regulation about the exploitation of resources; the legal and political culture which resists a complete endorsement of democracy and human rights, manifested in the weaknesses of the transitional justice processes that many countries of the South American context have gone through.

*Research areas/Key words:*

Participation, Human Rights, Democracy challenges, institutional practices, marginalization of human groups, citizen participation, social movements.

*Research questions*

- How democratic our current institutional practices are?
- How should we face the particular problems mentioned above?
- Can the study of the challenges for democracy have an impact in the protection of fundamental individual rights at the global level?
- How should studying the specific problems that our democracies face impact the analysis, design and execution of public policies linked to these problems?
- How citizens, grassroots organisations and social movements make claims to public authorities and interact with them?



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#### *Possible outcomes*

- To identify specific research areas
- Consolidating the working groups
- Formulating common research projects
- To situate the Latin American and Northern Hemisphere discussion about the challenges that globalization imposes on democracy in the 21st century

