

To sum up, while the volume has its weaknesses and inconsistencies, scholars interested in the field of media and politics in Latin America will find valuable insights on the on-going media wars in Latin America.

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Juan Pablo Ferrero, *Democracy against Neoliberalism in Argentina and Brazil: A Move to the Left* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. xii + 264, £62.50, hb.

*Democracy Against Neoliberalism* is a timely contribution to the burgeoning literature on the 'left turn' in Latin America from 1998 onwards. This literature has been primarily concerned with the form and nature of Latin America's 'pink tide' states, and the extent to which their agency represents an existential break from the recent neoliberal past. Ferrero engages in a different, but no less relevant debate regarding the constitution of the democratic forces that challenged the neoliberal status quo in Argentina and Brazil in the post-transition context. In other words, Ferrero offers a theoretically rigorous empirical study of the drivers of socio-political change between the 1990s and 2000s in both countries. Analysis of these drivers leads Ferrero to engage with the democratisation debate. He suggests that the move to the left experienced in Argentina and Brazil (and by extension in large swathes of Latin America in general) or what he terms as 'a process from disagreement to participation' (p. 6), was the result of democracy *versus* neoliberalism. The development of democratic forces, or the constitution of the demos, is responsible in the post-transition context of Brazil and Argentina for the emergence of a counter-hegemonic discourse captured in the literature as the 'pink tide'.

The process of this realisation is best captured by the notion of 'democratic subjectivities'. This facilitates a discussion of how the internal articulation of disagreement with neoliberalism led to the construction of a new consensus. What issues and questions formed part of the development of democratic subjectivities? Who were the main protagonists influencing the formation of a new counter-hegemonic discourse? In order to achieve this ambitious research agenda, Ferrero explicitly critiques the transitology literature and instead embraces a radical democracy framework, seeking to integrate the concept of 'the ceaseless enacting of equality' (p. 7) into the literature. He therefore departs from issues of representation and instead investigates the more foundational arena of self-government. As Ferrero argues (p. 8): 'both the transition school and the participatory democracy perspectives posit different theoretical limits to the analysis of democratisation as transformative socio-political action ... the narrative of democracy needs to engage with the production of democratic subjectivities in order to give account for the potential and the limitations of the ceaseless enacting of equality, that is, the production of politics in post-transition contexts'. Thus, radical democracy as a framework is required in order to successfully integrate complexity, without displacing the question of emancipation.

The ontological starting point from such a position is that societies are differentiated according to their complexity, which in turn binds them to the development of certain types of demand over others. Different degrees of institutionalisation, and different types of colonial legacy, among other factors, have influenced the configuration of societies. This facilitates a need to re-engage with democratisation in light of emancipation, to challenge the notion of democracy as institutional regime and

institute it as the making of transformative politics. In the words of Ferrero (p. 24), ‘to move the study of democracy from that of passive institutional regime [transition school] to democracy as active transformative politics [radical democracy perspective]’ facilitates a suitable framework for an interrogation of the conditions that generated a democratic movement that challenged the institutionalisation of neoliberalism and associated Washington Consensus policies.

In applying this framework to contemporary Argentina and Brazil, Ferrero attempts to overcome some of the traditional inadequacies of the radical democracy approach (namely that of sound empirical research) to test and challenge the notion of democratisation as transformative and (potentially) emancipatory politics. Ferrero rises to this challenge, examining the role of social protest and associated institutions and organisations in the development of industrial relations in both Argentina and Brazil, suggesting in the process that grassroots activation represents a common contentious element emerging from heterogeneous actors in this area. As such, *Democracy Against Neoliberalism* has three main (interconnected) contributions to the literature. First, as just stated, it provides an interpretation of contemporary democratisation in Argentina and Brazil within the radical democracy framework, offering badly needed empirical evidence for the radical democracy approach. Second, Ferrero offers a significant contribution to the debate on participation. As the core thesis of the book suggests, the politics of democratisation in the post-transition context of Argentina and Brazil needs to be understood as the displacement from disagreement to participation. Therefore, Ferrero moves beyond ‘government-centred’ approaches that integrate multiform mediations and alternative competing spaces (i.e. participation as administration) and instead embraces participation as democratisation (p. 208). Third, in the process of investigating the above two factors, the monograph contributes to expanding, reforming and tightening some of radical democracy’s concepts and ideas bringing new critical light (enacting ‘equality’ in Brazil and Argentina) to the understanding of old problems, the creation of contentious political action.

*Democracy Against Neoliberalism* places radical democracy in relation to existing debates on democracy in general and in the process critiques the conceptualisation of democracy as a ‘passive state of arrival’ (p. 208). Democracy is not an end point, but a process. Subsequent empirical exploration of social protest across different organisations and networks concerned with industrial relations facilitates a transcending of the notion of fronts and coalitions and instead posits the emergence of a permanent contentious dynamic. Ferrero talks about relations of ‘space’ and ‘time’: the presence of ‘networks’ with deliberation outside of traditional institutions such as parliament, and the challenge to corporatism through the rejection of typical hierarchies and grassroots empowerment. Power was displaced from the political to the social. Both the contingent character and the radical possibility of the politicisation of demands emerge out of this dynamic. This in turn proves not only the importance of governments in effecting the socio-political processes but also the limits within which their policies are generated and implemented. Thus, the configuration of two differentiable moments (disagreement and participation) within the post-transition period provides an accurate account of democratisation in Argentina and Brazil; a process understood as governments being displaced by aspects of society that have colonised key parts of the state.

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