

# Editorial / Editorial

This issue of *World Tensions* is dedicated to reflecting on the current crisis that democratic governments face, with a spatial focus on democracies within the periphery of capitalism. More specifically, countries from the third wave of democratisation in Central Europe, South America, and Africa are once again analysed, whose transition processes towards this regime, advancements, and consolidation have been challenging. The objective is to foster academic debate toward the current crises of liberal democracy, observing both empirical aspects of certain democratic political systems and the theoretical plane that tensions and presents the limits of democratic political theory. It is, therefore, reflections on the phenomena of the deinstitutionalisation of liberal democracy, and the difficulties of its enforcement in multiethnic and culturally disparate contexts, whose political culture as espouse different values and principles.

Within the last decade, the literature has broached this theme, mobilising a variety of concepts: crisis, retrocession, collapse, decline, de-consolidation, de-democratisation, autocratisation, and even the death of democracy. In the international landscape, one can observe a challenging conjuncture for democratic regimes, seen in concepts such as: the decline of popular support for democracy as the best form of governance; the growing adoption of authoritarian policies, with the consequent victory of leaders with antidemocratic discourse and practices; the increase in episodes of autocratisation; processes of coups d'état; and the decrease of democratic quality. This thematic issue seeks to establish a dialogue with the literature that analyses the mishaps and the difficulties of liberal democracy, be it by contributing to the theoretical-methodological landscape, be it by presenting empirical situations.

The initial articles address the international overview of this democratic crisis. The central European region deserves highlighting with the Hungarian case. Marco Gabbas, PhD professor at Hungary's Milestone Institute, presents us with the historical, political, ideological, and constitutional context that contributed to Viktor Orbán's dominion in the country since his election in 2010. To Gabbas, it was thanks to Orbán's first victory that he was able to radically change the Hungarian constitution of 1949 in such an anti-democratic, exclusionary, and ethnicist way, therefore paving the way for other constitutional changes. Furthermore, Gabbas identifies the regime's democratic setbacks by discussing the relationships between Orbán's ideology, illiberalism, with liberalism and democracy. The author further argues how Orbán's anti-migrant measures are connected to the violation of democratic guarantees.

With the second article on Hungary, UFAL's PhD professor Joyce Miranda Leão Martins, undergraduate student Antônio José da Silva Neto, and UFPE PhD student Fillipi Lúcio Nascimento da Silva critically review the vast bibliography on the democratic erosion of Viktor Orbán's illiberal governments (2010-2025). The text analyses the strategies adopted by the country in the migratory crisis of 2015, weaving insights on the challenges and solutions proposed in the face of contemporary migratory complexities. They argue that there is a connection between the democratic retrocesses experienced by Hungarian society and offensive migratory policies, understood to be those that stimulate xenophobia and the hatred towards the immigrant carried out by the Prime Minister.

This issue boasts an article on the context of Africa. In the study of Nando Paulo Suma, political science doctoral student at UNICAMP, and Policarpo Gomes Caomique, MA in Ethnic and African Studies from UFBA and Governance and Regional Integration from the Pan-African University, it is once again analysed countries in the sub-Saharan region of the African continent, especially those of the Sahel region, stricken by a high incidence rate of coups d'état, resulting in contexts marred by political instability and social inequality. According to the authors, a second wave of decolonisation (defrancisation) of these high political-violence states is

occurring. They argue, putting themselves against part of the bibliography, that these coups might be originating a new process of decolonisation in the region in face of the French state's interference in internal issues in order to curtail institutional personification and patronage.

In regards to the crisis of democracy in Central America, the case in focus here is Honduras'. Lara Caldas, PhD from the University of Brasília, presents significant insights on the implications of neoliberal projects in the Latin-American context, highlighting the centrality of territorial disputes and the roles of the state and foreign corporations. By juxtaposing theoretical fundamentals with empirical evidence, the article brings out distinctive characteristics of neoliberal authoritarianism in Latin America. For this, it assesses how the disputes over territory in cities' urban regions materialise and sustain the recent processes of de-democratisation. Empirically, it investigates the phenomenon of Charter Cities, and as a case study, the city Prospera, Honduras' first Charter City.

Next, we have a reflection on the Brazilian scenery, with a theme that is worthy of attention by constituting a challenge towards a democratic society: the National Program for Civic-Military Schools executed during the administration of Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022). The text, authored by Marcelo José Monte, UECE Public Policy PhD student, and Fabio Gentile, Social Sciences professor at UFC and PPGPP-UECE collaborator, reflects on the educational model, militarised and indoctrinating for young students adopted by the Federal Government. The authors highlight the role of bolsonarism in the intervention of the educational system, whose objective was to plant and consolidate a militarised teaching methodology, made up of creeds and values aimed towards discipline and hierarchy.

Jorge Matheus Oliveira Rodrigues, San Tiago Dantas International Relations PhD student at UNESP, UNICAMP, PUC-SP; Ana Amélia Penido Oliveira, Political Science post-doctoral student at UNICAMP; and Héctor Luis Saint-Pierre, professor of International Security at UNESP, discuss the strategic dependency and autonomy of countries in the periphery of capitalism. They emphasise the existence of a project based on foreign transfers in the industrial and technological fields which limit the autonomy

of the defence of nations in the global South. The text, anchored in an anticolonial perspective, assesses the bibliography in depth, approaching the concept of autonomy in terms of freedom of decision-making, political action, and strategic thought. They point towards the blocking of sovereign exercise on peripheral countries, which impedes their effective defence in the face of an external imposition contrary to national interests.

In the conference titled “Nationalisms and Populisms in the Contemporary Age” Alfonso Botti, professor of Contemporary History at the Department of Linguistic and Cultural Studies at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (UniMoRe) in Italy, addresses in depth the concept of populism and the relationships between nationalisms and religion in the processes of modernisation in Spain. Organized by Fabio Gentile, the conference was administered during an event promoted by the Post-Graduation Program in Sociology at UFC, in October 2023.

To close this edition on democratic crisis, we turn to two interviews. Alfonso Botti talks with Erica Sales and Monica Martins, researchers at the Observatory of Nationalities, speaking on his intellectual formation and his interest on the relationship between Catholicism and modernity, which brought him to dedicate himself to the study of the nation. Botti is invited to reflect on the concepts of “nationalisms”, “populisms”, and “national-Catholicism” in his works.

We thank the colleagues Maria do Socorro Sousa Braga (UFSCar) and José Raulino Chaves Pessoa Júnior (UECE), co-editors of this thematic issue, and wish you a pleasant reading!

The Editors