

Alerta
DEMOCRÁTICA

**Four futures for democracy
in Latin America 2030**

1 WHY THIS PROCESS?

To catalyze open and reflective **strategic thinking and conversation** among Latin Americans about the possible futures of democracy, and the opportunities, risks and choices these futures present.

To stimulate individual and collective **strategic action** to influence these futures.

WHAT ARE SCENARIOS?

- Scenarios are **not predictions**.
- Scenarios are **not proposals**.
- They are **stories** that describe possible pathways into a future, and which help us talk and think about our lived reality.
- The seeds of the future exist in the present.

HOW WERE THESE SCENARIOS CREATED?

The scenarios are the collective creation of a group of **37 leaders from across Latin America**.

This team worked together over the course of 8 days of workshops to identify key forces at play, ask burning questions about what might happen, and create a set of stories about possible futures.

WHO CREATED THE SCENARIOS?

*academics, policy-makers, public servants,
youth, social movements, business, media,
indigenous populations, religious institutions,
and foundations*

What they have in common:

- A wide range of knowledge, experience and perspectives
- Shared commitment to building a positive democratic future for Latin America



Point of departure

LATIN AMERICA IN 2015 IS AT A CROSSROADS

- A dynamic period of economic growth is coming to a halt.
- While democracy today predominates in Latin America, it is still consolidating its roots in a process that is far from being irreversible.
- The strengthening of democracy is demanding instruments and leaders who can offer answers to pressing social, economic, political and environmental challenges.
- Democratic institutions in Latin America are young and still malleable. There is a high degree of uncertainty as to how they will evolve to meet the needs of the 21st century.

Latin American Democracy in 2015

IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENTS

**Established
democracies with
regular elections after a
history of political
instability and
dictatorships**

**Macroeconomic and
financial stability after a
history of debt crisis**

**New forms of social
participation and
mobilization**

**Poverty reduction and a
rising middle class**

Latin American Democracy in 2015

SERIOUS CHALLENGES

Clientelism

Corruption

Crime and
illegal powers

Violence

Inequality

Poverty

Exclusion

Religious
fundamentalism

Low quality
of education
and public
goods

Low economic
growth

Low productivity
and
competitiveness

High
dependence on
commodities/low
levels of
innovation

Vulnerable
political
systems

Fragile
institutions

Crises of
representation



Scenarios

POSSIBLE FUTURES

Four scenarios reflecting
different outcomes in terms of:

- Power structures
- Democratic institutions and political culture
- Citizen participation
- Economic development and social inclusion
- Regional integration

Democracy in

TRANS- FORMATION

Democracy in

TENSION

Democracy in

MOBILI- ZATION

Democracy in

AGONY

Scenarios

CAVEAT

- Latin America is a region recognized for its great diversity and complexity. These scenarios refer to the region as a whole, while acknowledging its diverse realities. Each scenario allows for some diversity of outcomes for different contexts.
- Our future will not necessarily be a pure version of one or the other scenario.

Democracy in

TRANS- FORMATION

This is a scenario of redistribution of power,
strengthening of democracy and
institutional innovation.

Democracy in
TRANSFORMATION
Storyline

2020

An increasingly demanding electorate calls for institutional reforms that can progressively overcome the urgent structural problems of the region. New political proposals and mechanisms of participation emerge.

2028

Reforms extend to the approach to drugs and organized crime, illiteracy is eradicated, the economic model is diversified, and corporate responsibility is growing.

2015

Scandals of corruption and abuse of power combined with deterioration in poverty and inequality indicators lead to decline in trust in political leaders and institutions.

2022

A new wave of reforms is underway, oriented towards institutional innovation, overcoming structural problems, and investing in human capital, poverty reduction, and a culture of entrepreneurship.

2030

The region is more effectively inserted in the global context. Political leadership is diverse, the relationship between government and civil society generally collaborative, and commitments are established to public education, tax reform, and further democratic process.

Results vary across the region depending on economic conditions and the level of resistance from elites.

Democracy in

TRANSFORMATION

Characteristics

Power structure

Power is redistributed, and political leadership is diversified.

Democratic institutions and political culture

Democracy tends to be valued and respected, and the capacity to govern improves. Structural reforms strengthen institutional incentives and mechanisms of social participation, inclusion and pluralism.

Citizen participation

The electorate is demanding, social participation is incentivized, and a generally collaborative relationship between the state and the citizenry is established.

Economic development and social inclusion

Alternative models of sustainable development and redistribution are emerging.

Regional integration

Political and economic blocs are consolidating in the region with increasing strength and presence in the global landscape.

Alert

It is possible that in the future...

Historic patterns of inequality, exclusion, violence, and authoritarianism may be shifted through institutional reforms and investments in education.

The core state institutions may genuinely represent the diverse society of Latin America and the rules of the game may be changed.

A better balance may be created between representation and participation.

A new generation may evolve that deeply values democracy, individual liberty, pluralism, freedom of expression, rotation of power, and public deliberation.

The world may look to Latin America to learn from its democratic lessons and experiments.

However, there are no absolute successes in the ascending path of democratic progress.

Democracy in

TRANSFORMATION



Democracy in

TENSION

This is a scenario of a democracy in appearance, where power is concentrated and disputed among different political and economic forces, generating social frustration.

Democracy in
TENSION
Storyline

2018

Proposals emerge to restore confidence in democratic institutions. In some countries, power is usurped by populist leaders who lead significant economic and social advances, generating a wave of enthusiasm. In others political leaders intend to re-concentrate power.

2028

Elites are diversified, but the democratic ideal in Latin America is still primarily at the service of private interests, and occult or external powers. Attempts at tax reforms are aborted in the legislature. New spaces of resistance and mobilization form to challenge power.

2015

Reformist movements bring attention to the limitations in Latin American democracy, noting that the region is the most unequal in the world, economically and politically.

2020

Extensions of mandates, loss of checks and balances. Emergence or consolidation of authoritarian governments and charismatic leaders. Low electoral participation and political trust. Political parties are primarily electoral machines.

2030

The economies are less diversified, productive, and competitive, dependent on extraction of natural resources, commodity exports, and subsidized internal consumption. Environmental problems are aggravated, violence continues. The 2020's are labeled a "lost decade" for Latin American democracy.

Democracy in

TENSION

Characteristics

Power structure

Concentration of power and constant power disputes. Lack of balance in interactions between politicians, business, and civil society.

Democratic institutions and political culture

The political culture is “caudillista” and clientelist. Erosion of controls and institutional checks and balances. High levels of corruption and impunity. Political and judicial persecution of the opposition.

Citizen participation

Low electoral participation, captive vote, low trust in politics and politicians, and threats on freedom of expression.

Economic development and social inclusion

Short-term solutions dominate, and economic efficiency prevails over social justice and environmental sustainability. The region as a whole does not advance significantly on poverty, inequality and violence.

Regional integration

Regional integration decelerates and there is a drop in competitiveness with other regions of the world.

Alert

**It is possible
that in the
future...**

There may be advances in rights and emergence of new leaders, but without altering the patterns of concentration of power, corruption, and subordination of democratic institutions.

Polarization and disputes over power may intensify.

The idea of democracy may remain primarily associated with elections.

Democracy may be employed for protecting private and occult interests.

The world may look at Latin America as a continent consistently losing democratic opportunities.

**This raises the question,
what is a genuine democracy?**

Democracy in

TENSION



Democracy in

MOBILI- ZATION

This is a scenario of popular mobilization, pressure and creativity challenging traditional power structures.

Democracy in

MOBILIZATION

Storyline

2020

Social mobilization has highs and lows. Some social leaders face government repression, others form political parties and become institutionalized. Activist methods and technologies also inspire non-democratic groups. Aggression and polarization increase in the public debate.

2028

Lessons from successful and failed experiments accumulate, leading to recognition that while participatory innovations do not substitute the State, they contribute to de-concentrating power, increasing popular pressure and empowerment, and solving some public problems directly.

2015

Increased expectations of the rising middle classes generate impatience, dissatisfaction, and inability of citizens to identify themselves with politics. The “Latin-American Spring” gains momentum as millions take to the streets, drawing on new technologies to organize.

2022

Reforms inspired by the marches are insufficient, and citizen empowerment grows. Groups organize around experiments aiming to challenge, substitute or complement the State, making use of channels that are more direct than the vote. New civic coalitions and networks emerging.

2030

Increased creation of alliances and virtuous cycles for a culture of social participation reducing the gap between state and the dynamic civil society. The voice of the citizen is becoming more important by the day.

Democracy in

MOBILIZATION

Characteristics

Power structure

Power is de-concentrated, and traditional power is challenged.

Democratic institutions and political culture

Frustration with traditional democracy generates permanent challenge through strategic work in networks, popular pressure and adoption of new technologies by citizens and social movements.

Citizen participation

Social mobilization expands through new mechanisms of horizontal collaboration and parallel networks. State is under pressure. The vote is questioned as an effective means of influence. Social empowerment goes beyond the traditional schemes of representative democracy as citizens take solutions into their own hands.

Economic development and social inclusion

Innovative and inclusive models of local economic development emerge that are less dependent on the state.

Regional integration

New forms of regional exchange and integration through networks.

Alert

**It is possible
that in the
future...**

The primary source of innovations may be society, rather than the State.

Citizens may draw on alternative methods beyond the vote to generate public pressure on the State, assuming responsibility for specific causes and direct social transformation.

New models of activism and social organization may grow and pose serious challenges to traditional power. They may also be used by varying agendas, including non-democratic ones.

Social activism may at times besiege, postpone or dilute state actions, increase polarization, frustration, and mutual distrust.

Latin America may be seen globally as an interesting laboratory for public mobilization and local experiments in “networked government”.

A jewelry store window display with various pieces of jewelry hanging from chains. The items include necklaces, pendants, and earrings. The background is a light-colored wall with a grid pattern. The overall scene is dimly lit, with a warm, reddish-pink glow on the left side.

Democracy in

AGONY

This is a scenario of a hijacked democracy, dominated by organized crime, and generating fear and a sense of defeat among citizens.

Democracy in
AGONY
Storyline

2018

At a UN assembly on drugs, Latin American governments fail to shift the paradigm of the war on drugs. Violence continues, the connection intensifies between drug trafficking and political, economic and social change.

2028

Countries and communities react in different ways: citizen self-defense groups emerge, authorities adopt repressive means and use force arbitrarily, Authoritarianism and populism rise. Citizens Mobilize resistance to living under the shadow of organized crime, and develop resilience campaigns. Migration increases. Many seek refuge in religion.

2015

Citizens distance themselves from political parties, which are becoming instruments for corruption and crime. State bureaucracy has limited capacity for execution and lacks incentives for its own renovation.

2020

Organized crime dominates in increasing numbers of territories where public services are lacking. Organized crime beyond drugs expands across the region (arms, precious metals, human trafficking, digital crimes, etc.). Government is unable to prevent this expansion. Legitimate businesses are now competing at a disadvantage with those associated with illicit activities.

2030

Homicides and disappearances due to illicit traffic have reached unprecedented epidemic numbers. Region is submersed in a security crisis and territorial crises that imply serious risk for destabilization. Some pioneering cases of improvement offer light at the end of the tunnel.

Democracy in

AGONY

Characteristics

Power structure

The power of organized crime predominates.

Democratic institutions and political culture

Institutions are undermined and governance structures are established that debilitate democratic ideals in many territories. Organized crime penetrates the state and the judiciary. Corruption and impunity are widespread.

Citizen participation

The citizenry is characterized by fear, self-censorship and double standards, and civic values are degraded.

Economic development and social inclusion

Poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation are exacerbated and state mechanisms for redistribution are inoperative. The productive potential of the region is significantly reduced.

Regional integration

Organized crime benefits from regionally integrated networks while inter-governmental agreements are too slow to keep up.

Alert

It is possible that in the future...

Organized crime may compensate for the shortages in government services, being seen as a provider of public services, peace, and stability.

If leaders lack political will to address organized crime and violence, and citizens turn a blind eye and focus on self-protection, our democracies may be hijacked.

Security crises may justify authoritarian and repressive solutions.

The region may learn lessons at a very high cost.

The world may look to Latin America as the continent that most debilitated forms of government that had been constructed on democratic ideals.

Democracy in

AGONY

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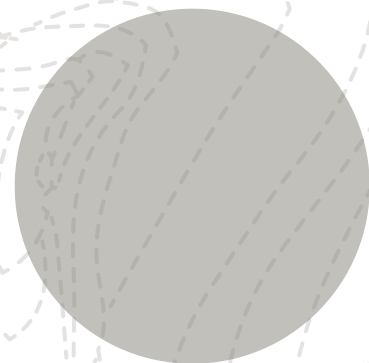
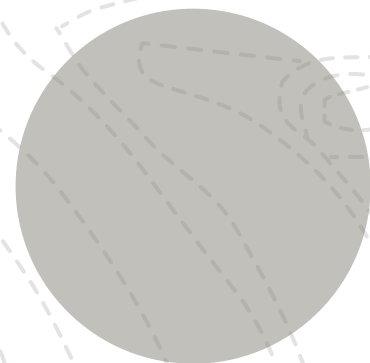
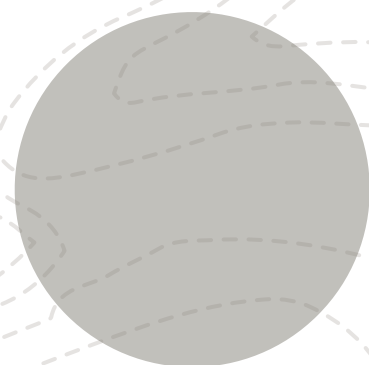
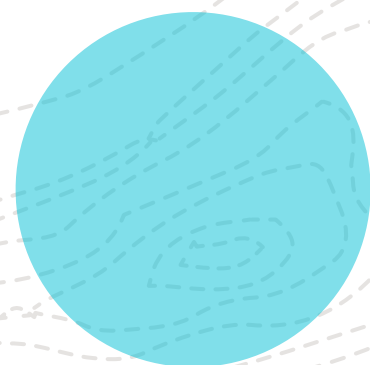
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WHAT NOW?

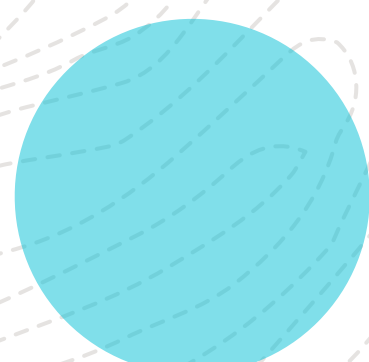
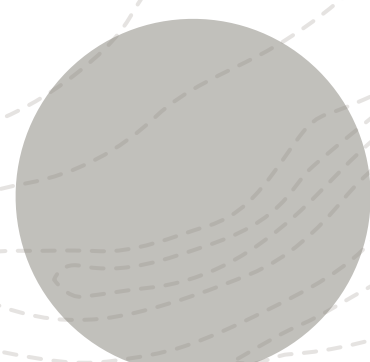
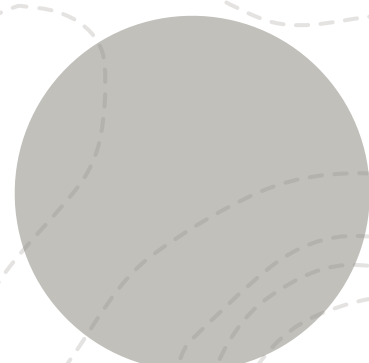
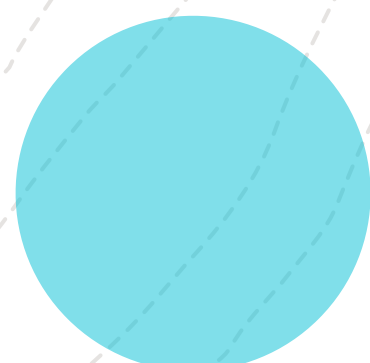
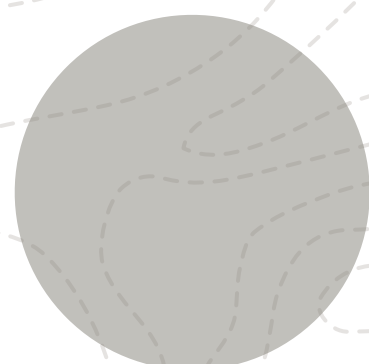
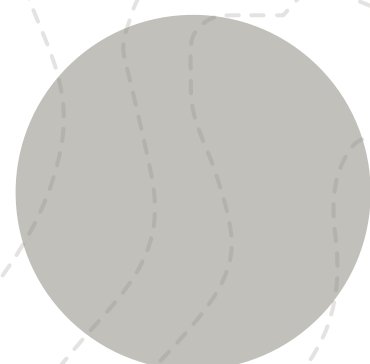
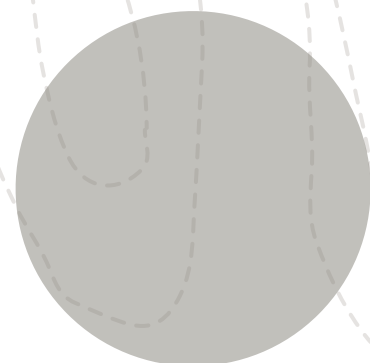
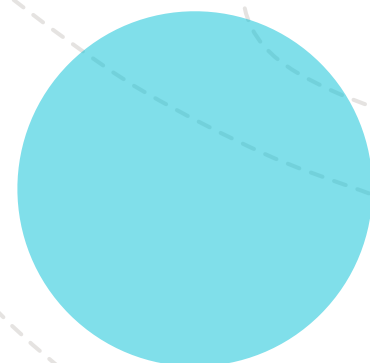
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VIVA O ESPAÇO PÚBLICO

POR QU
LUTAM
?






**THE FUTURE ISN'T
PRE-DETERMINED,
IT'S CREATED.**



Strategic questions to consider



What opportunities, risks and challenges do these scenarios present for us/ our organization, movement, community, country?

What forces, indicators, or warning signals in our context do we need to be paying attention to?

How do our current strategies hold up considering these four scenarios?

What position would we want to be in in each scenario?

What strategies do we want to pursue?

What do we need to think about and what do we need to do now?

What can you do?

SHARE

the messages of the scenarios with colleagues, leaders, and citizens, using the materials available on www.alertademocratica.org and [#alertademocratica](https://twitter.com/alertademocratica)

REFLECT

on the implications for your own actions and next steps

CONSIDER

the scenarios in your organization's strategic planning process using the guidelines on www.alertademocratica.org

ORGANIZE

events for reflection and dialogue – briefings, presentations, workshops

ENGAGE

with the media – print, TV, radio, social media

DESIGN

solutions and act to improve the future.

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ALERTA DEMOCRÁTICA

Four futures for democracy
in Latin America 2030

Realization



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