

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

THE FAR-RIGHT IN LATIN AMERICA

Definitions and Explanations

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The far-right is a global phenomenon that differs from the mainstream right in two key ways: its highly radical advocacy of right-wing ideas and its conflictive relationship with democracy.



While there are differences between the various actors of the far-right in Latin America, they share extremely conservative ideas on socio-cultural issues and tend to support »iron fist« policies to tackle crime.



The empirical evidence available reveals that there has been no increase in conservative positions amongst citizens in Latin America. Consequently, the rise of the far-right in the region is not directly related to a shift to the right by the electorate.

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THE FAR-RIGHT IN LATIN AMERICA: DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

1 INTRODUCTION

Until recently, the far-right was seen in Latin America as a distant phenomenon, as part of the political conflict all the way over there in Europe. One of the core reasons behind the electoral success of the far-right in Europe is migration; but as large influxes of migrants do not affect Latin American countries in any marked way, it could be assumed that the region would be safe from the far-right forces gaining ground in elections there. However, this interpretation is incorrect for at least three reasons.

Firstly, academic literature has determined that there is no direct link between the number of immigrants arriving in a country and the rise of the far-right. For example, most Eastern European countries do not receive large numbers of migrants, yet they have seen a considerable increase in votes for far-right parties (Bustikova, 2020). In turn, studies reveal that there is usually greater support for the far-right in areas with fewer migrants (Rydgren, 2007). In other words, it is the fear of migrants arriving, rather than their actual arrival, that is driving the success of far-right parties at the ballot box. This shows that one of the main causes of support for the far-right is voters' perceptions, many of whom tend to lean on subjective rather than objective threats.

Secondly, while it is true that the European far-right holds xenophobic views (especially against the Muslim population), it would be too simplistic to claim this as its defining feature. Moreover, if we analyse the ideas developed by the far-right outside Europe, it is clear that xenophobia is no longer a primary criterion; rather, there are other ideas that are more relevant (Rovira Kaltwasser and Zanotti, 2023). It is therefore necessary to define the far-right in a way that is sufficiently abstract to group together various actors who share a particular idiosyncrasy, but differ ideologically at regional and national levels.

Thirdly, there is no doubt that the far-right has now landed in the Americas. The first prominent case was the emergence of Donald Trump in the United States in 2016; the next prime example was Jair Bolsonaro's electoral triumph in Brazil in 2018. Although both leaders failed to be re-elected, they obtained a large number of votes despite having managed the COVID-19 pandemic terribly and hav-

ing ended their respective governments with a fairly regular economic balance. What is more, far-right forces have begun to gain ground in different countries across Latin America, including Nayib Bukele (*Nuevas Ideas*) in El Salvador, José Antonio Kast (*Partido Republicano*) in Chile, Rafael López Aliaga (*Renovación Popular*) in Peru, Guido Manini Ríos (*Cabildo Abierto*) in Uruguay and Javier Milei (*La Libertad Avanza*) in Argentina.

How can we understand this rapid rise of the far-right in the region? How could it impact democracy? This paper aims to answer these questions by breaking them down into three sections. It first looks at how to define the far-right and the mainstream right in a European context. It then briefly discusses how these concepts can be applied to Latin America, specifically in some of the most high-profile cases of the far-right in the region today. Finally, some ideas are proposed to understand why the far-right seems to be gaining ground, with a reflection on the potential impact on Latin American democracies.

2 FAR-RIGHT VERSUS MAINSTREAM RIGHT

In modern societies, the current political conflict often boils down to right versus left. As is widely known, the origin of this analytical distinction dates back to the French Revolution. Once the king was decapitated and a National Assembly formed, those in favour of the *ancien régime* sat on the right and those who supported the establishment of a new order sat on the left. This ended up forging two positions with opposing ideological frameworks. In more abstract terms, according to Norberto Bobbio (1995), right-wing thinking relies on the idea that most inequalities are natural and the state therefore does not need to do much, if anything, to eradicate them. Conversely, the left argues that most inequalities are socially constructed and the state therefore must actively work to tackle them.

This definition is quite common in comparative politics. But something that is sometimes overlooked is that when Bobbio (1995) and his advocates argue about whether inequalities should be seen as natural or not, it is necessary to consider both the socio-economic and the socio-cultural dimension. While the former aspect is related to the

classic debate on privileged and disenfranchised economic groups, the latter arises from the discussion on the integration or exclusion of groups based on cultural criteria (gender, nation, etc.). It is important to keep both dimensions in mind, firstly because – as we will see below – the debate on the far-right is not so much linked to the economic policies they uphold, but rather and, fundamentally, with the cultural policies that they promote.

Since the 1980s, when far-right forces in Europe began consolidating their parliamentary representation, an extensive debate has been ongoing in this region on what the far-right actually stands for (Ignazi, 2003; Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2007). The starting point for these definitions lies in the need to distinguish between two camps within the political right: the mainstream right and the far-right. There are fundamentally two criteria for making this distinction: their positioning (whether they hold moderate or radical positions) and their stance on democracy (acceptance or rejection). Taking these two criteria into account, it is relatively simple to distinguish the two camps from each other (Akkerman et al., 2016; Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2023). The mainstream right is characterised by its promotion of right-wing ideas in a relatively moderate way, while honouring the rules of play inherent to a liberal democratic system. The far-right, on the other hand, stands out through its rather radical right-wing positions and, in turn, its disdain for democracy, in particular its liberal aspects (e.g. the independence of the courts, the civil service along with its duty to act lawfully and the existence of supranational bodies that restrict national sovereignty).

As mentioned, the expansion of the far-right in Europe dates back to the 1980s, when a group of intellectuals linked to the *Nouvelle Droite* (New Right) in France, were inspired by the work of Antonio Gramsci, arguing that a new cultural hegemony needed to be created, centred on the notion of ethnopluralism. This term is used to argue that each ethnicity is distinct and has its own value, and therefore inequalities between different ethnicities are natural, so the state must not intervene to try to eradicate them (Betz & Johnson, 2004). What is unique about this debate is that it sows the seeds for the socio-cultural dimension to become much more relevant than the classic right-versus-left debate, whereas the socio-economic aspect had historically been the focal point. For that very reason, the far-right presents itself attacking not only the left, but also the mainstream right, which it often seeks to sideline.

There is considerable academic consensus that the far-right in Europe is developing programmatic proposals that conflict with the expansion of progressive values that have been gaining ground over time and which, in a sense, have also been adopted by the mainstream right (Mudde, 2007; 2013).

This is particularly noticeable in the way in which the European far-right expresses opposition to multiculturalism that borders on xenophobia, especially against the Muslim

population. At the same time, the economic positions adopted by the European far-right have varied, moving increasingly towards the idea of “welfare chauvinism”: the concept of a robust welfare state, but only for the native population, i.e. not for immigrants because of their supposed undermining of the homogeneity of the nation (Schumacher & van Kersbergen, 2016).

While this is not the place to offer a detailed analysis of the far-right and mainstream right in Europe, it is important to note that there are different families of political parties within each of these camps. On the one hand, on the mainstream right, there are the Christian democratic, conservative and liberal parties – crucial for the consolidation of liberal democracy in Western Europe, since these are political parties that manage to argue for and channel right-wing ideas within the democratic framework (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2021; Ziblatt, 2017). On the other hand, on the far-right, there is usually a distinction between the populist radical right and the extreme right. The former has been gaining votes due to its criticism of the establishment and its defence (at least nominally, albeit under pressure) of the democratic system, examples being *Vox* in Spain and *Rassemblement National* in France¹; the latter has very little electoral weight due to its head-on attack on democracy and its clear authoritarian traits, examples being *Chrysi Avgi* in Greece or *Die Heimat* in Germany.

In short, the current situation in Europe is marked by a growing fragmentation between two right-wing political camps: the mainstream right and the far-right. The distinction between the two lies in how radical their position is when defending right-wing ideas (particularly socio-cultural ones) and, above all, their stance on democracy.

Although the far-right is generally highly critical of the mainstream right and usually attempts to displace it, there are countries in Western Europe where the two cooperate – either implicitly or explicitly – to various degrees. For example, Austria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Italy, Norway and Sweden have had or currently have governments either with the far-right as part of a coalition or with the support of the far-right for a minority government. Several academics therefore express concerns that far-right ideas are being gradually normalised, which has significant consequences for the democratic system (Mondon & Winter, 2020; Mudde, 2019; Wodak, 2021).

¹ More specifically, populist radical right-wing parties are characterised by all three of the following ideological components: (a) authoritarianism, i.e. the promotion of a societal hierarchy, under which any type of deviant behaviour must be severely punished, (b) nativism, i.e. the notion that the political system must essentially promote the interests of the native population, as foreign ideas and foreigners themselves pose a threat to the homogeneity of the nation-state, and (c) populism, i.e. a discourse that not only portrays society as divided between two opposing groups, “the people” versus “the corrupt elite”, but also argues to respect popular sovereignty by all means. See Mudde (2007, 2013); Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser (2017; 2018).

3 THE FAR-RIGHT IN LATIN AMERICA

Until recently, the far-right was seen in Latin America as a distant phenomenon, as something far away and limited to Europe. However, the electoral triumphs of the likes of Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, Narendra Modi in India and Donald Trump in the United States show that the far-right must be seen as a global reality. With Jair Bolsonaro's ascension to the presidency of Brazil in 2018, the debate on the far-right has also started to gain prominence in Latin America (Rovira Kaltwasser, 2022). However, we should reflect on how to define the far-right and the mainstream right, as explained above, in a Latin American context.

The 2000s were, in a sense, the “golden age” for the left in Latin America. A lot of studies emerged to understand not only the causes and consequences of this shift to the left, but also to distinguish between different types of actors of the left within the region (see Levitsky & Roberts 2011; Weyland et al., 2012). With the left dominating the political stage, the right was neglected by much of academia. In a sense, the high levels of socio-economic inequality in Latin America create a political scenario where the left has a comparative advantage over the right since it can connect with the demands of society regarding the need to strengthen the state to address the prevailing socio-economic inequalities (Luna & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2014). In other words, it is difficult to envisage that the right could win elections if it centres its campaign on the idea that the invisible hand of the free market alone can solve the problems of poverty and inequality that are so typical of the region.

This argument still holds true today, but regarding the dispute between right and left, we should not overlook that the inequalities that are politicised can be of both socio-economic as well as socio-cultural in nature. From this perspective, the right can try to differentiate itself from the left by playing on socio-cultural issues that help it tune into people's underlying concerns around issues such as abortion, equal marriage and indigenous peoples. Indeed, the “new-right” that has been developing in Latin America recently does distinguish itself from both the left and the mainstream right through its targeted attacks on political correctness and its criticism of ideas considered progressive (Stefanoni, 2021).

Fortunately, interest in the study of the right in Latin America is gradually rising; in several recent works on this subject, we can find conceptualisations that coincide with the established definitions in Europe and globally. Two recent works illustrate this point. On the one hand, Escoffier et al. (2023) mention “the right against rights” and that this must be understood as a new political project defined as “a collective extra-institutional and institutional mobilisation to check, roll back or reverse specific rights promoted by previously marginalised groups and communities (i. e. gender and sexuality, ethnic, race, environment, accountability for crimes against humanity) and to restore, promote or advance a status quo ante of traditional political, social, economic and cultural rights” (p. 3). On the other hand, Mayka & Smith

(2021) talk about the “grassroots right” in Latin America, arguing that the latter should be understood as:

a diverse set of individuals and organisations that seek to maintain social hierarchies perceived as traditional or natural [...]. Such hierarchies might include, for instance, patriarchy, the economic dominance of large businesses or landowners, or the subordination of LGBTQ+ individuals or Black and Indigenous Latin Americans (p. 3).

These two works elaborate concepts that deliberately seek to differentiate actors of the mainstream right (such as Sebastián Piñera in Chile and Mauricio Macri in Argentina) from new right-wing political forces (such as Bolsonaro in Brazil and Rafael López Aliaga in Peru), who place particular emphasis on opposition to abortion, LGBTI+ rights and sex education in schools.

In other words, what seems characteristic of the “new-right” emerging in Latin America is its politicisation of socio-cultural aspects over socio-economic ones, which is intended to engage not only well-off segments of society, but also working-class sectors that hold conservative ideas on moral issues. This becomes particularly clear when we consider the evangelical population and their voting tendencies (Boas, 2023; Smith, 2019).

This “new-right” also promotes harsh punishment for crimes, an issue widely considered by Latin Americans as crucial. In this regard, it is important to note that academic literature distinguishes between “valence issues” and “position issues”: the former are characterised by consensus among citizens, regardless of individual ideas and interests (e. g. the need to tackle corruption and crime), while the latter generates a lot of division because they vary according to the ideology and interests of individual voters (e. g. support for the free market or multiculturalism) (Adams et al., 2005; Stokes, 1963). This distinction is relevant because it helps us understand that, instead of competing on every dimension of the political space, leaders and parties usually prefer to give more prominence to those issues in which they have more credibility and that serve to differentiate themselves from their opponents (Budge et al., 1987; Meguid, 2008).

To what extent can this “new-right” be considered “far right” – as identified by some authors in Latin America – in line with the definition outlined above? The similarity is quite evident, as these are political forces that not only adopt quite radical right-wing positions (especially on socio-cultural issues), but also maintain a conflictive relationship with the democratic system, in particular, with the liberal component of democracy. In turn, these are political forces that – like their European brethren – are eminently reactionaries, which oppose the rise of minorities who have been gaining material and symbolic recognition thanks to accommodating policies of various kinds (Mayka & Smith, 2021; Payne et al., 2023). As Lenka Bustikova (2020) indicates, the far-right is mobilising as a result of resentment towards minority groups who are gaining more visibility.

In this sense, the far-right is not necessarily interested in eradicating minorities, but rather in suppressing their desire to exercise greater political power, influence public policies, receive government resources and hold relevant positions. The core issue of which minorities have gained ground and are considered as challengers varies depending on the national and regional contexts. In the case of Latin America, everything suggests that the change in the status quo of relations between minorities and the majority is directly linked to issues such as gender and sexual identity, whereas in Europe, migration is much more relevant (Mayka & Smith, 2021).

To illustrate how this far-right is manifesting itself on the Latin American continent, a brief summary of the work carried out for the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, which looks at several countries in the region, is presented below. Perhaps one of the main findings is that, despite different political trajectories and ideological origins, all of the far-right forces observed in Latin America share morally conservative positions on issues of gender and sexual policies, as well as a tough stance on tackling crime.

When thinking of the far-right in Latin America, Argentina is one of the most striking cases due to the rapid and unexpected rise of Javier Milei and his radical ideas and leadership style. Gabriel Vommaro (2023) reveals that Milei has developed a series of innovative policies, many of which are quite opportunistic. For example, until recently Milei did not adopt any conservative positions on moral issues, but he has become quite outspoken against abortion. This also teaches us that the inability of Argentina's previous governments – both the Macri and the more recent Peronist government – to stabilise the economy (particularly inflation) has generated resentment towards the political establishment, which has been very shrewdly exploited by Milei's libertarian and populist discourse.

The case of Bolsonaro in Brazil is perhaps the best known example of the far-right in the Latin American region. Lucio Rennó (2023) reviewed the policies implemented during the Bolsonaro government, showing that the closer he got to his re-election campaign, the more radical and anti-democratic his government became. For this reason, this article demonstrates that, although there is no doubt about categorising Bolsonaro as far-right, it is quite difficult to determine whether he can be labelled as populist radical right (i.e. he maintains an antagonistic relationship with liberal democracy) or rather extreme right (i.e. he takes a clearer stance against democracy). Finally, by analysing the situation in Brazil, it becomes clear that although Bolsonaro has little chance of continuing to lead the far-right, everything points to Bolsonaroism as a political ideology continuing to exist in the country.

The far-right is relatively new to Chile and is tied to the emergence of José Antonio Kast, who has given life to the *Partido Republicano*. Lisa Zanotti (2023) indicates that this is indeed a far-right project that must be understood as a split from the mainstream right. Indeed, both Kast and sev-

eral leaders of the *Partido Republicano* come from parties on the mainstream right that they view as having become too moderate on both socio-economic and socio-cultural issues and having supposedly surrendered to progressivism. This case is marked by a rapid growth in support for the far-right within a very short period of time, which could eventually lead to internal tensions, since there are various factions within the far-right and it is not entirely clear whether they can maintain a harmonious relationship with each other.

Colombia stands out within Latin America for the strength of its right-wing parties and the weakness of its left-wing parties. However, Sandra Botero and José Miguel Jaimes Prada (2023) argue that there are still no indisputable examples of far-right actors in the country; they hold that it would be wrong to classify former president Álvaro Uribe or presidential candidate Rodolfo Hernández as far-right. The only political leader whom they characterise as the most clear-cut representative of the Colombian far-right is Senator María Fernanda Cabal, who makes use of the discourse of the far-right despite currently being a member of a mainstream right political party. In any case, the authors argue that the recent election of Gustavo Petro marks a turning point in Colombian politics and a crisis for the right, such that there is now a possibility that mainstream right-wing leaders and groups will end up morphing into part of a far-right bloc. In fact, the authors argue that factions related to Uribism are today tempted to move toward the far-right.

Together with Bolsonaro in Brazil, Nayib Bukele in El Salvador is the other example of a far-right politician in Latin America who has managed to gain executive power. Manuel Meléndez-Sánchez (2023) highlights that his political leadership originally lacked a clear profile as far-right, but over time has developed an agenda with a marked conservative tint on moral issues. However, his policies on tackling crime are strongly at odds with the rule of law and the liberal framework of the democratic system. The country is now nearing a presidential election, where Bukele is likely to be re-elected, which will not only pave the way for him to consolidate his political project, but also for the continued democratic erosion that El Salvador is experiencing.

Compared with other Latin American countries, Mexico stands out for its absence of far-right leaders and parties with any success at the ballot box. What is the explanation behind this? To answer this question, Rodrigo Castro Cornejo (2023) provides an analysis that focuses on the peculiarities of the country's incumbent government under Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO). Given that he has not pursued a culturally liberal agenda, his approach could be described as "leftism without progressivism", which manages to satisfy parts of the electorate who might otherwise be tempted by the far-right. However, AMLO will not be competing in the 2024 presidential election and it is not entirely clear that Claudia Sheinbaum who intends to carry on his legacy will continue to mobilize potential far-right voters, who could instead be won over by new political figures.

In Peru, it is true that the country is known for its personality-based leaders and it is practically impossible to find any robust party organisations, yet various right-wing projects have coexisted over the last decade and have succeeded in mobilizing significant segments of the electorate. Carlos Meléndez (2023) offers an analysis of these different right-wing political projects, which are rather close to the mainstream right, but he argues that a far-right political initiative has been emerging recently. Its key figure, Rafael López Aliaga, who, in a sense, has colonised the *Renovación Popular* party; as mayor of Lima, is attempting to conduct an exercise in far-right governance, above all in his extremely conservative socio-cultural measures, as well as his populist confrontation with certain sectors of the business elite.

Finally, Uruguay is also an interesting case to consider. After a long hegemony by the left-wing coalition *Frente Amplio*, the right regained executive power in the 2019 election. Current president Luis Lacalle Pou's government sits on the mainstream right, but in order to secure a majority in parliament, it has depended in part on the votes of a far-right party: *Cabildo Abierto*. Talita Tanscheit (2023) explains the particularities of this case study, which centres on a party that adopts morally conservative positions and advocates "iron fist" policies against crime in Uruguay. It should be noted that Guido Manini Ríos, the main leader of *Cabildo Abierto*, was previously commander-in-chief of the Uruguayan Army; it is no coincidence that this political project has a strong position in the military world and tends to elaborate a revisionist account of the authoritarian regime.

4 SOME EXPLANATIONS

The results of publications by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung on the far-right in Latin America reinforce the idea that this political project is on the rise throughout the region. The great unknown is how to explain this phenomenon. It is hardly a coincidence that far-right forces with varying ideological and organisational backgrounds are gaining electoral weight in different countries in Latin America in such a short period of time. Yet, so far scholars have not been able to come up with a reasonable theory for this. For this reason, it is more plausible to put forward some tentative arguments, which hold more validity in some countries than in others, but which together help us to offer a preliminary diagnosis on the rise of the far-right in Latin America.

Firstly, the increase in votes for far-right candidates is partly due to the voters' way of punishing the incumbents, who were mostly left-wing until not long ago (Luna & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2021). The hegemony of left-wing forces in the 2000s came to an end through to a combination of factors, including the drop in the price of raw materials and the corruption scandals that seriously affected the left's credibility. From this perspective, left-wing governments have run their course, paving the way for them to be rejected at the polls and creating a space for new actors from both the mainstream right (such as Macri in Argentina) and the far-right (such as Bolsonaro in Brazil). In turn, given that crime and

public safety is a problem that significantly affects the Latin American population, the far-right can politicise this issue as a criticism of left-wing governments and present itself as the only political option willing to take harsh measures to tackle this problem.

Secondly, another reason that helps us to understand the electoral rise of the far-right in Latin America is that mainstream right-wing parties find themselves in a crisis after having run out of steam. When these are unable to offer policies that appeal to broad parts of the electorate, this creates a representation void that can be cleverly exploited by far-right forces – including new ones – that not only criticise the left, but also seek to differentiate themselves and capture ground from the mainstream right. In this regard, the mainstream right in Chile is a typical example, having gradually adapted to a society with increasingly progressive positions in both socio-economic and socio-cultural terms, which certainly facilitated its electoral growth and gain executive power (Madariaga & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2020; Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019). However, the last government of Sebastián Piñera (2018-2022) rapidly fell out of favour not only due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also and, above all, the social outburst that the country saw at the end of 2019. As a result, the far-right led by José Antonio Kast managed to astutely exploit the window of opportunity that opened up.

Thirdly, the Latin American far-right certainly benefits from the growth of the far-right on a global level. In an increasingly interconnected world, political actors do not exist in a vacuum; they operate in environments linked to events elsewhere around the globe. The global diffusion of the far-right has attracted very little study (Bob, 2012), but in any case it is quite evident that there are transnational far-right support networks active in Latin America that are run in a very similar way to how they work for progressive causes, as famously studied by Keck and Sikkink (1998). In fact, the *Foro Madrid* recently created by Vox in Spain can be seen as a deliberate attempt to spread far-right ideas between the North and the South.

Beyond the arguments that help us to understand the rise of the far-right in Latin America, it is important to note the academic scepticism towards a simplistic interpretation: the idea that voters in the region are becoming more conservative and that, therefore, there is societal pressure for a shift away from culturally progressive positions. The empirical evidence available reveals no conservative shift in the region's voters (Mayka & Smith, 2021).

In fact, de Abreu Maia et al. (2022) emphasize public opinion data to demonstrate there has been no increase in opposition to marriage equality or LGBT+ persons competing in elections. Instead, we can observe the contrary: the vast majority of Latin American countries have been making advances in promoting gender equality and securing LGBT+ rights, even though we can also observe a rise in far-right actors positioning themselves against these policies (Corrales, 2020).

How can we explain this paradox? The answer must focus on the role of political actors, raising certain issues, tapping into citizens' underlying fears. Just as in Europe policies in favour of accommodating migrants have aroused anxiety and feelings of a loss of status in certain segments of the population. It is possible to speculate that in Latin America, policies supporting women's rights and non-traditional family structures have opened up opportunities for political leaders and parties to stoke fears in the face of these cultural changes. That is why it is important to study the far-right in Latin America, since these are political actors who deliberately seek to encourage the electorate to return to the old order of gender and sexual hierarchies.

In closing, it should be noted that the rise of the far-right in Latin America is a very recent phenomenon and deserves to be studied in detail. Empirical evidence available on other regions in the world reveals that these political forces have a negative impact on the democratic system (Akkerman et al., 2016; Mondon & Winter, 2020; Mudde, 2019). However, the far-right's ability to erode liberal democracy rests not only on the possibility of it gaining access to executive power, but also on the influence it exerts on the whole political system, in particular in the pressure it puts on the mainstream right to radicalise and to stop adhering to the formal and informal rules of the game that are typical of liberal democracy. Consequently, it is necessary to analyse both the rise of the far-right in Latin America and the potential transformation of the mainstream right. It depends, to a great extent, on whether the latter will allow the far-right's ideas to become normalised and thus permeate the political system.

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THE FAR-RIGHT IN LATIN AMERICA

Definitions and Explanations



The far-right is a global phenomenon that differs from the mainstream right in two key ways: its more radical advocacy of right-wing ideas and its conflictive relationship with democracy, above all with its liberal institutions.



While there are differences between the various actors of the far-right in Latin America, all of them share extremely conservative ideas on socio-cultural issues, such as those related to gender and sexual issues, and also tend to support »iron fist« policies against crime.



The empirical evidence available, however, reveals that there has been no increase in conservative positions amongst citizens in Latin America. Consequently, the rise and proliferation of the far-right in Latin America is explained more as the emergence of new leaders who promote right-wing socio-economic ideas but also develop radical positions on socio-cultural issues in order to differentiate themselves as much from the left, in general, as from the mainstream right, in particular.

Further information on the topic can be found here:
<https://www.fes.de/referat-lateinamerika-und-karibik/>