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The far-right in the Southern Cone: from the military dictatorships to the recent right-wing turn

Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta 

Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil

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Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta ¹

The far-right in the Southern Cone: from the military dictatorships to the recent right-wing turn

Abstract: The aim of this text is to analyze the recent right-wing turn in Southern Cone countries or, more precisely, towards the far-right. I intend to explain the recent context by exploring three strategies of analysis: first, conferring a historical density on the phenomenon of the rebirth of the far-right contrasting this with previous experiences, especially the military dictatorships in the 1960s and 1970s, whose legacies continue to mark the current scenario; second, reflecting on transnational connections, since the growth of the far-right is a global phenomenon which propels local agents, however, without disregarding the singularities; third, analyzing essential aspects of the far-right in the Southern Cone highlighting its common points, but also the particularities of each case.

Keywords: dictatorships, military, Southern Cone, Latin America

Resumen: El objetivo de este texto es analizar el reciente giro a la derecha en los países del Cono Sur o, más precisamente, hacia la extrema derecha. Mi intención es explicar el contexto reciente explorando tres estrategias de análisis: en primer lugar, dotar al fenómeno del renacimiento de la extrema derecha de una densidad histórica, contrastándolo con experiencias previas, especialmente las dictaduras militares de las décadas de 1960 y 1970, cuyos legados continúan marcando el escenario actual; en segundo lugar, reflexionar sobre las conexiones transnacionales, dado que el crecimiento de la extrema derecha es un fenómeno global que impulsa a los actores locales, aunque sin desatender las singularidades; en tercer lugar, analizar aspectos

¹ Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta is a Professor at the Department of History – Federal University of Minas Gerais. Email: rodrigopsamotta@gmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0158-6501>

esenciales de la extrema derecha en el Cono Sur destacando sus puntos comunes, pero también las particularidades de cada caso.

Palabras clave: dictaduras, militares, Cono Sur, América Latina

Introduction

The aim of this text is to analyze the recent rightwing turn in Southern Cone countries or, more precisely, towards the far-right. However, the analysis will be restricted to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, the absence of Paraguay being justified by the need to reduce the scope and the complexity of the analysis, as well as the difficulty in accessing the bibliography about that country.

The far-right reached power in this region in 2018, first with Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, followed by Javier Milei in Argentina in 2023 and José Antonio Kast in Chile in December 2025. In the case of Uruguay, in recent years there emerged a briefly successful far-right party led by General Guido Manini Ríos. This scenario represents a notable political realignment in the region, since after the end of the military dictatorships in the 1980s these countries underwent democratization processes of a progressive type which marginalized the far-right.

Three analytical strategies structure the argument. First, the text confers a historical density on the phenomenon of the rebirth of the far-right by contrasting it with previous experiences, especially the military dictatorships in the 1960s and 1970s, whose legacies continue to mark the current scenario. Second, it reflects on transnational connections, since the growth of the far-right is a global phenomenon which propels local agents, though without disregarding the singularities. Third, it analyzes essential aspects of the far-right in the Southern Cone by highlighting its common points, but also the particularities of each case.

A prior conceptual clarification is in order. The analysis draws on the concept developed by the Dutch political scientist Cas Mudde, who proposed the use of far-right as a wide-ranging concept for the anti-systemic rightwing hostile to liberal democracy. According to Mudde, the far-right is composed of two groups: the extreme right, which rejects the liberal democratic political system and aims to destroy it; and the radical right, which criticizes some aspects of this system (for example, respect for minorities), but in general submits to its rules (Mudde, 2021, p.21). However, considering the cases focused on here, at times it is difficult to make

clear distinctions according to this concept. The expression far-right will thus be used to define all of them.

Historical Roots: From the 1930s to the Military Dictatorships

The first analytical movement consists of a synthetic account of the far-right's trajectory in the region during the twentieth century, with particular emphasis on the period of the military dictatorships.

Rightwing extremism emerged for the first time in the region in the 1920s and 1930s, in connection with the global scenario marked by the impact of the First World War and the 1929 crisis, as well as the ascension of fascist movements in Europe. This first far-right wave in the Southern Cone generated well-structured fascist parties in Brazil (Gonçalves & Caldeira, 2022) and Chile and a deep-rooted authoritarian nationalism in Argentina (Lvovich, 2006), and provoked coups and the emergence of rightwing dictatorships in the four countries.

The military defeat of the fascist powers in Europe and the end of the Second World War led to important changes in the scenario. With the Cold War and the emergence of the United States as a hegemonic power in Latin America without serious competitors, local political groups realigned. In the rightwing field, liberal groups regained strength, relying on the values and political influence of the United States. However, the different far-right factions continued to operate, although with declining influence, above all those with fascist tendencies, which in some cases toned down their most radical traits to adapt to the new context. This implied the appropriation of "democratic" rhetoric by groups which were anything but democratic, and which only sought to align themselves with the Western bloc in the Cold War.

It is important to highlight that the resumption of political liberalism after the end of the Second World War coincided with the expansion of the left. Repressive actions with an anti-communist nature continued in this liberal phase, partly because they combined with the dominant ideas in the western bloc (Motta, 2020; Valdivia, 2021). However, even under political repression which affected more than communist circles, the Latin American left found more space to act in this phase of

the predominance of governments aligned with liberalism or reformist nationalism, which in some cases were tolerant of the actions of the left and social movements.

During these initial decades of the Cold War the expansion of leftwing activism was also due to the impact of anti-colonial struggles in Asia and Africa, and the success of the Cuban Revolution, which profoundly marked the Latin American scenario. Moreover, in the context of the 1950s and 1960s, the left diversified with the emergence of heterodox Marxist tendencies and the appearance of progressive tendencies among Catholic activists. During that time, those groups demanded income distribution policies, reforms democratizing access to public education and universities, nationalist measures and agrarian reform.

This growth of left-wing activism met a violent response from the local rightwing groups, which were supported by the Western bloc. They led a wave of military coups in the region from the 1960s onwards, with the overthrow of João Goulart in Brazil in 1964 being a milestone, as the military would maintain power not as individuals, but as corporations that sought objectives to justify long-term authoritarian regimes. For that reason, researchers labelled this cycle of dictatorships "new authoritarianism" to distinguish it from the previous dictatorships (Collier, 1979, p.19-31). Following Brazil, the other countries would soon be submitted to military dictatorships: the 1966 dictatorship in Argentina, which after a brief return of Peronists to power in 1973 would be followed by the bloody dictatorship of 1976; while in Chile and Uruguay military coups would occur in the same year, 1973. These dictatorships lasted until the middle of the 1980s, with the Chilean being the last to end, in 1989.

Various motives drove the coup leaders and supporters. They were propelled by anti-communism and anti-leftism, which perceived local activists as part of a global communist threat. This rejection of the left included the guerrilla movements, a phenomenon present in all countries, though most importantly in Argentina and Uruguay. However, except for Uruguay, guerrillas emerged in response to military dictatorships and were not the main reasons for the coups. Significantly, in the latter country the military took power a few months after declaring victory over the guerrillas (Broquetas, 2024, p.320). The real target of the coup leaders was the expanding social movements and their demands, which could imply the loss of privileges of the upper classes. Furthermore, they also aimed to repress changes in behavior which threatened traditional morality, above all concerning sexuality and drug consumption. Economic impasses and problems equally motivated the coup leaders, who used the dictatorships to find authoritarian solutions to resolve them. Naturally, the impact of the Cold War and the protagonism of US agencies must also be considered, though their role did not apply equally across all coups.

The authoritarian cycle of the 1960s and 1970s was led by the military, clerics, political leaders, and businessmen, notably media companies. Various rightwing organizations also played a very active role, above all women's, youth, and Christian groups. From the ideological point of view, their spectrum extended from the far-right to the liberal right. It is important to highlight this novelty in relation to the 1930s dictatorships, since on that occasion liberalism was an enemy or at least a decadent ideology to be overcome. In contrast, in the 1960s and 1970s liberalism was an ally of the dictators, which implied contradictory attitudes of leaders who preached liberty but supported authoritarian political regimes. This alliance also generated ideological differences and disputes between the more moderate wings and the far-right.

In general, the far-right devoted itself primarily to repressive tasks involving the torture and murder of thousands of opponents (Águila et al., 2020). Furthermore, the far-right contributed to the construction of social and cultural policies inspired by its traditions, such as the introduction of authoritarian civic-patriotic lessons in schools, the defense of traditional Christian moral values, and the repression of deviant forms of behavior. The liberal right, in turn, influenced the economic policies of the dictatorships, which were marked by liberalism — unlike the dictatorships of the 1930s. That was an important novelty in the rightwing field, with notable repercussions for the future. Crucially, original forms of combination between liberalism and authoritarianism were thus created, and would be reappropriated by far-right leaders in the twenty-first century.

Democratic Transitions and the Return of the Far-Right

The end of the military dictatorships and the democratic transitions of the 1980s led to a new political scenario. The rejection of the violence practiced by the military became dominant in the public debate, including among sectors which had previously supported it. Furthermore, the demands for democracy and the reduction of social inequalities, aggravated by the dictatorships, made progressive proposals very attractive. Due to their identification with then-discredited dictatorships, the most radical and conservative rightwing groups withdrew to the fringes of the recently constructed democratic political systems. Neofascist groups, ultra-conservative Catholic organizations, and retired military continued to act, criticizing the left and human rights policies, but with little public visibility.

Following the democratization processes, the growth of the influence of the left — especially moderate sectors distant from the revolutionary utopias, called the "pink tide" for this reason — allowed its rise to power in all countries in the region at the end of the twentieth century. In Brazil, the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party) reached power in 2002 under the leadership of Lula da Silva; in Argentina, Néstor Kirchner and his wife Cristina Fernández did so as well, leading neo-Peronist administrations from 2003 onwards; while in Uruguay the leftwing Frente Amplio coalition reached power in 2004. In the case of Chile, it is more complex to establish when the left came to power, since some of its members had participated in the Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia which reached power in 1989. It is safer, however, to take the election of the socialist Michelle Bachelet in 2005 as marking this point.

At the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century this scenario began to change, with the far-right gaining relevance again. The reasons for this are essentially of local order, though the global scenario provided an impulse and encouragement. The European far-right offered examples of success, such as Lepenism, and also from France came the teachings of Alain de Benoist (De Benoist, 1982), who called on the right to wage a cultural battle — a call that would be answered by Latin American public intellectuals from the end of the 1990s (for example: Mendoza; Montaner, Carlos Alberto; Vargas Llosa, 1996). Eastern European far-right movements were also influential, above all the case of Hungary under Viktor Orbán. However, for the Southern Cone far-right the more influential cases were the United States, with the Trump phenomenon from 2016, and Spain after the emergence of the Vox party in 2013. The Spanish party has been particularly influential in Hispano-American countries, having appropriated the Francoist discourse of affirming Hispanidad (Goldstein, 2024).

The global context has thus significantly impacted the far-right in the Southern Cone, which has used similar arguments to those of its counterparts in the North and acted in connection with them. Before analyzing the particularities and singularities of each case, and the distinctions between the four movements, it is worth briefly presenting the trajectory of each leader and their respective political movement.

Four Cases, Four Trajectories

Bolsonarism emerged first in the regional and global scenario, following Jair Bolsonaro's victory in the 2018 presidential elections. Jair Bolsonaro began his

political life after leaving the army at the end of the 1980s, when he was a young captain. In 1991 he was elected to the Brazilian Congress as a federal deputy, counting on votes from the military and their relatives. For various years, however, he remained a marginal figure in parliament. From the second decade of the twenty-first century onwards, the new political scenario opened the way for a surprising and rapid transformation of Bolsonaro into the leader of millions. At that moment the PT was in power with president Rousseff, having been elected in 2010 with the support of Lula. Her administration inherited the impact of the 2008 global crisis, which contributed to the economic and political crisis that worsened after her reelection in 2014, opening the way for the 2016 impeachment.

The anti-PT movement which overthrew the Rousseff administration was also propelled by accusations of corruption and conservative attacks on social policies aimed at excluded or marginalized groups (Limongi, 2023). The fact that the investigations against corruption also involved traditional rightwing parties benefited Bolsonaro, who could present himself as an anti-systemic politician. To attract the support of the economic elites, Bolsonaro embraced the neoliberal economic agenda and abandoned the nationalist and corporatist proposals which he had defended before. By mixing the conservative agenda and neoliberalism, Bolsonaro easily won the 2018 elections, consolidating a far-right movement around his figure. Despite this, Bolsonaro was defeated when he attempted to run for reelection in 2022 (with a difference of 2% of the votes in favor of Lula da Silva). Bolsonaro responded to electoral defeat by supporting a coup conspiracy, with the decisive participation of the military, which failed after an attempt to invade the federal capital in January 2023, resulting in the trial of the former president, who was sentenced to 27 years in prison.

In the case of Chile, the main far-right leader is José Antonio Kast, a politician with family and personal ties to Pinochetism. Kast began his career as a deputy, elected by UDI (Unión Democrática Independiente), a party founded by supporters of Pinochet which merged liberalism, conservatism, and authoritarianism. However, Kast broke with this party and the traditional right in 2016, running as an independent presidential candidate the following year (obtaining 8% of the votes). His leadership was strengthened after the 2019 *estallido*, when progressive causes gained more space in Chile, prompting those on the right to transfer part of their votes to the Republican Party founded by Kast. He built his profile around defending a traditional conservative agenda — family, social hierarchies, Christian values, rejection of abortion and homosexuality, and the defense of security

and national sovereignty — against the usual enemies, primarily those he labels Marxists or neo-Marxists. However, Kast also singled out two further enemies: Mapuche indigenous activists and immigrants (especially Venezuelans), whose movements he intended to block by building ditches (Díaz, Rovira Kaltwasser, Zanotti, 2023).

In the 2021 elections he obtained 28% in the first round, sufficient to elect 15 deputies and one senator. In the 2025 elections, Kast sought to soften his moralistic conservative positions, probably to attract the women's vote which had rejected him in the previous election. For this reason, he emphasized more the themes of public security and the economy, though he did not renounce the conservative moral agenda (Gartenlaub, 2023). Kast obtained 24% of the votes in the first round of the 2025 elections, when the Chilean right split between Kast, the young Johannes Kaiser (who obtained 14% of the votes) — a former follower of Kast who broke from him adopting an even more radical discourse — and the candidate of the traditional UDI, Evelyn Matthei (12% of the votes). In the second round, those votes went to Kast, who was elected with 58% of the votes.

In the case of Argentina, the economist Javier Milei began his public career in 2015 participating in television programs, in which he defended ultraliberal and "anarcho-capitalist" ideas, as well as conservative positions on questions of morality, with criticisms of attempts to legalize abortion. He gained greater notoriety during the Covid-19 pandemic when he used social media to criticize and ridicule social isolation policies (Lvovich, 2025). In 2021, Milei was elected as a deputy on the list of the recently created La Libertad Avanza party. The party initially elected only two deputies, but soon afterwards benefitted from the worsening of the Argentinian economic and social crisis, which weakened the main parties that had held power. Milei mainly attracted the votes which had previously gone to the liberal right, especially PRO (Propuesta Republicana) led by the businessman Mauricio Macri, who governed Argentina from 2015–2019. Macri's weak economic performance favored the return of Peronists/Kirchneristas to power in the 2019 elections, won by Alberto Fernández. The economic and social crisis became extremely serious during Fernández's administration, implying the impoverishment of part of the population. Social despair led to Milei's victory in the second round of the 2023 elections, in which he attracted voters from the right but also those disillusioned with the Peronists, including young people and workers (Goldstein, 2024).

Milei attracted traditional rightwing sectors with attacks on all sorts of progressivism in the social and moral fields and violent criticism of a generic cultural Marxism. In relation to patriotic discourse, Milei clung to a nostalgic vision of the glories of

Argentina at the end of the nineteenth century, which he intended to revive with his ultraliberal policies, while pleasing military sectors by criticizing defenders of human rights.

In the case of Uruguay, in 2019 the far-right formed a party, *Cabildo Abierto*, under the leadership of the former general Guido Manini Ríos. Manini Ríos had served as army commander during part of the *Frente Amplio* administration, becoming notorious for criticizing the trials of military officers who had committed crimes during the dictatorship and opposing the human rights policy of the left-wing administration. Despite this, he was allowed to remain in the position for four years until he was dismissed in 2019 after resisting the provision of evidence of crimes committed by the dictatorship. Upon leaving the position of Army Commander he delivered a strong speech against the government, dressed in combat uniform for dramatic effect. In the same year he ran for president for *Cabildo Abierto*, when the party had its best performance, obtaining 11% of the votes, enough to elect 11 deputies and three senators (Broquetas & Caetano, 2023, p.177–194).

This result shocked many Uruguayans, used to the idea that the far-right had been buried along with the military dictatorship. The new party found its greatest source of support among the "military family" and security professionals, as well as activists of the extreme right, ranging from remnants of *Juventud Uruguaya de Pie* — a group which was strong in the 1970s — to young neo-fascists. The party's discourse also attracted voters dissatisfied with the traditional right or disappointed with the *Frente Amplio*.

In the agenda of the group led by General Manini Ríos one finds many similarities with other cases: the defense of order and authority accompanied by criticism of the so-called gender ideology and new behaviors tolerated by progressive administrations, such as sexual education in schools and the liberalization of abortion and the consumption of marijuana. Moreover, the party defended the positive role of the armed forces in the public sphere, as well as security policies to deal with crime and anti-corruption measures. Nationalism featured prominently in its discourse, accompanied by criticism of globalism and a generic anti-imperialism. The party's leaders identified as Catholics and Hispanists, showing sympathy for neo-Francoism and aversion to Marxism.

After the surprising positive performance in the 2019 elections, the party collapsed in the 2024 elections, attaining only 2.6% of votes and electing only two deputies. As in Brazil, this result shows that the growth of the extreme right is not an irreversible process. But unlike Brazil it appears that the Uruguayan far-right did not manage to create a strong identification with the electorate, with some analysts arguing that internal divisions — between civilians and the military — hindered the performance of Manini Ríos' party in the 2024 elections.

Global connections in contrast with regional and local particularities

The connections between the Southern Cone far-right and its peers in the northern hemisphere are numerous: they share many values and are driven by a similar social, political, and economic context. One of the common aspects is the sense of exhaustion of previous economic models, or, in cases where the economic crisis is not severe, the discourse that it is necessary to change direction to achieve better results. The crisis or decadence are attributed to the responsibility of the left or the liberal right, accused of not finding solutions to economic impasses. Moreover, they reject the moderate right for having become too close to progressive ideas. In this way, the far-right presents itself as a novel anti-systemic force, which has also helped to attract those disappointed with the left.

The Latin American far-right defends similar proposals to those of its Northern peers, such as nationalism (in contrast to "globalism"), authoritarian measures against enemies, and certain populist postures (Caiani, della Porta and Wagemann, 2012). Furthermore, the far-right also attacks the so-called cultural Marxism, the progressive identity-based policies that benefit minorities, and the human rights agenda, responding instead with demands for investment in security apparatus and respect for national traditions.

Considering their singularities, the Southern Cone far-right represents above all a reaction to the governments of the so-called pink tide, both because of their failures and their achievements. In addition to accusing these administrations of being influenced by Marxism, the far-right rejects the progressive measures it accuses of ideologically and sexually corrupting the youth. Furthermore, these movements viscerally reject feminist policies or those aimed at protecting sexual minorities, as well as actions in favor of Black and indigenous peoples — issues of particular importance given the history of the region — as well as attacking multiculturalism in the name of traditional nationalism. Another key aspect is

criticism of environmental protection measures enacted by the progressive governments, while the neoliberal fringe of the Southern Cone's far-right attacks the neo-developmental economic policies adopted by the "pink" governments in pursuit of income redistribution to benefit the lower classes.

The far-right groups emphasize that they are rebels and transgressors. Their most visible innovation, however, is the use of new technologies and media, used effectively by figures such as Olavo de Carvalho, Agustín Laje, Axel Kaiser, and Nicolás Márquez, among other intellectuals engaged in cultural battles, practicing a type of rightwing Gramscianism (Saferstein & Goldentul, 2022). The alleged novelty is nonetheless questionable, considering their strong connection with previous traditions. In fact, the current far-right is as conservative from the moral point of view as its predecessors, equally focused on the defense of religion, Christian morality, and the traditional family. The actual novelty is that it fights demands non-existent or irrelevant in previous decades, such as the LGBT movement agenda and the legalization of abortion and marijuana.

Returning to transnational connections, it is worth highlighting that the Latin American far-right differs from its Northern partners — above all in Western Europe — which tend to be less linked to Christian morality and less conservative in behavioral themes, to the point of admitting women and gay people as leaders, which would be unacceptable to their counterparts in the Southern Cone. There are the cases of Evelyn Matthei in Chile and Michele Bolsonaro in Brazil, but the first belongs to the traditional right and the second built a public image in the shadow of her husband, presenting herself as a conservative Christian woman. Another important singularity involves the military dictatorships' inheritance, which has no parallel in the countries of the North, and is analyzed below.

Economic issues also distinguish the Southern from the Northern far-right. The latter tends to be more nationalist, protectionist, and at times chauvinistic in economic terms — with the possible exception of the AfD — criticizing globalism to affirm national interests. In contrast, the Southern Cone far-right defends economic liberalism, free trade, and reduction of protectionist tariffs, in such a way that their "nationalism" and anti-globalism tend to serve only as weapons to criticize the left. The partial exception is Cabildo Abierto, from Uruguay, whose generic criticism of imperialism can be understood as an attack on capitalist powers.

The Southern Cone far-right thus tends to unite Christian-based moral conservatism with neoliberalism, representing a point of connection with the military dictatorships that originally promoted the fusion of such ideas. In contrast with other scenarios, the main enemies of the far-right in the Southern Cone are not foreign immigrants, with the partial exception of Chile. The main enemy, the other, are neither foreigners nor immigrants from exotic cultures, but the left, homosexuals, and feminists — adversaries which the far-right tends to merge into one.

Let's focus on the distinctions between the four cases. They all share characteristics classified as populist, above all discourses opposing the people to the elite. However, the elites in question are bureaucrats and politicians rather than social elites, and the imagined people are more the middle classes than the popular sectors proper. It is also worth noting that Kast fits less into the populist profile (González de Requena Farré & Riveros Ferrada, 2024), among other reasons because he adopts a more sober style, whereas Milei and Bolsonaro have invested more in caricatural speeches and attitudes — the former going so far as to dress as a libertarian superhero to attract attention.

In relation to the dictatorships of the 1960s and 1970s, two of the leaders came from military careers shaped by the authoritarian regimes. During his political trajectory, Bolsonaro made various declarations favorable to the dictatorship, including endorsements of the murder of leftwing opponents. Upon assuming the presidency, he praised officers who had been active in repression and made statements in defense of the 1964 coup and the subsequent authoritarian regime. It is no coincidence that he attempted a coup d'état in 2023 in association with Army officers. In Manini Ríos's case, he avoided making explicit speeches in defense of the dictatorship, doing so instead indirectly by criticizing the trial of officers who had committed crimes in that period and by proposing a public role for the armed forces in defense of order and security.

As for Kast, a lawyer, he did not have a military background, but from an early age had connections with the Pinochetista inheritance, which he reveals by defending economic policies practically identical to those of the dictatorship (the themes of popular capitalism and the subsidiary role of the state), as well as demanding the repression of Mapuche activists based on anti-terrorist rhetoric. Moreover, Kast has made declarations showing his admiration for the dictatorship, such as saying that if Pinochet were alive he would vote for him, or stating, on the anniversary of the coup in 2022, that on 11 September 1973 Chile had chosen freedom thanks to the men and women who had risen up to prevent a Marxist revolution.

Milei's relations with the Argentine dictatorship are more tenuous. Nevertheless, he sought the military vote by making Victoria Villarruel his vice-president. Villarruel supports sectors that criticize reparatory policies for the dictatorship's crimes and call for a "complete memory" of the period — in other words, demanding that the violent acts of the armed left also be highlighted, in the hope that this would soften the public image of the military and eventually open the way for amnesty for their crimes.

Final considerations

It is difficult to offer a conclusive analysis of a phenomenon which is still developing, and predictions are even more hazardous. By 2025, the far-right had won the elections held in Argentina and Chile, while Brazil will have general elections in October 2026. In Uruguay, the next election is more distant, but the 2024 results, as noted above, showed a strong decline of the party led by General Manini Ríos. In the other three cases, the far-right is in power in Argentina and Chile, while opinion polls in Brazil show that the movement is well-positioned — with the candidacy of one of Bolsonaro's sons — to try to prevent the re-election of Lula da Silva.

The current scenario of the growth of the far-right on a global scale is worrying due to its intrinsic authoritarianism and the risk it represents to democracy, even in cases classified as radical right, which in theory accepts the liberal-democratic institutions. The threat may be perhaps more acute in the Southern Cone, due to the recent history of military dictatorships which the current far-right leaders admire, to say the least.

On the other hand, in contrast with the experiences of the 1930s–40s and the 1960s–70s, when the far-right came to power through coups and military uprisings, these groups have recently reached government through democratic elections. This significant historical novelty raises important questions for reflection. First, it evidences the increasing popularity of the far-right, which is related to the singular combination between authoritarianism, conservatism, and economic liberalism — an arrangement that would have been unthinkable a century ago.

Second, the apparent commitment of the far-right to the electoral system could imply that the risk of new coups has been discarded. Nevertheless, the coup attempt in Brazil in January 2023 showed that the dictatorial temptation remains alive in the

far-right, at least in that country. The defeat of the Bolsonaroista *putsch* may signify that the dictatorships of the past are unfeasible today. However, this does not exempt the region from other types of authoritarian threats implied in far-right activism, which still linger over the region and the world.

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