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CALL FOR PAPERS

Public Accountability and Institutional Change in Latin America

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An array of global and regional factors has contributed to the centrality of public accountability in academic production: the end of the Cold War; the third wave of democratic expansion in academia and the consequent concern over the quality of democracies; the turn to the left of the region and the multiplication of innovative democratic experiences centered on citizen participation or the reforms of the State centered on the improvement of the quality of public services led by multilateral agencies, to mention three joint factors.

Despite the rich and extensive academic Latin American production concerning public accountability, the integrated diagnostics about the transformations taking place in the region are still inchoate. For example, the recent multiplication of large corruption scandals sheds a new light on the institutional changes and non-electoral public accountability in Latin America. Are those scandals a sign of more corruption? Or, do they show a greater capacity to control social actors over the State? Do they reflect the development of the capacities of agencies in charge of public accountability? Do they show greater transparency in public service? Or, are they a combination of both? And if this is the case, what combination?

Research on public accountability has developed from three complementary views, but they have not been well articulated. The first type of research, which deals with the deficits in accountability and transparency, uses theories of delegative democracy to explain the changes in the quality of democracy in terms of the institutional capacity of the State. The second type of research, which

focuses on social control, stems from theories of participation and is centered on the role of non-state actors in political processes, such as the participative budget, local government, popular initiatives, etc. The third type of research, which encompasses the administrative capacities of the State, emerges from theories of patronage and explains the causes and effects of the politicization of bureaucracy, clientelism, nepotism, etc.

One of the consequences of this limited articulation is that conceptual pairs of common use in this field of study, such as electoral/non-electoral, vertical/horizontal, political/social control, formal/informal are of limited use for the generation of integrated and consistent knowledge that allows for the comparison of the structures or configurations of accountability. They particularly do not explain the complete relationships between democratic electoral checks (vertical accountability), political intra-estate checks (horizontal accountability), social controls (social accountability), and the professionalization of bureaucracy (administrative accountability).

The objective of the current dossier is to demonstrate the transformation in the systems and processes of democratic non-electoral checks (public accountability) in the past three decades. By emphasizing institutional changes, this dossier aspires to contribute to a greater interdisciplinary analytical articulation that stimulates a discussion between longitudinal studies and comparisons between countries, public policy fields, and administrative areas and modalities of non-electoral checks. This dossier is particularly interested in contributions that arise from the following topics:

1. Institutional Innovation and Creation: emergence and demise of new powers; bureaucratic autonomy; role of non-governmental organizations and political networks (national and international).
2. Citizen Participation and Democratic Innovation: multi-level governance (responsibility of national, federal, local, state or supranational governments), accountability in specific policies (extractivist, industrial, related to health, etc.).
3. Transparency and Anti-corruption Policies: national initiatives; diffusion of global initiatives (Open Government Partnership, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, etc.); State reforms; control of resources by governments.

Article submissions are accepted in Spanish, English, and Portuguese, though the selected articles will be published in Spanish. The journal will clarify any doubts and provide feedback on proposals until the submission deadline.

The articles must comply with the editorial policy and publication standards of the journal (available at www.revistaiconos.ec). A peer review system is used for the selection of articles.

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