



Topics discussion panels

Panel 1. Is Democracy in Danger? The Uncertain Future of Democracy Worldwide

Democracy faces great challenges. Societies are questioning its ability to solve today's complex problems, thus undermining support for it. Also, parties and politicians have risen to power through free elections –the main democratic instrument–, only to perpetuate themselves in power later on, and erode democracy itself through policies and ideas which run contrary to its fundamental values. Some examples of this can be found in such dissimilar countries as Hungary, the Philippines and the United States. This is a global phenomenon: for twelve years now, the *Freedom in the World Report*, by Freedom House, has registered more setbacks than advances in guaranteeing individual and civil liberties, 2017 being the worst year. What explains this ascending wave of authoritarianism? Is this a new era of democratic relapse, or is it a temporary juncture? In any case, how can these threats be faced, and how can democracy and freedom be strengthened?

Panel 2. Warning Signs? The Future of Democracy in Latin America

For the last ten years, there has been a constant and noticeable descent in support for democracy in Latin America. More and more citizens are now indifferent to what kind of political regime they live in (25% in 2017, according to Latinobarómetro); young people, the citizens of the future, express an increasing apathy towards politics (76% in 2016, according to Latinobarómetro). In 2018, forty years after the third wave of democratization in the region, some countries even experience a setback; a number of them, not longer characterized as electoral democracies anymore. Which are these cases? Why are these setbacks taking place? How can they be stopped?

Panel 3. Mexico 2018 Elections: A balance

In 2018, Mexico lived the biggest and most complex electoral process of its history. Once again, the capacity of the electoral authorities to organize and sanction elections has been proved. Also, the electoral reform of 2014 was implemented for the first time in a presidential election. What is the balance of this election? Where can room for improvement be found? Which areas should be maintained as they are now, and which should be strengthened?

The findings of this roundtable will be submitted to the recently elected Mexican Congress, aiming at an electoral reform.

Panel 4. The Future of Electoral Justice

In a democratic regime, the exercise of independent and impartial electoral justice is fundamental. Thus, several countries have come up with the idea of, and pushed for, the creation of electoral conflict resolution bodies. These instances solve not only the conflicts that may arise from the electoral results themselves, but those that might ensue at any moment of the electoral cycle; and they also aim to guarantee political-electoral human rights that might be harmed throughout campaigns, from offering protection to the freedom of expression on social media, to representing affected groups. What has been the role of independent justice for advancing democracy in the world? Which have been the contributions of the Judicial Electoral Tribunal in Mexico? Furthermore, where is there room for improvement? Which areas should be strengthened?

Panel 5. Mexico 2018 Elections: Towards Political Reform

The political-electoral reform of 2014 was tested in the 2018 election. The results are mixed. Whether the current hybrid system will be maintained, or if the option to centralize the electoral management will be decided upon, is something yet to be determined. Furthermore, there are wider issues related to democratic governability, that range from adjusting the current public administration model, to the possibility of transitioning to a parliamentary or semi-parliamentary system. In which direction should Mexico be heading to consolidate its democracy? Will there be a new electoral reform? Would this be desirable? Is there a way to break the election-reform cycle?