



Call For Paper For Special Issue: Critical Perspectives on Covid19 in Latin America

Alternautas, an academic peer-reviewed blog, invites authors to submit contributions for a special issue on 'Critical perspectives on Covid19 in Latin America'



In the first quarter of 2020 a new coronavirus spread around the globe, leaving death and destruction in its wake. One by one, entire regions were forced into lockdown to tackle what quickly became a pandemic, as the virus spread quickly through the world's globalised production networks. Although Latin America was hit relatively late in comparison to Europe, the virus has still spread across the continent to devastating effect, leaving the healthcare systems of many countries – most notably Brazil and Ecuador – on the brink of collapse.

As the world reels, it becomes clear that the Covid-19 pandemic is part of a broader confluence of multiple, intertwined crises that have emerged out of the dominant modes of development. The virus itself was born on the (artificial) boundary between human society and nature, from the contradictory ways that capitalism dominates animal species to feed itself. Indeed, the major disease outbreaks of recent years have all been traced to either agroindustrial meat production (Swine flu, H1N1) or the expansion of extractive activities deep into the last remaining great forests (Ebola, HIV-Aids). This leads to vital questions around the political ecological dimensions and effects of modes of development in Latin America and elsewhere in the world.

Since 2013, in many countries that were part of the left-wing governments known collectively as the pink tide, many of the economic gains of these regimes – GDP growth, raises in the minimum and average wages, falling poverty, inequality and informality – have been undermined or undone. The neoextractive models of development that underpinned these governments have increasingly come under strain, with the collapse of oil prices in March 2020 likely to have far-reaching ramifications for several Latin American countries, especially those dependent on hydrocarbons, such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela. The informal economy continues to be a source of livelihoods for much of Latin America, making lockdowns nigh on impossible and pitting populations against public health officials. The high instances of informal housing, with its poor sanitation and high population densities, make Latin American cities perfect breeding grounds for the coronavirus, and the weak public health systems across the region – already comparatively poor due to the low instance of healthcare spending as a proportion of GDP – leaves the region particularly vulnerable to the devastating impacts of the pandemic.

In Chile, Ecuador and Colombia during the year 2019, popular protests against inequality, private debt and the dominant modes of development flared, sparking political crises. Across the continent, the feminist movement *Ni Una Menos* continues apace, with the struggles over social reproduction and reproductive rights mobilising massive sectors of the population, particularly in Argentina, Chile and Mexico. The pandemic has confined people to their homes, but this does not stop the *caserolazos* that have been heard ringing through the neighbourhoods of many Latin

American cities. The pandemic may have put a spanner in the works of these movements, or may have poured fuel on the fire, it is still too early to tell.

Finally, indigenous people are thought to be particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus. Across Latin America, indigenous people continue to be forced off their land as the agricultural and extractive frontiers eat into the Amazon rainforest. In Brazil, loggers and ranchers, emboldened by the government of Jair Bolsonaro, became increasingly belligerent in 2019, murdering indigenous leaders and accelerating dispossession. As the pandemic hits, the healthcare system of Manaus, the Brazilian city in the middle of the Amazon, has already collapsed in the face of the virus, a sign of the dangers that indigenous communities are confronted by. This is to say nothing of the millions of indigenous people who find themselves in informal settlements in the peripheries of Latin America's cities, dependent on the market of the informal economy to survive.

In the face of this broad panorama, *Alternautas* is compiling a special issue on Development in Latin America during Covid-19. We invite articles that touch on any of the themes outlined above, which include:

- The state of extractivism in Latin America
- The political ecology of the pandemic
- Indigenous peoples and Covid-19
- Public healthcare system capacity in Latin America
- Informality and the world of work during the pandemic
- Public protest and social movements under Covid-19
- Alternatives to development opened by the pandemic

Article submissions

The call is open to contributions from different disciplinary approaches, from sociology, anthropology, political ecology and political geography to architecture, law, history, economics or political science. They are expected to be of a length between 3,500–5,000 words. Submit your articles to: info@alternautas.net and please specify "Covid19 in Latin America" in the subject line.

Important dates

Deadline to submit papers: before September 30th 2020.

Peer review process: October 20th – December 20th 2020

Author revisions: December 20th 2020 – January 20th 2021

Publication: First Semester 2021