

BriAS programme
Democratic governance: Challenges and innovations
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Despite the optimism at the turn of the century, democracies are witnessing a profound crisis, with numerous indicators suggesting that democratic systems are under increasing strain. From the rise of authoritarianism to widespread disillusionment with political institutions, the challenges facing democracies are significant. Long established democracies are encountering an unprecedented erosion of democratic norms: trust in democratic institutions is declining across many regions and citizens are becoming increasingly sceptical about the capacity of democratic governance to deliver on its promises.

Democracy, both as an ideal and a practice, has reached a critical juncture. It is now essential to assess the specific challenges facing democratic systems and explore potential pathways for renewal. This BriAS proposal focuses on four areas identified as key challenges to democratic governance:

- (1) polarization, populism, and violence;
- (2) democratic short-termism and sustainability;
- (3) technology, misinformation, and artificial intelligence;
- (4) inequality and inclusion.

The programme is structured around these four work packages, each addressing one of the central challenges faced by contemporary democracies. However, we do not merely want to diagnose problems; we also seek to provide solutions. To that end, the cross-cutting theme of democratic innovations will be woven through these work packages, offering pathways to help democracies adapt and thrive.

