

Editorial

Jorge Gordin

Welcome to JPLA *Journal of Politics in Latin America*. The launching of this journal reflects some changes in the field of comparative politics on Latin America. With the waning of military dictatorships in the region, there has been a proliferation of academic work on formal institutions, which now amounts to the dominant paradigm in the discipline. This scholarship on institutions has rebounded in the last two decades because of an increased interest on the part of political scientists and policy analysts in the quality of democracy and the performance of Latin American polities. Numerous comparative country studies as well as cross-national quantitative studies have focused on formal rules such as those governing the working of presidential and parliamentary regimes, elections, and the organization of political parties. Notwithstanding such studies, there is a conspicuous gap between these research foci and the increasing worldwide interest in informal institutions addressing issues such as public security and crime, corruption, globalization, and energy management, among others.

The major purpose of JPLA is to tackle this theoretical and thematic re-shuffling in the subdiscipline by providing a new publication outlet for scholars interested in disseminating comparatively informed research on Latin American politics that contributes to enduring debates on the political science agenda. The journal's goal is to address the increasing need for analysis of the functioning of political systems in the region from a comparative perspective, analysis which links the findings from Latin American-focused research with the results of similar studies on political institutions and processes in other countries or regions of the world. In doing this, we seek to offer the field a truly international forum for publishing high-quality research, and one that is open to various theoretical and methodological approaches. We do not impose any limits upon inquiry, nor do we favor any single approach at the expense of others. In this regard this journal sets out to serve as an intellectual and scientific bridge bringing together scholars working on Latin American politics in the Americas, Europe and, of course, all over the globe. It is our aim to become a consolidating force in the subdiscipline and the venue of choice for the political science community working on Latin America.

JPLA will include papers from all research approaches consistent with high standards of scholarships. In addition to the main research articles, JPLA will include two other article formats. First, we invite book reviews, conceived of as analytical and critical studies on two or more books dealing with the comparative politics of the region. Second, research notes are welcome. These

are concise papers where the preliminary findings of an ongoing and established research project are presented and discussed or, alternatively, theoretical and/or conceptually thought-provoking articles. Potential contributors are kindly invited to review our submission guidelines for further details.

I would like to take this occasion to thank my colleagues from the editorial team for their generous support. Likewise, I would like to express my enthusiasm and optimism about this exciting editorial project and welcome you again to this new journal. I hope that it will become a reference point for all of our colleagues across the world.

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