

President's Report

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Preparations for the 2010 LASA Congress, to be held October 2-6 in Toronto, are moving ahead. Program co-chairs Javier Corrales and Nina Gerassi-Navarro report they have received 750 proposals for panels and 724 proposals for individual papers. Track chairs will select the panels and papers to be included in the program early in the spring. They will assign the individual papers they select to new panels, but will not attempt to add any of them to existing panels. Special panels will mark the bicentennial of the Latin American independence movements, the centennial of the Mexican Revolution, and the 40th anniversary of the Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CALACS). By popular demand, LASA2010 will also feature short registration lines, audio-visual capabilities in every meeting room, and the return of the *Gran Baile*.

After Toronto, LASA will return to the United States to meet in San Francisco on May 23-26, 2012. (San Francisco was the most popular site of all those mentioned by members who responded to the survey sent to participants in the LASA2009 Congress; runners-up included New York, Chicago, and Washington.) LASA's decision to return to the United States was based, in part, on evidence that the U.S. government has resumed the practice of routinely issuing visas to Cuban scholars and scientists seeking to enter the United States to teach at U.S. institutions, carry out research, collaborate with U.S. counterparts, and attend scholarly gatherings. LASA surmised that a return to blanket denials, in contravention of the spirit and intent of U.S. laws, was unlikely any time soon.

When and where we meet in 2013 will depend on whether the LASA Executive Council opts for an annual meeting schedule like most other area studies associations. It will also depend on whether the LASA EC

decides to continue the pattern of holding every third meeting in Latin America. How about spring break in the Caribbean?

In the *On the Profession* section of this issue of *LASA Forum*, we respond to a growing interest among LASA members for information on academic journals published in Latin America. Three of the most distinguished are represented here. The oldest of the three, *Desarrollo Económico*, was founded in 1961 at a time when social science journals were not only scarce, but often persecuted or shut down by military rulers throughout the region. It continues to publish a wide variety of articles and essays that examine problems of economic growth, social equity, and democratic governance.

The *Revista CEPAL* is equally eclectic—perhaps even more so—and has recently changed its appearance, updated its editorial policies, and added scholars from Asia, Europe, and North America to its editorial board (including myself, I should confess in the interest of full disclosure). This journal, unlike the others, is firmly attached to an international organization, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), formerly CEPAL in Spanish and Portuguese, before the addition of the Caribbean to its name.

Finally, the *Revista de Ciencia Política (RCP)* has transformed itself in recent years into one of a new breed of academic journals with a decidedly more specialized disciplinary mission than the other two. *RCP*'s aim is to publish work in political science, whatever its regional or topical focus, that contributes to debates that would be familiar to readers of political science journals in the United States or elsewhere.

This issue also contains three important commentaries on the recent coup d'état in Honduras, including an illuminating



interview with historian Darío Euraque, who was summarily fired from his post as director of the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia by the regime that took power when President Manuel Zelaya was sent into exile. Further insight into the coup and its aftermath is provided by the contributions of historian Greg Grandin and Honduran sociologist and activist Leticia Salomón.

What happened seems clear enough. At the last possible moment before the November 29 presidential election, the United States stepped back from its insistence, in concert with the rest of the hemisphere, on the restoration of President Zelaya. This was followed by a declaration of victory by U.S. Senator Jim DeMint (R, South Carolina), who led efforts in Washington to weaken U.S. opposition to the de facto government. Having declared victory, DeMint then lifted the “hold” he had placed (preventing U.S. Senate action) on the nominations of two key officials: Thomas Shannon to be Ambassador to Brazil and Arturo Valenzuela to replace Shannon as Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. Both were speedily confirmed in the days after DeMint's celebration.

The U.S. retreat may have helped the Obama administration get its Latin American policy team into office, but it did so at some cost. It weakened the Organization of American States when U.S. policy seemed to be aimed at strengthening it. It also undermined the Obama administration's efforts to improve U.S.-Latin America relations, particularly with Brazil. Ambassador Shannon seems to have made his new job more difficult even

ON THE PROFESSION

Revista de Ciencia Política en el contexto de la “ecología internacional” de las publicaciones académicas

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COATSWORTH *continued...*

before arriving in Brasília. It will take some time before the damage can be repaired, because most Latin American countries do not accept the November Honduran elections as fully democratic and seem determined not to do business with the newly “elected” president, Porfirio Lobo.

In Honduras itself, it remains to be seen how the new conservative government will respond to the domestic and international crises that confront the country. It would add tragedy to farce if the new government were to opt for repression over negotiation and conciliation. Tragically, it appears that it will not have Washington to contend with if it does so.

Finally, the Honduran case suggests the need for a new kind of “Democratic Charter” in the Americas, one with greater specificity and at least a few teeth. Under what circumstances should *all* the governments of the hemisphere find themselves obliged to withdraw recognition and aid? Should the western hemisphere governments work to establish a new judicial mechanism for making rapid and binding judgments in disputed cases? Is it utopian to imagine a future without coups d'état in Latin America? ■

En primera instancia creo que es importante destacar que *Revista de Ciencia Política*, de ahora en más “RCP”, no es una publicación de estudios latinoamericanos propiamente tal, sino que simplemente es una revista hecha y pensada en Latinoamérica y Chile en particular. RCP se define como una publicación internacional y arbitrada de ciencia política y no somos necesariamente latinoamericanistas en nuestro objeto de estudio. Si bien la mayoría de los artículos que atañen a estudios comparados, internacionales, o políticas públicas tienden a focalizarse en nuestra región o algunos países de ésta, no es porque se busque expresamente esto sino por la naturaleza de la revista y la cercanía de los colegas que contribuyen en general a la misma.

Asimismo, salvo las contadas excepciones de los volúmenes temáticos, como el “Anuario Político de América Latina”, RCP funciona de la forma más ecléctica que uno pueda imaginarse. Simplemente se van publicando aquellos materiales que pasan el proceso de doble referato ciego (al cual me referiré mas adelante). Habiendo dicho eso, de acuerdo a mi experiencia, efectivamente existe una suerte de filtro informal donde se favorecen aquellos trabajos de corte más empiricistas (positivistas, si se quiere) y menos ensayísticos. Los réferis de RCP tienden a ser bastante reacios a trabajos básicamente de corte descriptivo, o con fuertes componentes normativos (claro está, fuera de las propias discusiones naturales del área de teoría política).

Se podría decir que en el último lustro de vida de RCP, no hemos hecho más que abocarnos en repotenciar RCP como una revista de ciencia política relevante, influyente y significativa no sólo en Chile sino que en América Latina y fuera de ella. Notables esfuerzos hemos puesto en aumentar la visibilidad de RCP no solo en la región, sino que en el norte. Para esto

hemos usado tres estrategias de forma sincronizada: (a) procedimientos, (b) accesibilidad y (c) calidad.

Quizás lo más importante de todo, fue la intransigencia en el referato doblemente ciego y en tiempos razonables, creo que con promedios bastante mejores que otras revistas del norte (a pesar de no tener datos estadísticos comparativos). Si bien RCP está adscrita al Instituto de Ciencia Política de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, esta *no* es el medio de difusión de los colegas del instituto. De hecho, todo lo contrario. Asimismo, no nos casamos con un enfoque en particular de la disciplina, sino que las políticas editoriales de RCP obedecen a criterios amplios y pluralistas, tanto en cuanto a áreas de especialización, como a metodologías utilizadas. Además, intenta cubrir todas las sub-áreas de la disciplina: política comparada, teoría política, relaciones internacionales, análisis formal, estudios regionales, políticas públicas, etc.

RCP tiene digitalizada toda su colección online, de forma abierta, gratuita y pública. Esto fue una decisión explícita y consciente del Comité Editorial de RCP, con el completo apoyo del Instituto de Ciencia Política, su director—anterior Editor de RCP—y del Director Responsable. Así, respecto a la “accesibilidad” podemos hacer una breve reseña: Fuimos invitados a la Red de Revistas Científicas de América Latina y El Caribe (RedaLyc) en 2004, la Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) en 2005 y, desde el 2007, integramos el prestigioso Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). Todo esto ha involucrado un enorme esfuerzo cotidiano de nuestra parte.

Si bien una mayor circulación tiende estar asociada con una mayor recepción de manuscritos, esto no necesariamente asegura calidad. Me animaría a decir, entonces, que durante un largo tiempo estuvimos en cierta