

Colombia Internacional

School of Social Sciences
Department of Political Science • Universidad de los Andes (Colombia)

Call for papers

Colombia Internacional invites the academic community to participate in its next special issue *Transformations of Party Systems in Latin America*, coordinated by Dr. Stéphanie Alenda (Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, Andrés Bello University, Chile) and Dr. Carlos Varetto (National Council of Scientific and Technical Research / National University of San Martín, Argentina). The proposal is part of the activities of the Research Group on Parties and Party Systems (*Grupo de Investigación en Partidos y Sistemas de Partidos - GIPSAL*) of the Latin American Association of Political Science (ALACIP). Articles will be received **from the 1st to the 31st of October 2019**.

In the third democratic wave, it has been repeatedly pointed out that Latin America entered a period of consolidation of democracy, albeit marked by instability for presidential mandates. That is to say, although there is now less probability that democratic regimes will fall as a result of military intervention, other sources of instability remain, which account for early departures of presidents, impeachments, removals, the crises of democratic institutions and the rise of populism. Dilma Rousseff's impeachment and removal, the recent election of Jair Bolsonaro as president of Brazil, and the institutional crisis in Nicaragua are just some examples of this.

In this context, most studies find explanations in factors linked to institutional design, or to various types of economic, social and/or political crises (high levels of corruption, certain leadership qualities, etc.). However, factors related to the role of party systems in these settings have attracted little attention in the specialized literature. In many cases, this is because parties are assumed to be weak or absent, but the truth is that in most of the region representation through parties and the dynamics that play out between them make them an enduring central conduit for the unfolding of the democratic game. Rather than questioning the significance of party organizations as such, with the argument that they have lost their former platforms and identities, their weaknesses and deficiencies must be subject to analysis.

It is well known that the broad body of research on party systems has linked this phenomenon with the quality of representation, with the sustainability of the democratic system, and even with the effectiveness of the political system. Those approaches have not been exempted

from controversy. A central feature is their appeal to party fragmentation, or the number of relevant parties in a system: authors like Giovanni Sartori consider that such fragmentation entails a major risk for democracy, while others like Arend Lijphart see the possibility of producing stable and effective systems by where elites are made to adopt moderate positions. Hand in hand with fragmentation, the process of ideological polarization is often incorporated into the analysis. Its rise can threaten democracy and the agreements underpinning the system. Conversely, programmatic undifferentiation can cause apathy, disaffection and low representative quality. Research has also emphasized the effects of sub-national differentiation within party systems, its consequences on the number of actors, and the responsiveness of the party and political systems. Although these effects are typical of federal countries, they are also observed in centralized political systems.

Another corpus aimed at understanding the effects on the quality and stability of democracy focuses on party institutionalization, mainly associated with the regularity of patterns and stability of the electoral ties with certain sectors. These studies have been particularly fruitful in the analysis of Latin America. Finally, we must bear in mind that political parties act in different arenas and can respond to different rationales, actors and rules of the game. Party systems can also differ in their competition patterns, in their rationale for forming coalitions or electoral alliances be it in the electoral or parliamentary sphere, just as different rationales can prevail for different levels of government.

In this framework, this issue of *Colombia Internacional* seeks quantitative, qualitative and mixed articles that prioritize a comparative perspective and seek to explain the recent transformations of party systems, focusing on stability/instability in a broad sense, that is, without restricting it to the permanence/fall of the president. In short, we expect an analysis of political (in)stability in relation to some of the central dimensions that have characterized party studies:

- Party fragmentation: parties, coalitions and strategic coordination
- Ideological mutations, party polarization and representative disaffection
- Party institutionalization: stability, mediation capacity and adherence to the rules of the game
- Party nationalization, sub-national politics and territorial cleavages
- Legislative action of parties and party coalitions: tensions, blockages and impeachment
- Rise of populism: crisis of political systems and crisis of representativeness

Colombia Internacional also publishes reviews, bibliographic essays and short research papers with a critical approach to the topic of this special issue, in English, Spanish and Portuguese. Additionally, we accept articles of general interest for other sections of the Journal.

The editorial standards and submission criteria for articles can be found on the journal's website: <http://revistas.uniandes.edu.co/journal/colombiaint>. Instructions for authors are available at: <http://revistas.uniandes.edu.co/for-authors/colombiaint/editorial-policy>