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Editorial: JLAG's Publishing Model

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The structures of academic publishing are a perennial topic of scholarly debate, from concern about a publishing model dominated by for-profit publishers, to calls for more open access options, to mounting critiques of predatory journals. The goal of this editorial is to contextualize the *Journal of Latin American Geography's* publishing model within these broader debates.

To begin, there is a fundamental contradiction at the heart of the dominant for-profit model of academic publishing: Much of the scholarship that is published in academic journals is funded by universities, governmental agencies, and non-profit foundations; and scholars affiliated with those institutions do the work of reviewing manuscripts, editing journals, and sitting on editorial boards. However, the product of this labor—the manuscripts themselves—are published in journals that reap significant profits selling those very articles back to the universities, libraries, laboratories, and individuals that funded and produced them in the first place. This contradiction led the University of California system in 2019 to terminate its subscription with Elsevier, one of the largest academic publishers in the world. Another reaction has been a push toward open access. Most for-profit journals allow authors to pay Author Publication Charges ranging from \$750 to \$3,000 in order for their individual articles to be permanently available open access, and there is an increasing number of fully open access journals across the academy, including many prominent journals in geog-

raphy and related disciplines (e.g. the *Journal of Political Ecology*, *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, and *Cultural Anthropology*).

JLAG occupies a unique space within this landscape of academic publishing. We fit neither the for-profit model, nor are we an open access journal: From initial submission to final publication, JLAG is entirely non-profit. The journal is published by the Conference of Latin American Geography (CLAG), a non-profit entity; it is distributed by the University of Texas Press, an academic press associate with a public university; and it is distributed online primarily by Project Muse, another non-profit entity.

That said, JLAG *does* generate revenue in the form of download royalties, mostly from Project Muse, which makes up approximately 80 percent of CLAG's annual budget. Beyond CLAG's minimal operational budget and the cost of producing JLAG, all proceeds are used to support CLAG's robust research and travel grant programs. This point is worth repeating: all surplus that JLAG generates is directly invested in grants for graduate students conducting research in and on Latin America. This is the reason that we ask that JLAG authors *not* publicly post their articles on personal or institutional websites, or on platforms such as ResearchGate or Academia.edu. Rather, we urge authors to share the permanent link to their article on Project Muse. Every full-text hit on Project Muse generates a royalty for CLAG which is used to fund graduate student research and travel;

every hit via ResearchGate is a missed opportunity. (Full disclosure: the JLAG editorial team is completely removed from CLAG's grant-making process; CLAG fully controls its budget and budget priorities, and it is the CLAG board that designs, publicizes, and ultimately decides winners of these awards.)

Even while we are thrilled to operate a non-profit journal that supports a robust grants program, we are also aware of the challenges and contradictions of JLAG's paywall. For one, though we regularly publish articles and essays by authors from Latin America—in 2019 alone JLAG published articles by authors from thirteen different countries and autonomous regions—our readership is not nearly as geographically widespread. Eighty percent of full-text hits in 2019 were from IP addresses in the U.S., UK, and Canada; fewer than 5 percent were from IP addresses in Latin America. This is a direct result of scholars in Latin America not having institutional access to JLAG and thus being blocked by our paywall.

In the past twelve months the JLAG editorial team has launched several initiatives that we hope will facilitate expanded readership in Latin America. First, we periodically open access to curated sets of articles from JLAG's archive that have the potential to inform breaking news or unfolding current events. In 2019 we opened access for a one-month period to a set of articles and essays focused on Mexican and Central American migration to the United States and on the U.S.-Mexico border, and in March 2020 we opened access to a set of articles and essays centered on feminist perspectives in Latin American geography.

Second, in January 2020 we launched *JLAG en Traducción/JLAG em Tradução*, a new section of the journal which features translations of articles—published in the same issue of JLAG as the original translated article—that have the potential to make broad and long-lasting contributions to theoretical, methodological, and topical debates in Latin American geography. Importantly, the Spanish or Portuguese versions of translated articles will be available open access *via* Project Muse for one full year after their initial publication. We published our full rationale for creating this section in JLAG vol. 19, no. 1. In this issue (vol. 19, no. 2) we feature an English-language translation of an article co-authored by four members of the Critical Geography Collective of Ecuador.

In the coming months and years we will continue to explore ways that we can maintain JLAG's revenues, which support graduate student research and travel in Latin America, while also expanding access to JLAG's content, especially for South-based scholars and students. We would love to hear your feedback and ideas about what we can do to expand access. Please reach out to us on Twitter—@JLatAmGeog—or individually via email. We look forward to hearing from you.

The Editors:

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Jörn Seemann, Associate Editor

Gabriela Valdivia, Associate Editor

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