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Editorial: Expanding Access to the Journal of Latin American Geography

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Editorial: Expanding Access to the Journal of Latin American Geography

The *Journal of Latin American Geography* is pleased to announce another new initiative in our long-term effort to increase the volume of open access (OA) content available in the journal, and to increase accessibility of JLAG's content to South-based scholars, researchers, and students. Beginning in 2022, JLAG will accept optional payments of Article Publishing Charges, or APCs, paid by authors, their institutions, or their funders, to ensure their articles are accessible open access via Project Muse, JLAG's primary online distribution partner. JLAG's new APC rate will be \$800 for articles (co-)authored by North-based lead authors and/or budget holders, and \$100 for articles (co-)authored by South-based lead authors and/or budget holders.

When thinking about APCs, it is worth remembering that JLAG occupies a relatively uncommon space within academic publishing. As we have written in a previous editorial (vol. 19, no. 2, 2020), JLAG is neither a for-profit journal nor a fully open access journal. Rather, from top to bottom, JLAG is 100 percent non-profit. We are published by the not-for-profit Conference of Latin American Geography (CLAG); we are distributed by the University of Texas Press, an academic press associated with a public university; and the non-profit Project Muse is JLAG's primary vehicle for online dissemination. At the same time, JLAG does generate revenue in the form of download royalties, which go to fund CLAG's robust research and

travel grants program. Through this program, CLAG provides \$1,500 fieldwork grants for Ph.D. students, \$1,000 fieldwork grants for Master's students, and \$500 travel grants for the sesquiannual CLAG conference, for students from anywhere in the world whose primary region of research is Latin America and/or the Caribbean. Beyond covering the journal's own production cost and CLAG's minimal overhead, all surplus value that the journal generates from download royalties is invested into this grants program. Revenue raised from APCs will directly support these same initiatives. (A list of recent CLAG grant recipients is available on CLAG's website: <https://clagscholar.org>.)

Even so, JLAG's paywall does block access to much of the journal's content for scholars, researchers, and students based at institutions without subscriptions to Project Muse or other databases where JLAG is digitally available. So, although we continue to publish articles and essays written by South-based authors—in just the last two years JLAG has published articles by nearly 100 authors and co-authors from nine different Latin American countries, or just about half of authors published in this period—our readership does not reflect this geographical diversity. While the total number of annual full-text downloads from Latin America is on track to more than triple between 2019 and 2021, and readership in Latin America has more than doubled in share of all readers during the same period, nearly eighty

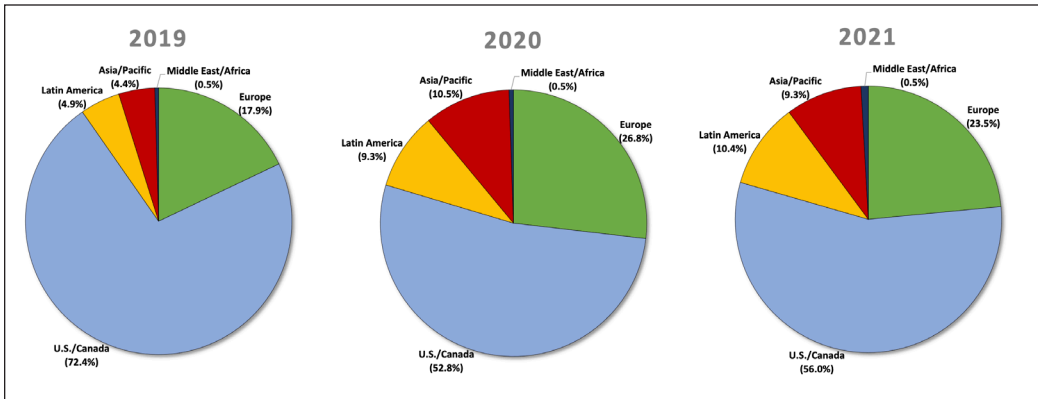


Figure 1. JLAG Readership by year, 2019-2021 (2021 download data through September 2021; source: Project Muse).

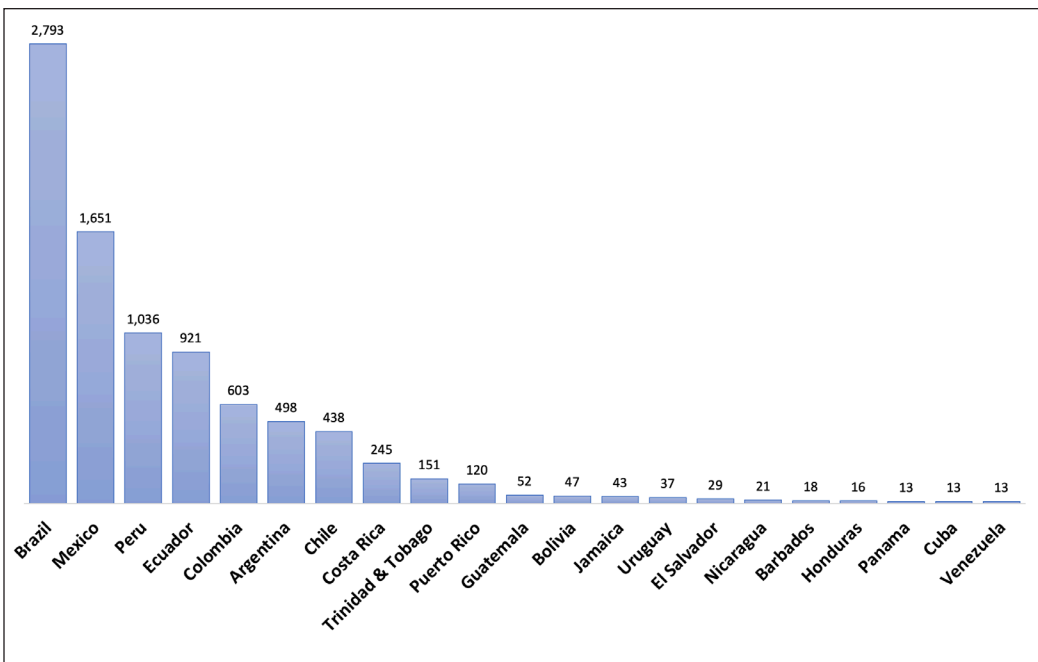


Figure 2. Total full-text downloads by country in Latin America and the Caribbean, January 2019 through September 2021. Eleven other countries in the region received less than ten full-text downloads each during this period: Belize, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Bahamas, Guadeloupe, Paraguay, Curaçao, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, Cayman Islands, and Haiti (source: Project Muse).

percent of full-text hits in 2021 were from IP addresses in the U.S., Canada, and Europe (see Figures 1 and 2). This is at least partially a result of scholars in Latin America not having institutional access to JLAG and thus being

blocked by our paywall.

We have taken other recent steps to expand readership beyond North America and Europe. In 2019, we began a program to provide temporary open access to arti-

cles and essays from our archive that help to analyze, contextualize, and understand current events and breaking news. In this way, since 2019 we've opened access to nearly 100 articles and essays on migration and the Mexico-U.S. border, on feminist geographies, on Covid-19, and on climate change. Furthermore, in 2020 we launched a new section in the journal—JLAG en Traducción / JLAG em Tradução—that features commissioned translations of peer-reviewed articles submitted to JLAG that have the potential to make broad and long-lasting contributions to Latin American geography, but which may not otherwise achieve the readership they deserve. Importantly, the Spanish or Portuguese versions of articles published in this section of the journal are open access for at least one year after their publication, which ensures broad access to readers outside of North America and Europe. To date, in this new section we have commissioned the

translation of, and published open access, articles and essays by Rogerio Haesbaert (Brazil); Joseli Maria Silva and Marcio Jose Ornat (Brazil); Diana Vela-Almeida, Sofía Zaragocín, Manuel Bayón, and Iñigo Arrazola (Ecuador); Danilo Borja, Juan Bay, and Conny Davidsen (Ecuador/Canada); the GeoBrujas collective (Mexico); and Joana Salém Vasconcelos (Brazil), whose essay on recent social unrest in Cuba, and its translation, appear in this issue.

The JLAG editorial team is committed to expanding access to the journal's content to South-based readers and institutions. While this new APC program constitutes just a small step in this direction, combined with other recent initiatives it is helping us to achieve wider access. Even so, there is much more work to be done. We are continuously exploring new possibilities for expanding access, and we invite ideas from all readers to further this goal.

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