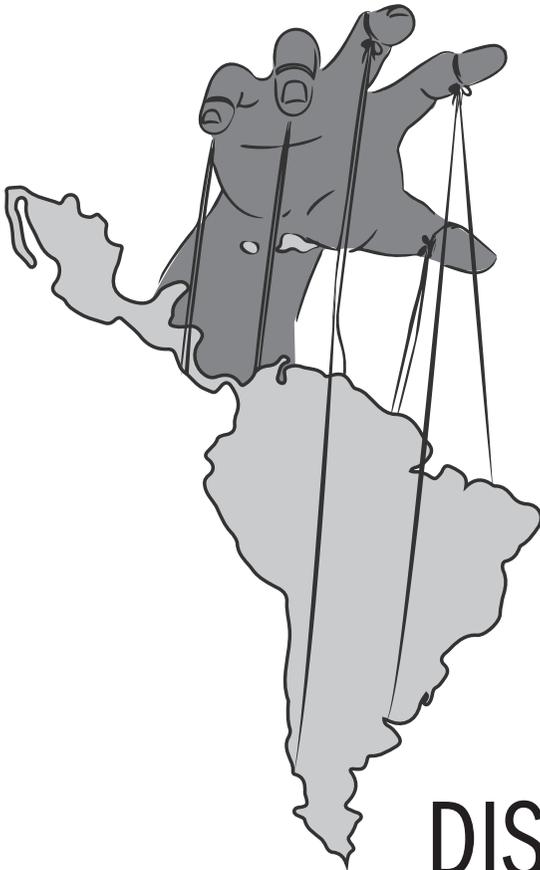


# LATIN AMERICA POLICY JOURNAL

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## DISRUPTIVE FORCES

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# Editorial Note

By the LAPJ Editorial Board

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There is a certain paradox in publishing one of the few journals from and for Latin American policymakers as students in a public policy school in the United States. From a distance, we, as Latinos, find each other sometimes more united than what our studies and work experience allowed us to be before finding ourselves abroad. As students and practitioners of policy in our home countries, we rarely find spaces to understand our shared history and challenges. National politics rarely leaves time for a reflection that transcends the national and local issues. Migration, as shown by the Venezuelan and Central American diaspora, breaks barriers and tears walls between cultures and narratives, and can serve as a vehicle for citizens to learn about their neighbors' humanity and struggles. Policymakers in the Americas face the task of mobilizing this shared knowledge and experience for both personal and institutional learning. After all, macroeconomics, gender, or urban policy challenges are not altogether different in our countries and cities, nor are the policies that can and should be advanced to confront them.

The Latin America Policy Journal (LAPJ) at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University seeks to serve this mission of learning by reigniting and strengthening the bonds that tie the peoples in this region. We believe our shared present and future is larger than the national borders that separate our countries. Through this journal, we strive to work towards a stronger community of Latin American leaders, politicians, and policymakers, that can better establish dialogue and act coordinately to face in union the most pressing problems in the continent.

The Editorial Board of the LAPJ titled its eighth issue "Disruptive Forces," acknowledging the swift transformations our region appears to be undergoing. In a year of pathbreaking presidential elections in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Costa Rica and Paraguay, citizens in many of the region's countries have shown unprecedented discontent towards political incumbents. As we write this edition, the people of Venezuela and Nicaragua fight to topple authoritarian governments, while the countries' neighbors fail to agree upon a unified position or approach to face the crisis. The Venezuelan exodus of more than three million men and women has generated the largest migration crisis the continent has ever seen, and whose consequences for host countries are yet to be known. Nonetheless, not all "Disruptive Forces" should be negatively appraised: across the continent, policymakers and citizens are increasingly aware and discontent with the inside dynamics of corruption in their countries and are discovering new policies to contribute to issues as diverse as the struggle for gender equality and the provision of quality services in large cities.

With the goal of maintaining a spirited conversation between the Harvard community and key stakeholders in the continent, the Spring 2019 edition brings together ministers, scholars, policymakers, journalists, and students, who are the heart of this publication. These articles reflect the diversity of experiences and challenges faced by the region, and the exceptional vigor of the professionals who tirelessly work for a better future.

The Editorial Team would like to thank all the individuals and organizations that are listed in the Acknowledgements page for their contribution and support that made the preparation of the LAPJ possible this year. A special mention should be made for the talented team of editors from the Harvard Kennedy School that allowed a publication of high-quality content to happen. We are also grateful for the financial aid granted by Dean Douglas Elmendorf and the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS), and the support of the Harvard Kennedy School Journal coordinators, Professor Richard Parker and Martha Foley.

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