

Call for Papers
Special Issue of Journal of Politics in Latin America
Rethinking Political Crises from Latin America: Concepts, Trajectories, and
Comparative Lessons

Guest Editors

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In collaboration with the
Millennium Nucleus on Political Crises in Latin America (CRISPOL)

Rationale

Political crises have become a central feature of contemporary democratic politics. Democratic backsliding, executive-legislative conflict, party system fragmentation, mass protest, anti-establishment mobilization, polarization, radical political actors, and conflicts over political authority have challenged both established and newer democracies. These processes have generated renewed interest in the causes, trajectories, and outcomes of political crises.

Yet many of the dominant conceptual frameworks used to analyze contemporary crises have been developed primarily from European and North American experiences. This special issue seeks to partially invert that perspective. Rather than treating Latin America merely as a field where theories produced elsewhere can be tested, it takes the region as a privileged site for conceptual innovation and comparative theory-building on political crises.

Latin America has a long and dense history of presidential instability, institutional conflict, contentious politics, crises of representation, democratic erosion, populist mobilization, contested legitimacy, and cycles of protest. The region has generated some of the most influential debates on presidential crises, impeachment, social movements, populism, democratic resilience, authoritarian legacies, and institutional instability. It therefore offers an exceptionally rich terrain for rethinking what political crises are, how they unfold, why some escalate while others remain contained, and how they reshape democratic orders even when they do not produce immediate institutional breakdown.

The special issue is centered on Latin America. It welcomes articles that use Latin American cases to advance conceptual, theoretical, empirical, or comparative debates on political crises. Contributions may engage with extra-regional cases as shadow cases, ancillary cases, or comparative references, but the main empirical and analytical focus should remain on Latin America. The aim is not to produce a general interregional issue on political crises around the world, but to examine how Latin American experiences can contribute to broader comparative debates on crisis, democracy, contention, authority, and institutional change.

Conceptual Focus

This special issue invites contributions that analyze political crises as processes rather than only as outcomes. Political crises should not be reduced to moments of breakdown, coups, presidential removals, regime collapse, or formal institutional interruption. Crises may end in rupture, institutional adaptation, democratic erosion, recomposition, partial containment, or unresolved transformation. Some crises remove incumbents; others reshape political

alignments, public narratives, institutional relations, party systems, constitutional debates, or state-society relations without producing immediate leadership change.

We are particularly interested in articles that examine the emergence, escalation, containment, or transformation of political crises. Contributions may address how crises move between social mobilization and institutional conflict; how actors construct crisis narratives; how presidential authority is challenged or defended; how parties, courts, congresses, social movements, security forces, and public opinion shape crisis trajectories; and how crises reconfigure democratic legitimacy.

The issue also seeks to promote dialogue between Latin American politics and broader comparative politics. Authors are encouraged to ask how Latin American cases can refine, challenge, or expand theories of political crisis. What can Latin American experiences of presidential instability contribute to theories of democratic resilience and executive survival? How do protest cycles reshape institutional politics? Why do some crises escalate into removal or breakdown while others remain contained? How do authoritarian legacies, memories of repression, social inequalities, party systems, and constitutional conflicts shape the trajectory of crisis? How do concepts travel across regions, and what conceptual innovations emerge when Latin America is treated as a site of theory-building rather than only as an empirical field?

Suggested Themes

We welcome theoretically informed empirical articles, comparative analyses, and conceptually ambitious case studies addressing, but not limited to, the following themes:

1. Conceptual innovation in the study of political crises from Latin America.
2. Presidential crises, impeachment, executive instability, and government survival.
3. Vertical, horizontal, and mixed configurations of political crisis.
4. Mass protest, contentious politics, and crisis escalation.
5. Institutional conflict, executive-legislative confrontation, judicial intervention, and competing centers of authority.
6. Political crises without breakdown: containment, adaptation, recomposition, and institutional resilience.
7. Democratic backsliding, authoritarian drift, and crisis narratives.
8. Party system fragmentation, anti-system actors, radical actors, and crisis entrepreneurship.
9. Populism, illiberalism, polarization, and democratic legitimacy in crisis contexts.
10. Constitutional conflict, constituent processes, and institutional re-foundation.
11. Violence, repression, public order, emergency discourses, and the legitimation of authority during crises.
12. Fear, emotions, memory, victimhood, and symbolic struggles in political crises.
13. State capacity, governance crises, and institutional responses to political instability.
14. Social inequalities, territorial conflicts, center-periphery tensions, and crisis dynamics.
15. Comparative uses of extra-regional cases as shadow cases, ancillary cases, or theoretical contrasts for Latin American-centered analysis.

Types of Contributions

The special issue welcomes:

- single-country case studies with a clear theoretical or conceptual contribution;
- comparative studies across Latin American cases;
- articles that use Latin American cases to refine or challenge concepts developed in other regional literatures;

- Latin America-centered comparisons that include extra-regional cases as secondary references, shadow cases, or ancillary cases;
- theoretically informed empirical articles based on qualitative, quantitative, historical, interpretive, or mixed-methods approaches;
- conceptual articles grounded in Latin American experiences of political crisis.

The special issue is not intended for articles whose main empirical focus is outside Latin America. Articles centered primarily on Europe, Africa, Asia, or North America will only be considered if Latin America remains the central analytical reference and the extra-regional case functions as a secondary comparative device.

Submission Procedure

Authors are invited to submit an extended abstract of approximately 800–1,000 words.

Abstracts should include:

- article title;
- author name(s), institutional affiliation(s), and contact information;
- research question;
- main argument;
- theoretical or conceptual contribution;
- case(s) and/or empirical material;
- methodology;
- expected contribution to the special issue;
- indication of how the article is centered on Latin America;
- if applicable, explanation of how extra-regional cases are used as shadow cases, ancillary cases, or comparative references.

Abstracts should be submitted by email to: Stéphanie Alenda (salenda@unab.cl)

Subject line:

Special Issue JPLA – Political Crises from Latin America – Abstract Submission

Deadline for abstract submission:

August, 10, 2026

Notification of selected abstracts:

August, 14, 2026

Selected authors will be invited to submit full manuscripts. Invitation to submit a full manuscript does not imply acceptance. All full manuscripts will be submitted through the *Journal of Politics in Latin America* online submission system and will undergo the journal's standard double-anonymized peer review process. Final editorial decisions will be made by the journal editors according to the journal's usual procedures.

Full manuscript guidelines for the *Journal of Politics in Latin America* are available at: [SAGE Author Instructions](#)

Tentative Timeline

Full manuscript submission:

November, 15, 2026

First round of peer review:

January, 8, 2027

Revised manuscripts due:
February, 15, 2027

Final editorial decisions:
March, 1, 2027

About CRISPOL

The Millennium Nucleus on Political Crises in Latin America (CRISPOL) is a research center devoted to the conceptual, empirical, and comparative study of political crises in the region. CRISPOL examines how crises emerge, unfold, escalate, are contained, or reshape political orders. Its research agenda combines comparative politics, political sociology, institutional analysis, contentious politics, and the study of democratic legitimacy.

Website: <https://crispol.cl>