



Letter from the Editor,

I am very pleased to launch the new issue of the Ibero-American Journal of Legislative Studies – RIEL. We have put together a group of outstanding papers in this first volume of 2014.

Taeko Hiroi and Lucio Renno offer a fascinating analysis of the lawmaking process in the Brazilian Congress. They demonstrate that the executive's success rate in Congress is contingent upon the size of the governing coalition. As expected, extremely large coalitions tend to deliver higher rates of success. To the surprise of many, however, the same is also true with regard to relatively small governing coalitions. On the other hand, legislative success tends to be less likely when the coalition size is barely over the supermajority threshold for approving constitutional amendments. In addition, these authors show that preference heterogeneity among Brazilian legislators tends to delay legislation but presents mixed effects with regards to legislative approval rates.

The paper by Bernd Weber and Sérgio Praça is also concerned with the legislative success of the executive in Congress. However, they comparatively analyze sub-national governments both in a presidential system, using the case of Brazil, and in a parliamentary system, using Germany as a comparative case study, from 1990 to 2010. Different from agenda-setting analytical perspectives, which emphasize the degree of centralization of legislative institutions to explain legislative outcomes, they show that coalition management and party politics play a more significant role..

Felipe Nunes provides a comparative assessment of all Latin American presidential elections since 1990, forcefully arguing in favor of the benefits of reelection. He demonstrates that incumbent governments, especially in multiparty systems, tend to moderate their policy positions in order to win the second round of an election. In addition to providing incentives for politicians to align their behaviors with voters' preferences, reelection tends to mitigate the emergence of what he calls new-populist governments in the region.

Thiago Silame and João Francisco Meira investigate the process of creating a regulatory apparatus by examining the emergence of Brazil's regulatory regime during the 1990s. They specifically analyze the creation of the Civil Aviation Regulatory Agency (ANAC). They claim that whereas other regulatory agencies, such as Telecommunications (ANATEL) and Energy (ANEEL), were created as a consequence of a delegation process from the legislature to the executive according to cartel theory, the logic of ANAC followed information theory, in which the legislature distinguished itself as the key player in setting up the institutional profile of the regulatory agency. In other words, the preferences of the legislature as a whole succeeded rather than those of the legislative cartel. They claim that this different route was a consequence of distinct stakeholders whose lobbying efforts generated informational gains for legislators.

The paper by Manoel Leonardo Santos also investigated the influence of interest groups on legislative outcomes in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies. In order to do so, he analyzed the role played by two complementary lobbies: the National Confederation of Industry (CNI), what he calls the corporatist lobby, and the influence of diffuse non corporatist organizations, which he calls the pluralist lobby. He empirically demonstrates that interest groups in fact influence legislative outcomes, but their influence is conditioned. The influence of industrial lobbies are more prominent at the committee level, and their influence is in negative agenda-setting – creating obstacles to new legislation rather than attempting to change the status quo.

Enjoy,

Carlos Pereira
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