

EDITORIAL COMMENT

So, here we are with the final issue of volume 49 of the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEGAL INFORMATION (IJLI). It's been quite a year! I will have a few reflections about 2021 at the conclusion of the commentary, though for now, I want to give readers a quick preview of the excellent material in this issue of the IJLI.

The first article in the lineup is a student-authored piece describing a unique feature of Mexican constitutional law, the *amparo*. **Devin McNulty** sketches a history of the *amparo* which, in a nutshell, provides a mechanism for individuals or organizations to challenge the constitutionality of any given law. The mechanism has been adopted in whole or in part in many other South American constitutions. At its core, it can have direct implications for helping to ensure human rights. McNulty explains that, unfortunately, *amparo* can become bogged down procedurally in Mexico's courts, and the high costs associated with pursuing an action under this provision hampers its accessibility to anyone other than the most well-connected and well-funded litigants. This very readable article is a fantastic offering on a little known aspect of Mexican law – and is a very welcome addition to the IJLI's publications on legal information from our neighbors in Central and South America.

For something a bit different, this issue contains a very well-researched piece about an aspect of Thai law bearing on several aspects of life as an undocumented worker in Thailand, including literacy, and particularly on women from marginalized communities and their access to technology, in particular social media platforms. It's six co-authors, **Channarong Intahchomphoo, André Vellino, Odd Erik Gundersen, Piyapat Jarusawat, Pranee Wongjamras, and Naomi Tschirhart**, took a very methodological approach to their subject and their findings point to ways that the Thai government may consider for improving the circumstances of documented and undocumented migrants within their borders. This is serious, focused research covering aspects of law, sociology, psychology, and survey research methods. It is my hope that readers may use it as a model for studying similar effects among other marginalized populations throughout the world. Given the mass migrations taking place around the globe these days, this article is particularly timely and supremely relevant.

The final article is a relatively short piece authored by **Juan Andres Fuentes**. Fuentes examines the overall legal context for considering whether and when US television news organizations may choose (or not) to air certain speeches by leading politicians. His principal example is Donald Trump's speech following the 2020 election when national television news organizations chose to discontinue coverage of his speech, citing Trump's promoting conspiracy theories and other misinformation as the reason for refusing to air the speech. The article lays the basic legal environment in terms of the conflict between laws relating to censorship, the public's interests in hearing information from elected officials, and news organizations' right to choose what to air and what not to air. The brief article is intended principally to prompt further discussion of these issues.

This issue also contains our long-running feature, the International Calendar, edited by **Amy Flick**. As readers will see, there are still many conferences and other events related to legal information, though you will also see that most of them are still held in virtual formats. One hopes that 2022 will eventually usher in a return to an era where many professional meetings, symposia, conferences, and other professional development events can once again take place in person.

Sharp-eyed readers may have noticed that there are no book reviews in this issue of the IJLI. Anticipating this some months ago, we made sure to publish at least *double* the amount of book reviews (eight) in issue 49.2. We wanted to be sure that IJLI readers received the expected quantity of high-quality book reviews for this volume, even if they were not spread evenly among all three issues of volume 49. This is an extremely rare occurrence and I do not anticipate it happening again. Once again, the COVID pandemic and its many resulting complications have made an impact in areas of life (and publishing) that were completely unexpected. Rest assured that the IJLI's book reviews, edited by **Caroline Osborne**, will return as a regular feature in the very next issue (50.1).

As I conclude this final issue of 2021, I paused to reflect on the past year. To say that 2021 was “unusual” would be an understatement. And it seems like the ever changing, unpredictable, pandemic-threatened world has become the familiar “new normal.” For me, resilience has been anchored in family. Like many families, we have had our share of chronic illness, tragedy, and death. We’ve also had much joy, communion, and other meaningful connections. The tough times make us more resilient, and the good times remind us why family is important, and our bonds grow stronger.

When the times get tough, I wonder... what if a person I loved was taken by COVID or some other illness? Would our disagreements matter? No. Would our degree of mutual trust matter? Absolutely! Will I have regrets – for things I didn’t say or do? For things I said or did that I wish I had not? Probably.

So, as you contemplate 2022 (yikes!), consider how you’ll grow and shape your relationships with your family, friends, colleagues, partners, and communities ... what matters and what does not. Look for the possibilities for meaningful connections, mutual trust, and hope. May you find clarity in the new year! Here’s wishing all IJLI readers a warm, safe, and healthy holiday season and a resilient new year!

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