
EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Welcome to the first issue of Volume 38 published under the aegis of the new editorial team at the University of Texas at Austin. After almost twenty years at the University of New Mexico, *LARR* has returned to the original seat where it began almost forty years ago in 1964. For the University of Texas at Austin, it is both an honor and a privilege that the LASA Council awarded us the opportunity to take on the responsibility of editing and publishing *LARR* over the next five years. Since January 2002, we have been busy preparing for this issue from our new offices in the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies.

Those familiar and comfortable with the bright pastel colors distinguishing each volume of the *LARR* of old will find the new cover a dramatic change, but we very much hope that you will enjoy the new livery, and that you will take pleasure in receiving a unique cover image on each issue. The image of each volume will reflect a theme (this year it is People of the Americas), and each individual issue will feature a different image on that theme that will also appear on the *LARR* Home Page.

We have, however, retained some links to the past. By picking out a single color for the cover titles—this year it will be gold—we will maintain a different color on the spine that makes for easy recognition of year and volume as *LARR* spills across our bookshelves. For the first two or three years at least, we will be drawing primarily upon some of the treasures at UT-Austin's Benson Latin American Collection that we are privileged to access. We unashamedly admit to a desire to begin *LARR*'s tenure at the University with a dramatic splash, and we hope that you share our excitement, not just about the cover design, but also about deeper initiatives that we hope to bring to *LARR*. Above all, the aim is to maintain and extend *LARR*'s reputation in publishing scholarship of the highest quality, and also to exercise leadership in the production of knowledge in both creative and innovative ways.

LASA and the new editors owe a great debt to the former University of New Mexico editorial team, and especially to former editor Dr. Gilbert Merckx and Associate Editor Dr. Karen Remmer (now both at Duke University). Thanks in large part to their long-term dedication, professionalism, unstinting efforts, and high standards, *LARR* has a deserved reputation as the foremost academic journal in the field of Latin American studies. Naturally, our aim is to ensure that this does not change.

The new editorial team comprises myself, Peter M. Ward (Sociology and the LBJ School of Public Affairs) as Executive Editor; Associate Editors: Jonathan C. Brown (History), Henry Dietz (Government), Naomi Lindstrom (Spanish and Portuguese), and Kurt Weyland (Government). Henry Dietz has kindly agreed to take the lead in editing our book review essays. This group of editors offers both a wide country coverage of Latin America, as well as interdisciplinary breadth and depth. Moreover, the University of Texas at Austin is well served by having some 130 Latinamericanist faculty, many of whom have specialist expertise in the areas of intellectual enquiry that *LARR* represents.

As is often the case with a change of team and venue, particularly after a long tenure at another institution, several significant changes are planned, and the purpose of this Foreword is to briefly outline those principal areas of change in the short and medium terms. Not all issues will have an Editor's Foreword, and even where they do, the editorial voice is just as likely to be that of one of my Associate Editor colleagues as my own. Readers are encouraged to visit the new *LARR* Home Page at <http://larr.lanic.utexas.edu/> for further details about the new editorial team, about the changes that we propose to make, as well as revised guidelines concerning submission of manuscripts, invitations to Book Review essayists, and so on. There is also an on-line feedback "hot link" that the Editors hope you will use.

In the following section I am pleased to outline briefly some of the continuities of *LARR* at UT-Austin, as well as some of the principal changes that are underway.

AREAS OF NO CHANGE: STET IN EDITING PARLANCE

The primary goal of *LARR*'s mission remains as always: to publish top-flight research on Latin America from a multi- and/or interdisciplinary perspective, and to do so in a format that is free from jargon while remaining accessible to a general academic readership. Preference will be given to work that draws attention to the linkage between research and its broader implications for theory and method, rather than presenting a detailed descriptive or an overly esoteric analysis of a particular case.

LARR does not normally publish policy or advocacy research. However, we do invite timely papers based upon rigorous analysis of public policy outcomes where this is based upon original research, particularly where such policy evaluation draws attention to the wider theoretical and practical implications for Latin American societies.

Papers may continue to be submitted in all three languages (English, Spanish, and Portuguese), but *LARR* does not normally translate articles, and will only do so by prior agreement, and where the costs of translation are covered by the author or by her/his institution.

LARR will also continue to review books through the medium of book review essays, which the Editors will commission from specialists in the field (see *LARR* Home Page). There is no intention to embark upon single book reviews since other Latinamericanist and disciplinary journals already offer this service. Instead, *LARR* prefers to examine several works on a particular research theme from an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspective. The Review Essays section is much appreciated by academicians and teachers alike, particularly where pressures of time, resources, and physical difficulties in getting access to monographs make a considered overview of several books especially valuable as a teaching resource. *LARR* wishes to encourage scholars to volunteer their services in offering book review essays, and those interested should consult the Home Page for further details. The smaller number of review essays in this issue is not a policy change about the importance of review essays within *LARR*. It reflects the longer time period required to cluster and commission a review on the one hand, and the fact that no review essays were carried forward from the previous editors.

SIGNIFICANT IMMEDIATE CHANGES

We wish to make *LARR* more innovative and responsive to the contemporary production of knowledge. Therefore, as part of the high-quality manuscripts that *LARR* regularly publishes, the goal is to encourage submission of ahead-of-the-curve research and ideas that may not yet have achieved broad acceptance, or have not yet become embedded in accepted theory. While this will entail the Editors taking occasional risks, the aim is to raise *LARR*'s leadership in breaking new ideas and scholarship.

Similarly, we wish to be more proactive, specifically to encourage subject or issue research forums (at LASA Congresses for example). Also, we would like to be able to sponsor occasional meetings of leading researchers coming together to discuss cutting-edge issues. There will be three or four *LARR*-sponsored sessions at the LASA 2003 Congress on 27–29 March, 2003, in Dallas, Texas. The goal is to encourage those

authors to submit their work for possible publication in *LARR* (albeit not in a "special issue" format).

We also feel there is a need to raise *LARR's* visibility and role as a venue for quality research in new and emerging areas where these relate directly to, or are informed by, Latin American studies. Examples here might include leading-edge interdisciplinary research initiatives within cultural studies, within research on Latino issues, and on transnationalism or globalization, all of which increasingly intersect with Latin American studies in ways that are intellectually challenging and illuminating.

Perhaps the greatest frustration for authors, especially in recent years, is that despite more rapid systems of communication, there has been little appreciable change in the speed at which their work appears in academic journals. Therefore, one of our main goals is to achieve a more rapid turnaround time in reviewing manuscripts. By maximizing the use of electronic communication and the transmission of documents, we are already achieving significant time reductions in the period between submission and actual publication. In general, however, authors whose manuscripts receive a final decision after the first (internal) review can usually expect to receive an early (decline) decision within four to six weeks of receipt. Those whose papers are sent out for multiple external reviews can expect to receive detailed reports within three to four months (see "Instructions to Authors" section on the Home Page). Scholars called upon to participate in reviewing papers can help enormously here, not just by their willingness to engage in double-blind peer assessment, but by doing so expeditiously and within set deadlines. *Not counting* the time taken by authors in making required revisions, our goal is that the review and production process rarely extend beyond a year for any manuscript.

In recognition of the essential role that publications in first-tier journals play in tenure and promotion for many LASA members, *LARR* is seeking to increase the number of full research articles included in each issue and volume. This does not mean a relaxation of standards or quality of published work, but the larger number of papers included will be achieved primarily by reducing the length of manuscripts preferably to no longer than 35 double-spaced pages including footnotes and bibliography (around 9,000 words).

LARR proposes to continue to publish "Research Reports and Notes," but to do so in a way that conforms more strictly to the title, namely to provide a brief research report or note (of 10–15 double spaced pages, around 3,000–4,000 words) that: offers a commentary on a technique or method that will assist other researchers; identifies and offers guidance about a new archive or body of research material and data; or, offers a complementary note on major research that will assist in the interpretation of those materials in a manner that is designed to facilitate rather than critique.

From now on, the production side of *LARR* will be vested within the Journals Division of the University of Texas Press, the largest academic publisher in Latin American studies. Among the Press' responsibilities will be business management and copy-editing, as well as production and distribution (much of which was formally undertaken at UNM in-house and by privately contracted typesetters and printers). We hope to build upon the Press' wide-ranging expertise in strengthening and streamlining production practices in order to achieve an even wider dissemination, thereby reducing the need for future cost increases.

MEDIUM-TERM CHANGES BEING CONTEMPLATED

As well as these changes and fine-tuning as we proceed in our first year, we anticipate a number of additional initiatives, but these will not be undertaken until *LARR* has completed at least one full year's cycle at UT-Austin (i.e., beginning in 2004).

Ultimately, we hope to establish an all-electronic process of submission and review of manuscripts, thereby improving the efficiency with which authors and external referees may interact with *LARR*, and further expediting a faster publication of research.

Strangely, perhaps, very few *LARR* subscribers (individual or LASA members) use the *LARR*-on-Line service. Non-institutional recipients of *LARR* in good standing can already make immediate use of *LARR*-on-Line without further charge simply by requesting an access code from the editorial office at UT-Austin (larr@uts.cc.utexas.edu). This offers on-line access to past issues since 1992 (Vol. 27) and the printing of individual papers where desired. Please note that all subscribers may access the full Index on-line as well as the contents page of the current issue.

Where appropriate and desirable, we hope to develop our capacity to translate articles into English with parallel on-line availability in the original language.

In short, *LARR* is actively seeking ways in which we may take advantage of the changing opportunities in communications and publishing technology, and to do so in ways that will both foster the greater dissemination of knowledge for the twenty-first century and serve the advancement of scholarship and the professional development of LASA members as well as those engaged in Latin American studies worldwide.

Once again, welcome to the "new" *LARR*!

Peter M. Ward
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