
EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Thirty-one years have passed since the first issue of *LARR* was published in the fall of 1965. Its appearance led to an incident that left a lasting impression on the current editor, then a graduate student. One fine autumn day in New Haven, Richard Morse, Director of Yale's Latin American Center, waved me into the sanctum of his office. I feared the worst. Morse was renowned among students for his critical mind and sardonic turn of phrase. To my surprise, Morse was positively jovial. He enthusiastically thrust into my hand a copy of a new journal and asked my opinion of it. My judgment was of course favorable. That copy still sits on my shelf, along with the ninety issues of *LARR* that have followed.

The establishment of *LARR* took place against the backdrop of the resounding failure of the Association of Latin American Studies (ALAS) in 1962. The brief life of ALAS served as a cautionary tale that inspired the great care with which first *LARR* and then the Latin American Studies Association were founded. During the 1950s, Theo Crevenna of the Pan American Union promoted the establishment of regional councils on Latin American affairs, the first of which was the Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies, set up in 1952. By 1958, such regional organizations could be found throughout most of the United States. This achievement led to discussions of merging the organizations into a national association or federation of councils. In August 1959, the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) sponsored a conference in Sagamore, New York, organized by Syracuse University and financed by the Creole Foundation, to discuss the issue and recommend action.

The Sagamore conference debated but could not resolve the issue of whether to set up a federation of councils or a national association based on individual memberships, nor could it agree on goals or a plan of action. Nevertheless, the participants voted unanimously to establish ALAS, with a governing council of fifteen persons—one representing each regional council and the rest elected at large.

Despite its name, the new organization did not take flight. Some of the reasons for its demise were summed up by Howard Cline in 1966: "Numerous difficulties impeded the development of ALAS as a cohesive national professional association. Its *Newsletter*, issued but twice, attracted unfavorable comment, as did the fact that its officers did not hold a meeting of its governing body, arrange regular elections, or even acknowledge dues payments. None of its committees met or functioned. It suffices to say that by 1962 ALAS as a national organization was clearly moribund."¹

The events following the Cuban Revolution, such as the Alliance for Progress and the Bay of Pigs, created a climate in which Latin American studies took on new importance. The need for mechanisms to institutionalize the field, such as a professional journal and a professional association, seemed more evident than ever. In 1962 the Ford Foundation began to provide support to Latin American studies programs and for the training of Latin Americanists through the Foreign Area Fellowship Program (FAFP), cosponsored by the ACLS and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC). Meanwhile, the Latin American centers that were receiving funding under Title VI of the U.S. National Defense Education Act of 1958 had formed the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP).

These various efforts came together in a historic meeting in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in December 1964, site of the semi-annual meeting of CLASP directors. The Management Committee of the FAFP, with the backing of the Ford Foundation, the ACLS, and the SSRC, asked to attend and meet with the CLASP directors. Those present at the Cuernavaca meeting debated at length the advisability of founding a new national association that would avoid the deficiencies of ALAS. They came closer to consensus, although not unanimity, on the need for a scholarly journal to disseminate research on Latin America. They finally reached an agreement to explore the establishment of a journal as the first priority. The question of the feasibility of a new association was passed to the Joint Committee on Latin American Studies of the FAFP for continued study.

Concerted action over the next few months led to *LARR*'s becoming a reality. The Institute of Latin American Studies at the University of Texas, directed by John Harrison, offered to host the new journal. Thirty-seven universities and the Hispanic Foundation of the Library of Congress pledged two thousand dollars each toward the cost of publication, matched by a forty-thousand-dollar grant from the Ford Foundation. These founding institutions continue to be listed on the inside back cover of *LARR*. The first issue appeared in the fall of 1965.

1. Howard F. Cline, "The Latin American Studies Association: A Summary Survey with Appendix," *LARR* 2, no. 1 (Fall 1966):63.

The journal's first editor, Richard Schaedel, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Texas, opened the inaugural issue with the following statement in Spanish: "Con este número se inicia la publicación de una nueva revista dedicada al intercambio continuo y sistemático de información referente a investigaciones que se están llevando a cabo en la actualidad en América Latina en los campos de las Ciencias Sociales y las Humanidades."²

The success of the new journal provided the impetus for a new professional organization, the Latin American Studies Association, which came to life in May 1966. In 1967 the journal and the association joined forces, and *LARR* became LASA's official publication. In 1973 the journal moved to the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of North Carolina. Eight years later, the Latin American Institute at the University of New Mexico assumed responsibility as the host institution, an arrangement that has been extended several times by mutual agreement with the Executive Council of the Latin American Studies Association.

Schaedel's description of *LARR*'s mission has remained valid during the subsequent editorships of Thomas McGann, John Martz, Joseph Tulchin, and the present editor. The first few issues of *LARR* featured articles surveying current research on Latin America. In time, a second category of article was added to the mandate, namely original research contributions of general and interdisciplinary interest. When the journal moved to North Carolina, John Martz and Joseph Tulchin added a third important category: essays reviewing not one but several books on a common topic. The University of New Mexico editors have added one minor innovation, the occasional publication of sections of "Commentary and Debate."

Manuscript submissions to *LARR* during the year running from June 1994 through May 1995 reached an all-time high (151 manuscripts as compared with 114 for the 1993–1994 period and 136 for 1992–1993). Thirty-three of these submissions were book review essays. The remaining 118 manuscripts entered the review process. By the end of May 1995, 10 of these manuscripts had been accepted for publication or accepted pending revisions, 77 had been rejected, 4 were withdrawn, and the remaining 28 were still under original review or a second review following revisions. An additional 9 manuscripts from the previous report period were also accepted after having been revised and resubmitted. The publication rate for articles and research notes that completed the review process (those accepted or rejected) was about 1 of 8 original submissions, with the proportion increasing to about 1 of every 4 if resubmitted manuscripts are included in the overall totals.

2. "A Nuestros Colegas Latinamericanos," *LARR* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1965):3.

The distribution by discipline reflected a slight increase in history manuscripts, which tied with political science submissions at 27 percent each of total submissions. Third place was held by sociology with 11 percent of the total. Economics fell to 9 percent, tying with language and literature submissions. Anthropology represented 7 percent of the total. Other fields such as bibliography, education, geography, and studies of religion accounted for the remaining 9 percent of submissions.

| Discipline | June 1994– May 1995 | June 1993– May 1994 | June 1992– May 1993 |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Political science | 27% | 27% | 24% |
| History | 27 | 24 | 22 |
| Sociology | 11 | 11 | 12 |
| Economics | 9 | 15 | 15 |
| Languages and literature | 9 | 8 | 9 |
| Anthropology | 7 | 7 | 8 |
| Other fields | 9 | 8 | 10 |
| Totals | 99% | 100% | 100% |

Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian authors or coauthors, including those living in Europe and North America, submitted 27 percent of all submissions, down 5 percent from the previous year. Women authored or coauthored 33 percent of submissions, an increase of 7 percent from last year's report. Twenty-two percent of the manuscripts came from outside the United States, as compared with 26 percent the previous year. Fifty-five percent of these non-U.S. manuscripts came from Latin America and the Caribbean, as compared with 48 percent in the preceding report period. Latin American and Caribbean countries represented were Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and Venezuela. Other countries included Canada, Denmark, England, France, Guam, Israel, Scotland, and Sweden.

The strong flow of manuscripts submitted to *LARR* over the last year testifies to the current vitality of research on Latin America as well as to the advantages of the close ties between *LARR* and the Latin American Studies Association. In a recent poll, LASA members rated *LARR* the most highly valued benefit of membership, and 93 percent of the respondents rated *LARR*'s quality as "excellent" or "good." Richard Morse's enthusiasm over the first issue in 1965 proved a good omen.

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