
EDITORS' FOREWORD

DISCIPLINARY OVERVIEW OF MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSIONS AND PUBLICATIONS 2002–2006

REPORT ON MANUSCRIPTS RECEIVED, 2006

In 2006 *LARR* began the transition from the University of Texas at Austin to the new editorial team at McGill University. By agreement with Dr. Philip Oxhorn, the incoming editor, we continued to receive and process manuscripts at UT for the first eight months of 2006, with all new manuscripts going to McGill for possible inclusion in volume 43 (2008) from September onwards. This means, therefore, that unlike previous years for which we reported on a full twelve-month cycle, the following data relate to eight months, January through August 2006. Thus, the data are not strictly comparable with previous years.

Nevertheless, the data suggest a strong continuation of the trends reported previously. The number of manuscripts submitted continues to rise: the 86 manuscripts received over the eight-month period suggest that the number would have exceeded the previous year's total of 108. Of those 86 submissions, political science/economy continue to be the largest disciplinary group maintaining their consistent average of total submissions to *LARR* of around 37 percent, as did history with 19 percent: both are almost identical to previous years. Literature and culture was next with 14 percent, followed by economics, sociology, and anthropology, each between 6 and 8 percent. In terms of country of origin or place of residence of authors, the large majority continued to come from the United States and Canada (65 percent), while a slightly lower percentage (21 percent) came from Latin America than in the previous year, with a further 14 percent of submissions coming from European-based scholars.

As in previous years, some 23 percent of manuscripts had a comparative or general Latin American focus, rather than being tied to any one country. Those that were country focused favored Brazil (19 percent); Argentina and Mexico (11–12 percent each); while Central American countries and the Caribbean (including Cuba) each provided the focus for around 10 percent of the submissions. This is a more diverse pattern than in previous reports, especially concerning the primacy of Brazil and the rising proportion of Caribbean and Central American country-based papers. In summary, these data suggest that *LARR* continues to be on an upward trend as a venue for publication of scholarly work, and reaches significantly beyond the United States in terms of authorship of submissions. The desire to increase submissions from Latin American-based scholars remains, however.

As previous reports have emphasized, *LARR* is very competitive in the review and selection process, but in processing manuscripts we have also sought to maintain a firm commitment to ensure a reasonably expeditious turnaround time. As in previous years, more than half (57 percent) of all manuscripts were rejected after an internal review by the editors, with notification on average three weeks from receipt. The average processing time for the remaining 43 percent that went out for external review was 86 days. Forty percent of those reviewed externally were subsequently rejected, while most of the remainder received revise-and-resubmit responses. (Only 5 percent were accepted outright or conditionally after external review.)

In conclusion, *LARR* continues to be fine fettle in terms of the total number and quality of submissions and their provenance. The journal maintains a high standard of selectivity, with a relatively swift review process.

2002–2006: A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW BY THE EDITORS

In our first foreword (38:1) we expressed a desire to broaden the range of disciplinary submissions and articles published in *LARR* as well as to promote ahead-of-the-curve research, even if this meant taking the occasional risk. We also proposed to periodically sponsor research forums, both in the pages of *LARR* and/or at LASA congresses or regional meetings.

Over the five years we have had considerable success on all fronts. *LARR* has sponsored more than a dozen major panels at LASA congresses since the one in Dallas (March 2003), and the findings of three of those research forums have appeared in our pages as research notes on “Marginality and ‘New’ Poverty” (2004, 39:1); on “Debates about Neoliberalism” (2004, 39:3); and on “Historiography of Structuralism and New Institutional Economics” (2005, 40:3). Each forum brought

together several leading scholars and provided an opportunity to reflect upon and to debate the key issues and research trends in their fields.

Holding these research forums and publishing them as research note compilations has allowed us to sidestep the need to publish special issues of *LARR*, and while we understand the virtue of special theme issues, we always felt that it would be undesirable to devote any one issue of the journal to a single theme, even if it could be made to be genuinely multidisciplinary in scope. This was felt to be an appropriate editorial decision—at least as long as *LARR* continues to be published three times a year, and has approximately 40 percent of its pages dedicated to book review essays (see below).

As described in earlier forewords (38:2; 39:3; and 40:3), we have been very successful in maintaining the high quality and preeminence of the journal as measured by peer review and journal “impact factors” (see 40:3). We have been greatly assisted in these endeavors by the members of the editorial board who have served with us over the past few years, and we would like to take this opportunity to offer them our heartfelt thanks.

In this, the last issue of *LARR* to be published by the University of Texas Press under the direction of the University of Texas editorial team, we thought that LASA members and *LARR* readers might be interested in receiving an overview of submissions and trends that we have observed during 2002–06, from the disciplinary perspective of each editor. At UT, the great breadth of Latin Americanist faculty allowed us to create a strong editorial team covering most of the principal disciplines: Peter Ward in sociology, geography, and environmental areas; Jonathan Brown in history; Naomi Lindstrom in literature and culture; Kurt Weyland (2002–04) and Raúl Madrid (2004–06) in political science, political economy, and international relations; and government professor Henry Dietz also serving as editor for the book review essays. Depending upon the subject matter and discipline, each associate editor took primary responsibility for a detailed internal reading of each manuscript, making a recommendation about whether or not to seek an external review from subject experts. All papers were read in-house by at least one of the editors and often by two of us, especially where the piece was multidisciplinary. This practice of internal reviewing by one or more expert readers allowed us to ensure that the review process was both fair and timely.

Table one provides a data summary of the submissions by disciplinary area and their progress through the review process. Over the five-year period we received a total of 525 manuscripts, of which slightly less than half (44 percent) were sent out for full external review, resulting in the actual publication of almost 90 articles and research notes.

It is not possible to do justice here to the rich breadth and depth of manuscripts that we have received and published, but as editors we are in a unique position to offer a brief commentary from each of our

disciplinary perspectives on the many papers that have crossed our desks in the past five years, and how, in our view, these submissions intersect and engage with *LARR*'s role and position as a major venue for multi- and interdisciplinary publication of scholarly work.¹ We will begin with the traditional stalwarts in terms of submissions—political science and history—but as we will also demonstrate below, we have been successful in stimulating and publishing a broader range of research than was the case in the previous decade.

Over the course of the last five years, *LARR*'s publications in the field of political science have been characterized by a high level of selectivity, considerable methodological and substantive diversity, and a significant degree of participation by Latin American scholars. For many years *LARR* has been a prestigious venue for political scientists—indeed the journal ranked first among all area studies journals in a recent survey of political scientists.² Over the course of the last five years, we received 200 submissions in the area of political science, broadly defined. We rejected nearly half of those manuscripts after an internal review (Table 1). Of the remaining 103 manuscripts that were sent out for external review, only 11 (less than 6 percent of the total political science submissions) were accepted outright. More often, we invited the authors (some 43, or 23 percent of total submissions in this area) to revise and resubmit their articles. Including vol. 42:3, we will have accepted and published 31 political science manuscripts from those submitted during the period 2002–2006, which represents an acceptance rate of 15.5 percent. While this rate of acceptance is slightly above that of the most prestigious political science journals, it nevertheless indicates considerable selectivity.³

LARR has traditionally received many important contributions from Latin American political science scholars and the last five years have been no exception. At least twelve of the aforementioned manuscripts accepted for publication were authored or coauthored by Latin American scholars, although most were based outside of Latin America. Indeed, for the whole period we received only 25 political science submissions (13 percent of the total) from scholars based in Latin America, including 8 submissions each from Argentina and Mexico.

1. While this foreword is collectively authored, each section was written by the current associate editor in that disciplinary area.

2. See James C. Garand and Michael W. Giles, "Journals in the Discipline: A Report on a New Survey of American Political Scientists." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, XXXVI, 2 (April) 2003: 296.

3. For recent data on acceptance rates in two prestigious political science journals, see Lee Sigelman, "Report of the Editor of the *American Political Science Review*, 2004–2005." *PS: Political Science and Politics* XXXIX (1): 171–73 (January) 2006; and Jennifer L. Hochschild, "Report of the Editor of *Perspective on Politics*, 2004–2005." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34 (1): 175–78 (January) 2006.

Table 1

<i>Primary Disciplinary Area⁴</i>	<i># of Submissions Received & Col % of Total</i>	<i>Row % External Reviewed</i>	<i>Col % and Number Pub- lished in LARR Vols. 38–42</i>
Anthropology (& Archaeology)	27 (5.14%)	45%	5 (5.70%)
Architecture, Urban Studies	3 (0.57%)	33%	1 (1.15%)
Culture, Fine Arts, Film etc.	22 (4.2%)	27%	2 (2.30%)
Language & Literature	37 (7.05%)	33%	6 (6.9%)
History / Historiography	90 (17.1%)	33%	20 (23%)
Economics	20 (3.90%)	50%	3 (3.9%)
Political Science and Political Economy	200 (38.1%)	52%	31 (36%)
Geography & Environmental Sciences (including agriculture)	21 (4.0%)	38%	3 (3.40%)
Sociology and Religion	81 (15.40%)	47%	13 (14.90%)
Gender/Women's Studies	8 (1.50%)	62.5%	1 (1.15%)
Education; Library, Bibliographic	7 (1.30%)	43%	2 (2.3%)
Law	2 (0.4%)	50%	—
Others unclassified	7 (1.30%)	14%	—
TOTALS (N)	525	231	87

Most submissions came from the United States (130), with a number of manuscripts coming as well from Europe (14), and Canada (10).

The manuscripts accepted for publication in the last five years were quite diverse in their substantive focus. In recent years, a great deal of research in political science has focused on the functioning of political institutions, and this was apparent in the pages of *LARR* as well. Thirteen of the accepted manuscripts (40 percent of the total) dealt

4. Given the multi- and interdisciplinary nature of *LARR*, many papers would fall across two or more disciplines in content, and this table indicates the primary field only. This was derived both from the title and abstract content as well as the author's "home" department. Thus, many gender topic papers were classified by the primary discipline.

with political institutions, including elections, parties, the legislature, the judiciary, and the presidency. Political economy, defined here as the study of the politics of economic policy and performance, also continues to be a major area of research in the discipline, and this, too, is reflected in the pages of *LARR*. Nine articles accepted between 2002–2006 dealt with political economy, including issues such as foreign direct investment, trade agreements, employment programs, economic reforms, and economic performance. The manuscripts accepted for publication, however, also reflect the interest of Latin Americanists in numerous other themes. Eight of the articles, for example, dealt with Latin American civil society, including women's movements, Afro-Latino and indigenous politics, and the media.

The political science articles accepted for publication in *LARR* during this period also exemplified the methodological pluralism present in the discipline. Approximately one-third of the manuscripts involve strictly qualitative research, one-third contain some simple quantitative analyses such as comparisons of means, and another third contained somewhat more sophisticated statistical analyses, typically regression. Formal modeling, which has become increasingly common in the discipline, was largely absent from the pages of *LARR*, although the journal did publish one article that included spatial models. Our insistence that papers published in the journal should at least be reasonably accessible to a multidisciplinary audience has probably meant that authors wishing to place their modeling and heavy statistical data-based research have sought to do so in more mainstream disciplinary outlets.

These same published articles also varied considerably in terms of geographic focus. Each of the main subregions of Latin America (Central America, the Caribbean, the Andean Region, and the Southern Cone) was covered in depth by at least one published article, and in most cases, by multiple articles. Ten articles dealt with Latin America as a whole, eight articles focused exclusively on Argentina, and five centered on Mexico. (The actual submissions during this period reflected a similar geographical diversity.)

Thus, over the last five years *LARR* has very much reflected the diversity of interests, backgrounds, and approaches of political scientists working on Latin America. We believe that much of the best political science research on Latin America in recent years has appeared in its pages, and we are grateful to the many authors and reviewers for their important contributions to the journal.

On average *LARR* has received fifteen history manuscripts each year, and has usually published four history articles in each volume (across the three issues). The quality has been exceptionally high, for the editors and reviewers accepted only one history manuscript for every 4.5 received. Often, too, those articles have been innovative. For example

Brodwyn Fischer's statistical study on race and class in Rio de Janeiro's criminal courts provided a provocative review of the literature on the subject as well as citation of court cases in which class trumped race and vice versa. *LARR* also published ground-breaking pieces by Paulo Drinot on suicides in Lima in the 1920s, and by Doug Yarrington on the functions of corruption in Vicente Gómez's state-building project, while the article by Jeremy Adelman sheds new light on the construction of nationhood in nineteenth-century Argentina.

We have also noted some degree of thematic selection towards economic history. This trend may be partly attributed to the *LARR*-sponsored panel that the editors organized at the 2004 LASA meeting in Las Vegas, which as mentioned above, saw papers by Joe Love, John Coatsworth, and Sandra Kuntz-Ficker appear as a special Research Forum. It may also partly reflect the fact that an economic historian—Jonathan Brown—served as associate editor for this period, and this somehow encouraged others working in this genre to submit their manuscripts. Whatever the reason, we were pleased to receive many quality submissions and published a number of economic history articles by Tom Passananti, coauthors Jeffrey Bortz and Marcos Tonatiuh Aguila, Pablo Lacoste, and Yovanna Pineda.

On the other hand, almost no manuscripts came our way in the flourishing field of the New Cultural History, and very few in the history of gender (with the very notable exception of Heidi Tinsman's article on rural women and consumption in Pinochet's Chile). Historians working in these genres appear to favor other journals, particularly the *Hispanic American Historical Review* (*HAHR*); and we believe that in this respect *LARR* and *HAHR* are not so much competitors as complementary venues for a healthy exchange in different research methodologies.

LARR appears to have created its niche in the history of modern Latin America, with historians of colonial Latin America publishing in other venues, specifically *HAHR* and the *Colonial Latin American Historical Review*. Nonetheless, *LARR* remains an excellent means by which the colonialist might reach a wider audience, as demonstrated by Matthew Restall's article on the state of the research in the New Philology, the study of indigenous peoples of Mexico according to texts in their own languages. *LARR* published only one other "colonial" article, that by the Chilean-based scholar Pablo Lacoste on the eighteenth-century Mendoza wine industry. Regrettably, we received too few other manuscripts on colonial history to be able to build upon the example of Restall and Lacoste's papers.

One of main goals has been to publish more articles from Latin American researchers, and while a significant number of history manuscripts came from Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking nations, lamentably these suffered a higher rejection rate, such that *LARR*'s expert reviewers recommended publication of only one article in Portuguese, by Regina Horta Duarte, and another in Spanish, by Pablo Lacoste.

During the five-year period in the area of research on literature and culture *LARR* has only rarely published research focused on the analysis of literary texts by an established writer. The principal example is "Violence and Difference in Gabriela Mistral's Short Stories (1904–1911)" by Karen P. Peña. In this essay, Peña argues that the after-effects of the Nobel Prize-winning Chilean writer's experience of sexual violence manifest themselves in the short stories that she published very early in her career. However, as table one suggests, more frequently than it has served as an outlet for literary studies as such, *LARR* has succeeded in providing a home for articles on literary and cultural research problems that cannot be fully explored using the concepts and methodologies of any one discipline. In some cases, these articles represent scholarship that, while both sound and lively, would have been difficult to place in a journal dominated by practitioners of any one discipline.

Literature and culture formed around 11 percent of submissions to *LARR*, and perhaps, again, because of our requirement that articles be accessible to a broad audience, a relatively small proportion of papers made it out of the internal review process. This was not due to an overly assiduous internal assessment; rather, a number of submissions in this area were brief notes or informal essays not well-suited to *LARR*. Nevertheless, almost 10 percent of all articles published in *LARR* were in literature and culture.

An example from *LARR*'s early days in Texas (38:3) is Candace Slater's article, "Terror in the Twin Towers: The Events of September 11 in the Brazilian *Literatura de Cordel*" which focuses upon a poet of *literatura de cordel* and his response in verse to the attack on the World Trade Center. Another, and one of the most thoroughly interdisciplinary articles that *LARR* has published is Jack Child, "The Politics and Semiotics of the Smallest Icons of Popular Culture: Latin American Postage Stamps." In vol. 40:1, Child brings together his familiarity with Latin American social history and his vast store of information about postage stamps in his examination of stamps from Latin American countries. At the same time that he brings in factual knowledge from diverse fields, he grounds his entire analysis in semiotic theory.

A phenomenon that has really caught our attention is the research currently being carried out on the nonalphabetic systems of representation developed by indigenous cultures and the ways in which, particularly during the early colonial period, these notational systems made inroads into alphabetical documents. In vol. 38:3, *LARR* ran Galen Brokaw's "The Poetics of *Khipu* Historiography: Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala and the Other *Khipukamayuqs*" and Margot Beyersdorff's [this issue] "Covering the Earth: Mapping the Walkabout in Andean Pueblos de Indios." These articles draw upon concepts and findings of linguistics, cultural anthropology, archeology, art history, and literary

studies, as well as, in the case of Beyersdorff's essay, a considerable amount of geography.

The politics of culture constitutes another area that appeals to scholars from different disciplines. In *LARR*, this area of study has most recently been represented by Deborah Cohn's "A Tale of Two Translation Programs" (41:2).

Our experiences at *LARR* have shown that scholars from fields other than literature generally find it difficult to appreciate research that is primarily textual analysis. Analyses of literary writing, carried out first and foremost for the sake of the text are not likely to fare well in an interdisciplinary environment. On the other hand, research that crosses over from literary studies by pulling in concepts from anthropology, linguistics, art history, and other disciplines, has clearly found a place in the pages of *LARR*. One hopes that in future years, *LARR* will continue to showcase the innovative research being carried out in the border areas between literature and other disciplines.

Turning to sociology, geography, and other disciplinary areas not yet discussed, one of the costs of being the lead editor is that it falls to me (Ward) to cover most of the remaining disciplinary areas covered in table one. I turn, first, to my own two principal intellectual hearths—those of geography and sociology. Both appear to have had an increased presence in submissions and article publications in the past five years. Sociology (and religion) have been especially vibrant, with over 80 (15 percent) submissions, 13 of which have been published (table one). These submissions cover the issues of gender, race, labor markets, stratification, and neoliberalism, rural and urban collective action, and mobilization—all of which have appeared in the pages of *LARR*. While we received a number of submissions on migration and transnational families, these were generally more suited to a specialist migration journal. Four articles were published on sociology and gender. Gay and lesbian issues hardly figured among submissions—going instead, one assumes, to more specialist journals—although latterly (42:1) we were able to publish Rafaela de la Dehesa's piece on the early emergence of these movements in Brazil and Mexico. Finally, Albert Esteve and Robert McCaa's comparative study of Brazil and Mexico on the issue of "homogamia educativa" will be unfamiliar for most *LARR* readers, even though the study of marriage partners and class is well established in sociology.

If sociology has always been a *LARR* staple, the same cannot be said for the disciplines of geography and environmental studies. However, especially if we include agriculture, there was a welcome increase in submissions (21, or 4 percent overall), of which three were published. All three related in some way to environmental issues, including an article on globalization and the organic export boom of the Dominican Republic.

Table one also shows other disciplinary areas from which submissions were received—education, law, architecture and planning—all of which we looked at afresh and with considerable enthusiasm, and which we were usually able to present in *LARR* at least once.

Last but not least are economics and anthropology, both of which have had significant numbers of submissions. As noted earlier in the case of political science, *LARR* does not tend to publish papers heavy in mathematical modeling and statistics, and probably partly for that reason economists have not usually considered *LARR* as a venue in which to publish their scholarly work. Those that have are usually Latin Americanists at heart, and economists by disciplinary training, who have sought to bring their *métier* to a multidisciplinary audience. A good example is Octavio Damiani's piece on labor markets, wages, and nontraditional exports in northeast Brazil (38:1). Generally, however, it appears that mainstream economists eschew *LARR* as an outlet for their work, which is a pity.

Not so anthropologists, and as indicated earlier for literature, culture, and politics, *LARR* continues to receive a steady flow of manuscripts from anthropological interdisciplinary perspectives. (Given the difficulty of classification the 5 percent of total submissions indicated in table one is a conservative figure.) However, it is important to recognize that archaeology and anthropology are disciplines with a large number of small but prestigious "niche" journals, and we rather doubt that even if we had included an anthropologist among the editorial team we would have been successful in encouraging many more manuscripts. Anthropology researchers not targeting one of these sub-disciplinary niche journals are likely to continue to look to *LARR* as an important venue for publication, and their submissions have tended to be both interdisciplinary, or even multidisciplinary, in nature, as for example the collaboration between Shahna Arps (an anthropologist) and Kendra McSweeney (a geographer) in vol. 40:1. And although the actual number of "mainstream" anthropology papers published appears to be rather modest, it should be appreciated that many of the other published works embrace current anthropological perspectives whether these are infused into political science, literature, sociology, or geography—as for example the manuscripts by Galen Brokaw and Margot Beyersdorff mentioned earlier, both of which were "counted" as literature, but could equally well be considered cultural anthropology. And that, perhaps, is exactly as it should be for the premier inter- and multidisciplinary journal in the field.

AN OVERVIEW OF BOOK REVIEW ESSAYS 2002–06⁵

The Book Review Essays section of the *Latin American Research Review* has been with the journal since its start and remains one of its

5. Overview written by Dr. Henry Dietz and Melissa Biggs

most popular features. Many agree that being able to read an essay that reviews, compares, and contrasts several books at one time, has significant advantages over reading stand-alone reviews of individual works. It also allows for many more scholars to share their expertise and have their work published in *LARR*, even though these essays are not formally peer reviewed.

Over the past five years *LARR* received approximately 2400 books. Of these a small minority was discarded since they were either works of fiction, poetry, issues of journals, or second or third editions, none of which the journal reviews. This still left around 2,000 volumes for possible inclusion in a thematic book cluster. Of these, approximately 1,175 were eventually folded into review essays that were published. Another way to look at the numbers is to realize that no less than 230 thematic clusters of books were formed from the books received. Of these, 40 or so were never sent out for review, generally because there were insufficient titles to form a viable cluster. Thus 190 clusters were successfully created and potential reviewers were contacted to write reviews.

But the number of reviewers contacted who agreed to write a review essay is not the same as the number of reviews in print. Of those who agree, a few (less than a quarter) later found that they were unable to write a review, while others who agreed simply never responded to numerous reminders or in some other way simply disappeared from sight. Such a practice was of course most unfortunate, since the authors of the books involved never saw their books reviewed.

Some 130 clusters therefore eventually appeared in print over the years in question; these contained about 950 titles, meaning that more than half of the appropriate volumes received were ultimately reviewed. The number of volumes in each cluster averaged between 6 and 7; almost none had less than 4, and only a handful had more than 10. It should also be noted that, in a modest number of cases, the reviewer asked to discard one or two books and to be allowed to include titles that *LARR* had not sent along to them. Other authors were sent a cluster of perhaps 12 or 15 titles and were asked to create their own final selection for the essay.

Of these 130 essays, the two largest disciplines were political science (about 23 essays) and history (20), followed by literature and cultural studies (18), international relations and law (11), sociology (5), and others (geography, health, economics, education, etc.). Such a distribution was not surprising; both history and political science (especially comparative politics) are notably "book" disciplines in which scholars are expected to produce books as opposed to articles.

Each issue of *LARR* generally had some eight or nine essays; the operating rule of thumb was that each issue was to contain about 40 percent of its total number of pages as review essays. The most notable exception to this average occurred in vol. 40:3, which contained 26 essays.

This issue was a one-time effort to reduce the backlog of essays received in order to ensure that they appeared in a timely manner.

Occasionally readers have complained that the essay format (rather than individual book reviews) delays the review process. This is probably both true and inevitable, but we hope that the delay has not been excessive. Indeed, others have complained that in the past the books were out of print by the time the review appeared. For these two reasons, we decided early on to set a three-year moving wall on books reviewed, seeking to ensure that by the time any book appeared in a *LARR* review essay, it should not normally be beyond three years from date of publication. This also led to a higher number of discarded books, but overall most readers seem to agree that the review essay remains a valuable and time-honored integral part of *LARR*, allowing for a broader spectrum of authorship and views to be represented in its pages.

ADIÓS TO UT-AUSTIN, BIENVENIDO MCGILL UNIVERSITY

It has been a great honor to have the opportunity to receive, read, and review colleagues' research over the past five years. We have greatly enjoyed editing *LARR*, and we have been uniquely privileged by the director and journal staff of the University of Texas Press who have allowed us to have such a "hands-on" involvement in the production process. Collectively, we at UT-Austin, the editorial board, and all those who have participated as authors and reviewers should be proud of what we have achieved over the past five years.

Our best wishes to Philip Oxhorn and his new team at McGill University, and to the leadership of LASA who will now be responsible for production of the journal. To them we hand the torch

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