
EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Diversity is the term that comes to mind whenever the *LARR* editors receive an inquiry about where Latin American studies are headed. It is far easier to talk about changes that have taken place, of course, than about changes that are underway or may yet develop. It can also be instructive to review past changes as clues to new directions. Looking back at Latin American studies in the 1960s, 1970s, and even part of the 1980s, it is striking that certain major themes of past significance appear to have lost contemporary relevance. Many of these themes fall into the category of "isms": nationalism, imperialism, populism, Catholicism, corporatism, authoritarianism, indigenism, developmentalism, and militarism are all samples of the genre.

The one thing that these terms have in common is that each "ism" refers to a theoretical core concept (not unlike an ideal or essence in the Hegelian sense) that is assumed to be reflected in Latin American reality or to shed light on that reality. The fact that these terms have lost much of their currency suggests a new stage of intellectual endeavor, in which the search for unifying themes that underlie events has been replaced by an interest in confronting the complexities of diversity. The old problems and issues have not necessarily disappeared, but they are increasingly being addressed through an effort to disaggregate phenomena, to take things apart to see how they work. Or to put it differently, a concern with essences has been superseded by an interest in processes.

The new approach can be seen, for example, in the declining interest in the nation-state as the unit of analysis. National history has been replaced by regional histories, class histories, institutional histories, even gender and family histories. National politics as the study of governments, presidencies, and national elections has been augmented by newer research using locally specific survey data on public opinion or case studies of public-policy formation as the outcome of formal and informal interactions within and among private and public-sector institutions.

Studies of elite national culture and national literatures have likewise been supplanted by research on popular culture and the literature of ethnicity, class, gender, and region.

Interest in phenomena of the nation-state level has declined not only in relation to subnational topics but in relation to international and transnational processes. Indeed, one of the striking features of contemporary Latin America is the extent to which subnational phenomena are also transnational in character. Popular movements addressing gender equity, ethnic identity, and environmental improvement draw inspiration and support from similar movements in other countries. Moreover, there are intersections among international and national-level phenomena. Thus the examples of Greece, Portugal, and Spain were as significant as Latin America's own national experiences in charting the redemocratization of Latin America in the 1980s. Public officials as well as scholars increasingly view economic policy, environmental policy, health policy, educational policy, military policy, and other public policies in comparative perspective.

It should go without saying that the supranational "isms" such as imperialism have likewise been dissected. Dependency theory, a Latin American export, matured into world-systems theory. The latter in its turn has become a field characterized, like Latin American studies, by studies of the intersections between the international and the subnational that focus on process and diversity.

The national-level perspective of Latin American studies in the past tended to be elite-oriented simply because nations are ordinarily dominated by elites (some would argue that nationhood itself is an elite construct). And because nations are historically grounded entities, explanations of these elite phenomena tended to be historical in character. In contrast, both the international and subnational perspectives are implicitly comparative. Thus the older diachronic or time-series approach is now being enriched by an infusion of synchronic or cross-sectional research strategies. From these newer perspectives, history itself is sometimes viewed as just one of many variables (albeit a major one) in the processes leading to diverse social outcomes.

We shall leave the content analysis of pieces actually published in *LARR* to some future researcher. Such a research project will be simplified by a forthcoming comprehensive index to the first twenty-five years of *LARR* by author, title, country, and subject. This index is nearing completion and should be published by *LARR* in a few months. It is worth noting that the themes referred to above—such as subnational, cross-national, and international studies of gender, ecology, ethnicity, religion, class, public opinion, and public policy—have been well represented in recent issues and show no signs of diminishing in number.

For the purposes of our annual report to the readership on submissions to the journal, we employ rather different categories, which were

inherited as a legacy of *LARR*'s character as an interdisciplinary journal. Manuscript submissions to the journal during the twelve months from June 1991 through May 1992 increased by 18 percent as compared with the previous year, rising to 137 manuscripts received in contrast to 116 for the preceding 1990–91 period. Thirty of these submissions were book review essays and one was a comment. The remaining 106 manuscripts entered the review process. By mid-June of 1992, 7 manuscripts had been accepted for publication or accepted pending revisions, 58 had been rejected, 1 had been withdrawn, and the remaining 38 were still under original review or a second review following revisions. An additional 6 "old" manuscripts (from the previous report period) were accepted after having been revised. The publication rate for articles and research notes that completed the review process (those accepted or rejected) continues to be slightly less than one of every five submissions.

The distribution by discipline reflected an increase in the proportion of political science submissions to 32 percent of the total. Second place was again held by history with 22 percent of submissions, followed by economics with 15 percent and sociology with 12 percent. Language and literature submissions increased to 7 percent of the total, while anthropology submissions remained in sixth place with 5 percent. Other fields such as communications, ecology, education, geography, planning, and religious studies accounted for the remaining 7 percent of submissions.

| <i>Discipline</i> | <i>June 1991– May 1992</i> | <i>June 1990– May 1991</i> | <i>June 1989– May 1990</i> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Political Science | 32% | 28% | 37% |
| History | 22 | 22 | 19 |
| Economics | 15 | 21 | 16 |
| Sociology | 12 | 15 | 12 |
| Languages and Literature | 7 | 3 | 6 |
| Anthropology | 5 | 2 | 5 |
| Other fields | 7 | 9 | 5 |
| Totals | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian authors or coauthors, including those living in Europe and North America, submitted 25 percent of all submissions, down 10 percent from the previous year. Women authored or co-authored 26 percent of submissions, an increase from 21 percent in the last manuscript report. Twenty percent of the manuscripts came from outside the United States, as compared with 31 percent for the previous period. Sixty-seven percent of these non-U.S. manuscripts came from Latin America and the Caribbean, as compared with 50 percent in the preceding report period. Latin American and Caribbean countries repre-

sented were Argentina, Brazil, Jamaica, Mexico, and the Netherlands Antilles. Other countries represented included Australia, Canada, England, and Germany.

LARR continues its long-established policy of publishing only two categories of refereed articles: surveys of the current state of research on Latin America and original research contributions that are judged to be of general and interdisciplinary interest. Because the editors do not solicit article manuscripts, the content of *LARR* articles reflects the research interests of its authors and the informed judgments of its referees. One consequence is the timely appearance in *LARR* of the new intellectual concerns that are shaping research on Latin America.

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