LARR Latin American
Research Review

Report from the Editor (2022)

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At the time of this report, our editorial team is starting its second year of work at *LARR*. We are introducing some changes to the journal. As advertised in previous reports, *LARR* is shifting from a disciplinary to a thematic emphasis. This means that starting in March 2022, *LARR*'s issues are organized based on interdisciplinary conversations. We hope that this change will call additional attention to the journal. Moreover, the approach will facilitate mapping what academics consider the research worthy topics in Latin American studies. The thematic arrangement relies this year on what has been freely submitted to *LARR*. Some themes featured in volume 57 (2022) are: "Politics and Decolonization in the Arts" (vol. 57, no. 1, March), "Epistemological and Historical Debates on Latin American Studies" (vol. 57, no. 2, June), "Turn to the Right and the Role of the Middle Classes in Brazil" (vol. 57, no. 3, September), and "Political Economy, Development, and the Environment" (vol. 57, no. 4, December). We are also organizing thematic debates sponsored by *LARR* at the LASA meetings. In 2022, *LARR* organized the panel "Race, Racism and Anti-Racism in Latin America: A Conversation between Research Networks." We expect the results of this conversation to be published in a future issue.

This report discusses the composition and work of the editorial team, 2020 journal impact factor and Cite Scores and strategies to improve these metrics, submissions in 2021, decisions made, articles published, the best article prize, and the challenges that the journal has faced under the Covid-19 pandemic.

Editorial team

The editorial team is made up of: Christopher Britt (literature, George Washington University), Juan Carlos Callirgos (anthropology, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú), Abby Córdova (politics and international relations, University of Notre Dame), Rosa Luz Durán (economics, Universidad de Lima), Jana Morgan (politics and international relations, University of Tennessee), Pavel Shlossberg (cultural studies, Gonzaga), Joel Stillerman (sociology, Grand Valley State University) Heather Vrana (history, University of Florida), Fabrice Lehoucq (book reviews, University of North Carolina-Greensboro), Antonio Gómez (film reviews, Tulane University), Sara Lickey (editorial manager, LASA), and Daniel Fernandez-Guevara (editorial assistant, University of Florida). I cannot thank our editorial manager, editorial assistant, and dedicated team of associate editors enough for their careful work and insights.

A challenge we have faced in our first year has been some turnover of assistant editors in the field of economics. We started the year with two senior associate editors:

Lena Lavinas from Universidade Federal de Rio de Janeiro and Alicia Girón from UNAM, Mexico. However, their many responsibilities precluded them from continuing to work with *LARR*. We are thankful for the service they performed while they collaborated with us.

Another challenge that the team faced last year was the transfer of *LARR* from the online publication platform Ubiquity Press to Cambridge University Press. Richard Horley from Cambridge University Press has been of great assistance in setting up the submission software and helping us troubleshoot it. Sara Lickey has worked particularly hard to help with the transition and has also helped editors navigate the new submission system. I am thankful to Sara, Richard, the associate editors, and Daniel Fernandez for contributing to smooth the transition. I also thank *LARR*'s authors for their patience in navigating these changes. Besides the software changes, we have also learned new institutional arrangements at CUP and drafted new regulations for the journal (for example on the ethics of the peer review process).

Impact factor and Cite Score

LARR's impact factor in Web of Science for 2020 is 0.779. Its journal citation indicator in Web of Science (based on a three-year instead of a two-year period) is 0.93. Scopus includes a wider journal database than Web of Science in its metrics. The Scopus Cite Score went up from 1.2 in 2019 to 1.3 in 2020. The metric is based on the citations for the period 2017–2020 divided by the articles published. Cite Score's tracker for 2021 predicts an increase of *LARR*'s impact to 1.5. Scopus also ranks *LARR* according to disciplines. *LARR* is above the 90th percentile in literature and history. According to this metric, *LARR* has improved its presence in all subjects, but particularly in the humanities.

Although we know that improving these scores may not be easy, we hope that the interdisciplinary shift will attract additional citations to *LARR*'s articles. We have noticed that the most cited articles in past issues (apart from our often-cited book review essays) are those that address important topics for the region or those written by well-known authors. With that in mind, we are commissioning some special debates: as noted above, the first is on race, racism and antiracism, featuring some prominent scholars in that field. Another future project is a conversation on Latin America's middle classes from an intersectional perspective. An additional strategy to enhance the journal's prestige that we are working on is the creation of a distinguished international advisory board.

Manuscripts received

We received 332 manuscripts and accepted 56 in 2021. Our acceptance rate was 16.86. Most of our submissions continued to come from Brazil, a trend that started in 2020. Second to Brazil were the United States, Colombia, Spain, and Chile (fig. 1). We received 59.2 percent of submissions from Latin America and only 18.8 percent from the United States and Canada. We received 19.8 percent of submissions from the rest of the world. The majority of these come from Spain, but there is a noticeable increase of manuscripts coming from China, India, Russia, and the Middle East. Fewer manuscripts came from the United Kingdom, perhaps due to the existence of well-established, UK-based journals like the *Journal of Latin American Studies* and the *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. While these numbers signal that *LARR* is a truly international journal, the editorial team would like to encourage submissions from North America.

Politics and international relations continue to be the main field of submissions to *LARR* (fig. 2). This is explained by *LARR*'s traditional strength in those disciplines, and the legacy of area studies that historically emphasized politics and learning languages. Economics
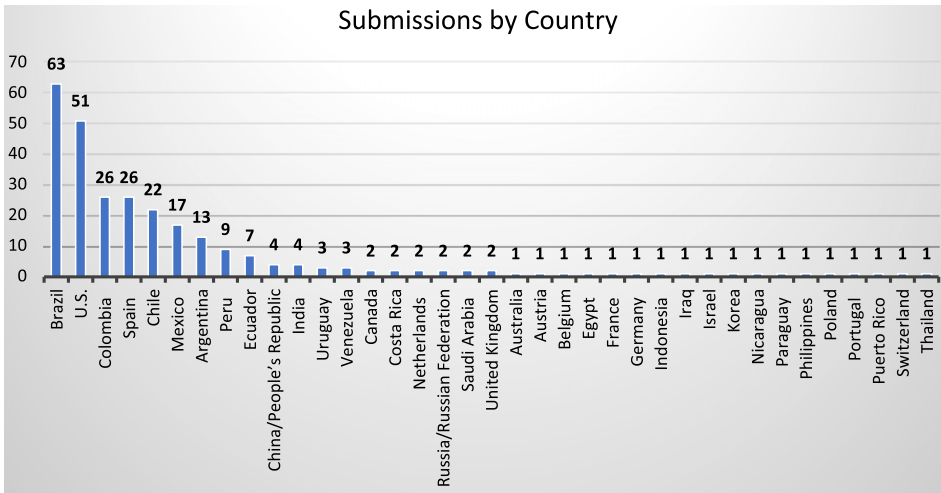
Submissions by Country

Figure 1. Submissions by country.
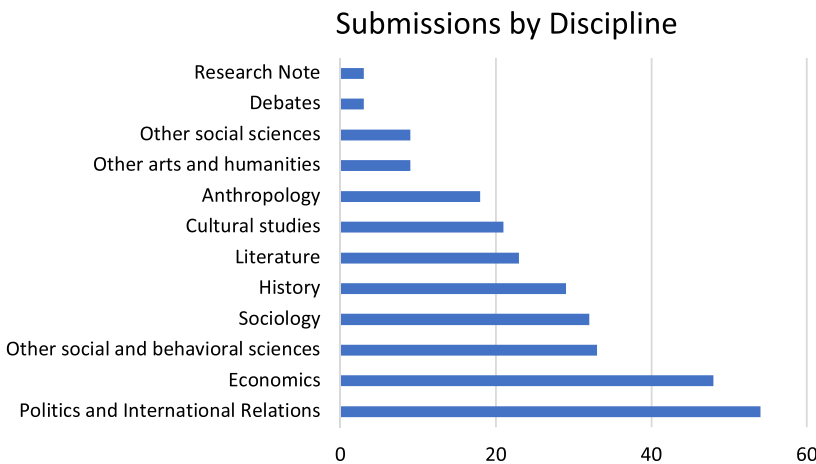
Submissions by Discipline

Figure 2. Submissions by discipline.

submissions are also strong, and they have been increasing in quality thanks to the work of our associate editors in that area. Literature and cultural studies (formerly together and now separated) continue to be a strong area for submissions, as are history and sociology.

Decisions made

The editorial team made a total of 348 decisions, of which 186 were final decisions and 162 were revise and resubmit decisions after the first or second round of review. Of the total decisions, 39.9 percent were internal or desk rejects, 9.7 percent were rejects after first review, and 0.57 were rejects after second review; 3.16 percent of the decisions were acceptances (fig. 3).

The turnaround times for manuscripts were as follows: time to desk reject was 41.96 days in average, submission to rejection after first or second review took 114 days on average, submission to acceptance after first round of review took 22 days, and after second round of
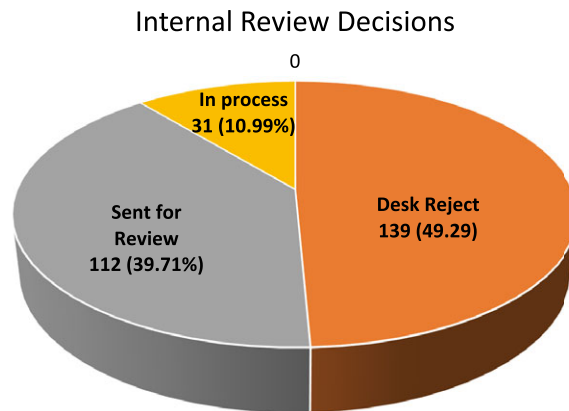
Internal Review Decisions

Figure 3. Internal review decisions.

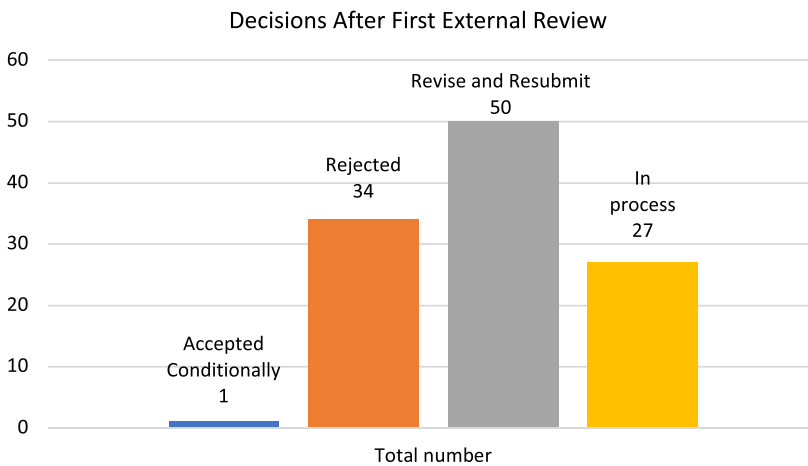## Decisions After First External Review

Figure 4. Decisions after first review.

review it took 144.6 days on average (figs. 4–5). From acceptance to publication took 300 days and from submission to publication 684 days, on average, which represents a long delay, particularly for junior authors. The possibility that Cambridge offers to publish articles individually in FirstView, before the assigned issue appears, will certainly contribute to more expedient turnaround time. In addition, we hope to be able to reduce review times thanks to the more efficient submission system that Cambridge provides.

Articles published

LARR published two editorials, fifty articles, one film review, and eighteen book review essays in 2021. In volume 56, 55 percent of the authors published were female. In 2020, only 32 percent of the published authors were women. The editorial team continues to encourage gender aware and feminist perspectives in all disciplines, and particularly in those like economics and political science where women have been underrepresented.

Resonating with the number of submissions, the United States and Brazil were the countries of origin of most of the articles published in volume 56 (2021). However, the United States was first and Brazil second in publications. The UK, Mexico, Chile, and Colombia were the most published countries after Brazil (fig. 6). The country of origin of published articles
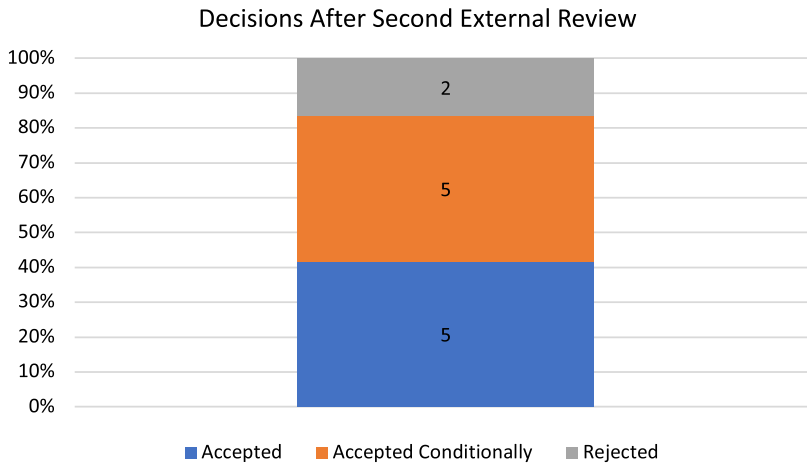
Decisions After Second External Review

Figure 5. Decisions after second review.

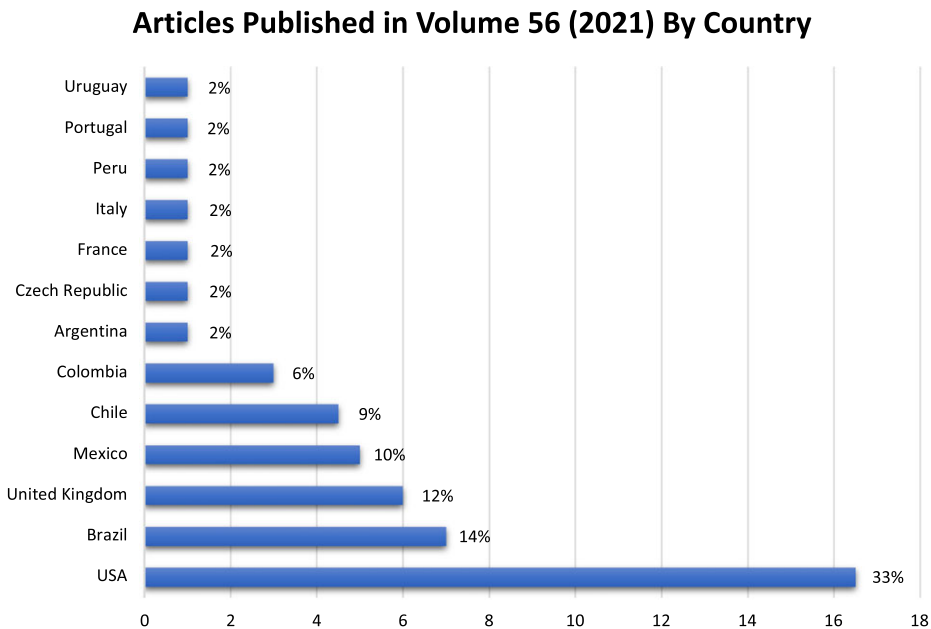## Articles Published in Volume 56 (2021) By Country

Figure 6. Articles published in vol. 56 (2021) by country.

tends to coincide with those academic environments where authors are more familiar with the peer review system and the writing conventions of Anglo-Saxon academia.

One challenge that the editorial team has faced relates to authors who produce good quality scholarship but who are unfamiliar with the peer review system and are reluctant to change their manuscripts according to reviewers' recommendations. This is a difficulty because sometimes excellent work that uses new sources and interesting approaches gets lost to *LARR*. As a solution, we propose to organize a workshop at the LASA Annual Congress in 2023, in which members of our editorial team will explain the peer review system and other publication strategies to the public. We led a panel of editors at
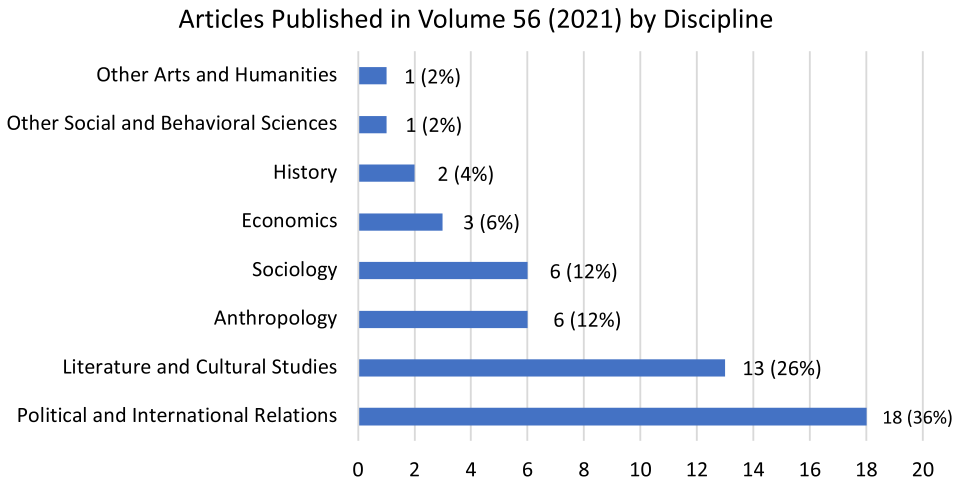
Articles Published in Volume 56 (2021) by Discipline

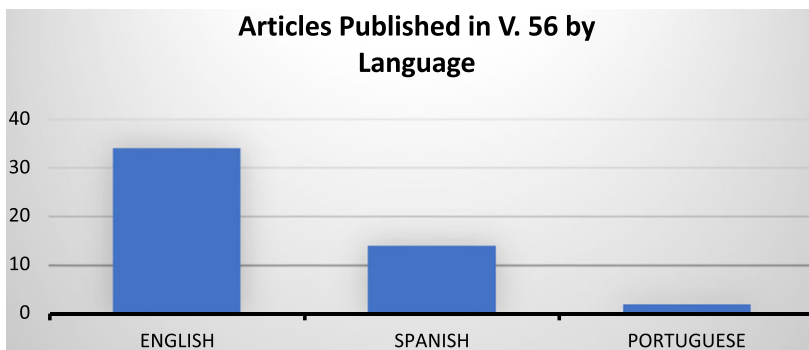**Figure 7.** Articles published in vol. 56 (2021) by discipline.

Figure 8. Articles published in vol. 56 (2021) by language.

LASA 2021 and have been doing these kind of workshops at different universities and conferences throughout the year.

The areas of politics and international relations and literature and cultural studies are the most represented in volume 56. Anthropology and sociology follow, and economics and history were less represented in 2021 (fig. 7). As noted in previous editorials, our goal has been to strengthen the appeal of *LARR* in the areas of history, economics, and the interpretive social sciences. We are publishing great articles coming from those disciplines in volume 57 (2022). Regarding language, 68 percent of articles were published in English, 28 percent in Spanish, and 4 percent in Portuguese (fig. 8).

The book review section has been very active in volume 56, featuring high-quality book review essays that continue to be among *LARR*'s most-cited pieces. We are very grateful to our dedicated and thoughtful book review editor, Fabrice Lehoucq.

Challenges *LARR* has faced during the pandemic

The editorial team faced some challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic. Interestingly, the number of submissions did not decrease under Covid. We received 332 articles in 2021, while *LARR* only received 245 in 2019 before Covid hit. This means a 35.5 increase in

submissions compared to the year before the pandemic. In our previous editorial, we hypothesized that because of pandemic lockdowns, authors might have had more time to write. In addition, an article by the *New York Times* noted that there has been a tendency to increase working hours as labor shifted to homes during the pandemic.[1]

On the other hand, due to personal illness, care for others, and home schooling, it has become more difficult for the editorial manager and team to find reviewers, as many colleagues have been overwhelmed and anxious about the public health situation and the additional responsibilities it has caused for them. Due to the same difficulties, some authors have requested extensions to be able to submit their revised manuscripts. We have been flexible and granted those extensions on a case-by-case basis, as we would like to be sensitive to the social context of authors and reviewers. Interestingly, we have not noticed differences by gender. Both men and women have requested extensions to send the revisions for their articles.

LARR-University of Florida Article Award

This year's winner of the LARR-University of Florida Article Award is Vanesa Miseres, who contributed the article "Materiales de viaje: La función de los objetos en las fotografías, ensayos y diario personal de Alice Dixon Le Plongeon en Yucatán" (*Latin American Research Review* 56, no. 1: 126–141). Miseres is Associate Professor of Spanish in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Notre Dame. The committee that selected the article was composed by Joel Stillerman, associate editor of *LARR* for sociology; Lilian Guerra, Professor of History, University of Florida; and Juan Carlos Callirgos, associate editor for anthropology. The committee stated:

> We developed four criteria for selecting the award-winning article: originality, diversity, and quality of sources used in the article; implications of the argument for other countries in the region; and theoretical contribution. "Materiales de viaje" is original because the examination of a female's explorations in Latin America fills an important gap in scholarship on the nineteenth century that has tended to focus on male travelers. Regarding sources, the use of Alice Dixon's photos and diaries alongside historiographical work during the time period studied is innovative because analyses of travelers' accounts often focus primarily on written records. The author's gendered lens will be influential in other studies in the region. The fact that this explorer, who left a large body of documentary, archeological, and photographic evidence, is only now being discovered offers inspiration for other scholars looking at this topic in different Latin American countries. Finally, the material culture approach adopted in the article is unique and relevant for other studies of cultural history. The author's proposal that the everyday objects Alice Dixon used while conducting archaeological research in Yucatán, México, served to transform her identity is interesting and counterintuitive. It opens a conversation in gender history and cultural studies regarding the role of objects in the development of people's identities.

We encourage *LARR*'s audience to read this award-winning article and look forward to continuing receiving their excellent contributions!

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[1] Elizabeth Spiers, "What We Lose When Work Gets Too Casual," *New York Times*, Opinion, February 7, 2022.