

---

## EDITOR'S FOREWORD

---

Wittgenstein's famous *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* begins with two propositions: "The world is all that is the case" and "What is the case is the existence of states of affairs." Had Wittgenstein been a contemporary Latin Americanist, he no doubt would have written *coyunturas* rather than *states of affairs*. The modern university, with its mission of developing and disseminating "universal" knowledge, ought to have as a major focus Wittgenstein's states of affairs. The university, however, consists largely of departments oriented toward academic disciplines, not necessarily toward the real world.

Foreign area studies provide a welcome relief from the disciplinary parochialism that tends to structure academic life. The field of Latin American studies has mounted a particularly influential challenge to disciplinary agendas by promoting the analysis of states of affairs in the Western Hemisphere. The *Latin American Research Review*, since its establishment in 1964, has played a major role in this effort. An additional framework for such discourse was created with the subsequent founding of the Latin American Studies Association in 1966. *LARR* and *LASA* continue to grow and to attract the participation of scholars from a variety of disciplines who share a common interest in Latin America.

With this issue *LARR* completes the first five years of its eight-year stay at the University of New Mexico, an appropriate occasion to review *LARR*'s coverage of the various disciplines contributing to research on Latin America. The journal continues the format developed under former editors John Martz and Joseph Tulchin at the University of North Carolina, consisting of three categories: articles, research reports and notes, and book review essays. One addition has been the occasional publication of sections of "Commentary and Debate."

In the last five years, *LARR* has published 251 manuscripts: 61

articles, 43 research reports and notes, and 147 book review essays. Six major disciplines (political science, history, economics, sociology, anthropology, and languages and literature) accounted for 98 percent of the articles, 81 percent of the research reports and notes, and 93 percent of the book review essays. As has been traditional for *LARR*, political science and history account for about half of the items published, but in the important category of articles, the other four disciplines are also well represented.

Summary of Manuscripts Published in *LARR* by Category and Discipline for the Five-Year Period 1983–1987

<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Articles</i>	<i>Research Reports and Notes</i>	<i>Book Review Essays</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Political				
Science	14 (23%)	6 ( 14%)	43 ( 29%)	63 ( 25%)
History	10 (16%)	16 ( 37%)	37 ( 25%)	63 ( 25%)
Economics	10 (16%)	1 ( 2%)	16 ( 11%)	27 ( 11%)
Sociology	9 (15%)	5 ( 12%)	10 ( 7%)	24 ( 10%)
Language and				
Literature	9 (15%)	7 ( 16%)	17 ( 12%)	33 ( 13%)
Anthropology	7 (11%)	0 ( 0%)	14 ( 10%)	21 ( 8%)
Other fields	2 ( 3%)	8 ( 19%)	10 ( 7%)	20 ( 8%)
Totals	61 (99%)	43 (100%)	147 (101%)	251 (100%)

The new Commentary and Debate category that was introduced by the current editors has been used sparingly due to the priority placed on refereed manuscripts and book review essays. In the past five years, four debates have been published, dealing with the economic history of the henequen industry in Yucatán, periodicity in colonial Mexican history, the role of foreign merchants in nineteenth-century Latin America, and public policy formation in Venezuela. A fifth debate is scheduled on the subject of Raúl Prebisch's economic influence in Argentina.

As is now customary for the final issue of each volume, the editors wish to share with our readers the pattern of manuscript submissions for the period just ended. In terms of calendar years, 1986 saw the submission of 129 manuscripts, as compared with 139 manuscripts in 1985, 160 in 1984, 132 in 1983, and 110 in 1982. For the year from May 1986 to May 1987 the rate was almost identical, with 128 manuscripts submitted.

The acceptance rate for manuscripts other than book review essays remains approximately one of every five submissions. Of the 100 manuscripts submitted in the ten-month report period from July 1986 to

May 1987, 21 book review essays were accepted and 2 were declined. The remaining 77 manuscripts entered the review process. By mid-May 1987, 12 were accepted, 47 were rejected, 2 were withdrawn, and 16 were still in process.

Twenty-two percent of the manuscripts came from outside the United States, as compared with 24 percent for the previous report period and 22 percent for the period before that. Of these non-U.S. manuscripts, 72 percent were submitted from Latin America, a sharp increase from the 43 percent in our last manuscript report. Submissions by women increased from 24 percent to 27 percent in the current period.

<i>Discipline</i>	<i>July 86– May 87</i>	<i>July 85– June 86</i>	<i>May 84– June 85</i>
Political Science	28%	27%	26%
Economics	23	12	18
History	18	24	18
Languages and Literature	9	8	10
Sociology	7	13	8
Anthropology	2	5	9
Other fields	13	11	11
Totals	100%	100%	100%

The distribution by discipline of the manuscripts submitted continues to show the fluctuations that have characterized previous report periods. Political science retained its traditional first ranking with 28 percent of all submissions. Economics recovered from its previous decline to rank second with 23 percent of the total. History moved to third place with 18 percent. Language and literature submissions were in fourth place with 9 percent, sociology dropped to 7 percent, and anthropology declined to 2 percent. Other fields, such as geography, philosophy, and religion, accounted for the remaining 13 percent of submissions.

The current predominance of political science and economics submissions is hardly surprising, given the political and economic challenges facing Latin America. The existence of a correspondence between states of affairs in the Western Hemisphere and the research published in *LARR* is subject to various interpretations, but the editors view such correspondence as a healthy sign that Latin American studies remain in touch with the contemporary world.

Gilbert W. Merx  
Albuquerque, New Mexico