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## EDITOR'S FOREWORD

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This issue of *LARR* is the last to be edited by the editors and staff who have conducted the affairs of the journal at the University of New Mexico (UNM) for the last twenty years. Two decades is not a long time in the longer course of history, but the last twenty years have witnessed remarkable changes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

When *LARR* moved to the University of New Mexico in 1982 from the University of North Carolina, Latin America was still largely dominated by military regimes whose brutality was unprecedented in the history of the region. Latin America's political economy was characterized by state-led development with a strong component of protection and import substitution, even though the continuities with past policies were somewhat camouflaged by the pro-capitalist rhetoric of the ruling military regimes. The debt crisis of the 1980s was not yet upon the region but was about to unfold.

The dominant theoretical paradigm in Latin American studies at that time was Fernando Henrique Cardoso's concept of dependency. Ironically, Cardoso as president of Brazil was later to oversee the opening of the Brazilian economy. A second influential perspective was the idea of bureaucratic authoritarianism, a concept useful for understanding the rise of the military regimes of the period. Both paradigms took as their basic frame of reference the nation-state. Neither proved particularly helpful, however, in understanding the transformations that Latin America and the Caribbean were about to experience.

The Latin America of 2002 was unimaginable in 1982. Today not a single military regime can be found in the region, economies are relatively open and export-oriented, and state economic controls and enterprises have been dramatically reduced. Traditional political parties have lost ground to nongovernmental organizations and regional movements. Public discourse features debates over minority and gender rights, environmental issues, regional and local autonomy, freedom of the press, legal reform, personal security, and other issues not on the agenda in 1982.

All these and many other changes have been the subject of analysis and reflection in the pages of *LARR* during its tenure at the University of New Mexico. As a result, our work in editing and producing the journal has not wanted for intellectual stimulation. In spite of the major commitments of time and energy required by the journal, we have felt privileged and rewarded by the challenges of editing and producing *LARR*. The previous editors at the University of North Carolina, Joseph Tulchin and the late John Martz, impressed on us the belief that stewardship of *LARR*'s character and quality was a special trust. We have done our best to honor that trust and pass the journal on to the new editors in the same spirit.

Editing and producing a journal is a collective process involving not only the core editors and staff but many others. For *LARR* at UNM, these collaborators included the *LARR* Editorial Board (renewed every couple of years), many anonymous referees, authors, advertisers and list buyers, the staff of the LASA Secretariat, the LASA Executive Council, the staff of the Latin American and Iberian Institute at the University of New Mexico, and even the truckers and postal workers who shipped the hard copies of the journal.

We are grateful to the University of New Mexico for the major support that it has given to *LARR* in faculty, space, and direct subsidies. Former UNM President William Davis and Provost McAllister Hull enthusiastically initiated this support. Subsequent UNM administrations renewed UNM's commitment, several times encouraging the UNM editorial team to apply for an extension of the contract with LASA under which *LARR* was hosted by UNM.

The Editor and Associate Editors could not have survived without the extraordinary skill and dedication of the *LARR* staff. I would particularly like to thank Sharon Kellum, Managing Editor over these two decades, Linda Kjeldgaard, Assistant Editor, and Nita Daly, Subscription Manager. They became a team that has been courteous, efficient, and committed to the highest standards, and they have been a delight to work with. Special thanks also go to Karen Remmer, Associate Editor for the entire period, and to Jon Tolman, the other Associate Editor, and to his predecessors, Tamara Holzapfel and Enylton de Sá Rego.

We all appreciate those who gave so unstintingly of their time and intellectual energy as members of the Editorial Board over time or as anonymous reviewers. These scholars are the unsung heroes of *LARR*'s history. There is no way for one editor or group of editors to evaluate the quality of scholarship in all the disciplines and all the topics addressed in Latin American studies. Peer review is essential for that purpose. We also adhered scrupulously to the practice inherited from the previous editors of eschewing commissioned research articles and special issues on some pre-selected theme. We believed that for the content of the journal to reflect the field of Latin American studies, voluntary submissions by authors and the

anonymous peer-review process should be the sole determinants of the research articles and notes to be published. Our role as editors was to ensure the integrity of the review process, obtain the highest possible quality of evaluations, and then work with the authors to salvage promising manuscripts and polish those accepted.

While we emphasized continuity with *LARR* traditions, our work inevitably took on its own character. One of our procedural innovations was to share the anonymous peer evaluations not only with the authors but also with the referees themselves, together with the Editor's letter of disposition to the author. Our motives were to reward the referees by letting them see the views of their anonymous colleagues and to give transparency to the outcome of the review process. Thus referees whose recommendations were overridden were provided with an understanding of the basis for the editorial decision. An unexpected by-product of this procedure was that once referees realized that their anonymous evaluations would be read by other referees, the quality improved considerably. Intellectual pride, it seems, is not diminished by anonymity.

Another aspect of our mission that we took seriously was to use the copyediting process to encourage readable prose as free of disciplinary jargon as possible. This process always involved close consultation with the author. Because *LARR* is an interdisciplinary journal read by many publics, this goal was easy to justify but harder to put into practice. Some academics are enamored of specialized vocabularies and resistant to ordinary language. While a few authors grumbled, we found that in the end most authors accepted editing and came to appreciate the readability of the final version.

At the end of this long stretch of editing, one is left with a heightened appreciation of the collective nature of intellectual production in Latin American studies. Authors build on or react against the work of previous scholars, adding their own creativity and intellectual diversity. Scholars donate their scarce time to evaluate manuscripts and offer advice to the authors. The journal staff shepherd this process and see that the final intellectual product is printed and distributed to the readership, with the support of the host institution and the collaboration of LASA. All of this effort is in the last analysis inspired and driven by the course of real events, in this case by the ongoing histories of the peoples and cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean, an always fascinating, ever-changing part of the world.

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