MARLAS Celebrates Its Fifth Anniversary!

MIDDLE ATLANTIC REVIEW OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES (MARLAS)

MARLAS is an international journal covering developments in transnational, national, and regional studies in Latin America, the Caribbean, US Hispanic/Latinx cultures, and related areas. We are proud to be celebrating the culmination of our fifth year of publication!

With its double-blind peer-reviewed articles from international scholars, *MARLAS* provides readers with the best up-to-date research available worldwide through new historical evidence and interpretations, unique perspectives on events, and theoretical advances with important implications for scholars working in Latin American Studies. It actively supports innovative work in all fields, including those that are multidisciplinary in nature. New publications from domestic and foreign publishers are surveyed, and reviews of important works are included.

Art, film, literature, telenovelas, comic strips (*Mafalda*!), music, cuisines, and other cultural products are scrutinized for their embodiment of crucial issues, including: migration, identity, belonging, human rights, gender definitions, continuity and change, transborder collaborations (even in a pandemic), narcotrafficking and violence, multiculturalism, unofficial memory and archive, urbanism, and digital outreach.

MARLAS AT FIVE YEARS

As our December 2021 issue is released, we want to commemorate with you the fifth anniversary of *MARLAS*. We do so with enormous pride for the journal's accomplishments. Contributions from our authors, reviewers, and readers and their engagement with the journal created new perspectives on Latin American studies, cutting-edge research, and innovative work in the social sciences, humanities, and the arts. Above all, a remarkable *MARLAS* success has been bringing to large audiences around the world the extraordinary life experiences of Latin Americans and their daily struggles for democracy, economic development, and social justice.

MARLAS & MACLAS

The history of *MARLAS* is intertwined with the trajectory of the Middle Atlantic Council of Latin American Studies (MACLAS), the journal's publisher founded in 1979. For thirty years before our online debut, MACLAS disseminated research through its annual print publication, *Latin American Essays* (http://www.maclas.org/latinamericanessays).

In the early 2010s, the MACLAS leadership began considering a new journal format in tune with our digital era and aligned with the original mission to promote research in Latin American Studies. A commission was appointed to develop options and make recommendations for a new publishing model. After surveys and focus group discussions with its membership, MACLAS launched *MARLAS* at its 2016 conference at Temple University, led by the current editorial team. One year later, we were delighted to present the first issue at the 2017 MACLAS conference at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

MACLAS confers an award in memory of Rutgers University economics professor James H. Street, in recognition of the best article in its publications. The Street Prize has been granted twice since the conversion to *MARLAS* online:

> Diego Rivera Hernández, (Villanova University), "Escrutinio internacional y acompañamiento de las víctimas de Ayotzinapa: una lectura de los informes del GIEI," *Middle Atlantic Review of Latin American Studies* 2.1 (2018), pp. 8–30.

> Miguel Ángel Latouche (Universidad Central de Venezuela), "Venezuela and Its Labyrinth: Institutional Change and Authoritarianism in Twenty-First Century Socialism," *Middle Atlantic Review of Latin American Studies* 3.2 (2019), pp.1–26.

The MACLAS annual conference is always a stimulating, vibrant event. After two years of virtual meetings, we are thrilled that on March 18–19, 2022, we will meet at The College of New Jersey in Ewing, NJ. See all the details at: http://www.maclas.org.

MARLAS SUCCESSES, 2017–2021

MARLAS is now consolidating itself in the field of Latin American Studies. We have published articles on a wide variety of subjects, with authors working in a host of countries in the Americas and Europe. This is an accomplishment possible only thanks to the participation of our readers and the expertise of reviewers and authors. We are always grateful to MACLAS for its unwavering support, and much appreciate our collaboration with the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) for integrating our

journal onto its digital platform, the Latin American Research Commons. This was a pioneering arrangement that has opened the way for additional journals and a book publishing platform to reach a larger readership through a diamond-level open-access model, which makes exciting new research—including work published in multiple languages from the Global South—more broadly available to scholars.

MARLAS also broke new ground with its timely special issues and dossiers in 2017–2021. The dossiers bring the best of two worlds: theory-based analyses and reports from individual activists. Our interest in promoting forward-thinking scholarship that postulates new frames of reference for new circumstances was signaled in "Shifting Frontiers of Citizenship"—the inaugural *MARLAS* dossier organized by Luis Roniger (June 2017, vol. 1.1)—and in a special issue edited by Jeffrey Pugh and Patricia Rodríguez on "Contention & Nonviolent Action" (June 2018, vol. 2.1).

A third dossier that focused on Indian Caribbean art and visual culture, edited by Christopher L. Ballengee and Darrell Gerohn Baksh (December 2020, vol. 4.2), brought attractively illustrated, challenging, interdisciplinary essays, and embedded multimedia videos and sound tracks.

Most recently, we published two dossiers on COVID-19. At the very initial stages of the pandemic, marked by a high level of uncertainty and amid grave public health concerns, *MARLAS* enlisted experts to contribute commentaries to a seminal dossier, edited by Ivani Vassoler-Froelich, with a comprehensive assessment of the virus's devastating trajectory and its effects on the lives of Latin Americans (June 2020, vol. 4.1). An entire special issue followed, devoted to the broad impacts of COVID-19 in the region (February 2021, vol. 4.3), edited by Diane E. Johnson and Mario Siddhartha Portugal Ramírez. Attention to the pandemic provided urgently needed, concrete materials for researchers and instructors: data, as well as informed analyses, and two anthologies of original pandemic poetry.

MARLAS METRICS[*]

During its first five years, MARLAS has established itself as an important contributor to scholarly debates and publishing in Latin American Studies. It is now indexed by Scopus, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Hispanic American Periodicals Index (HAPI), EBSCO, MLA Directory of Periodicals, CrossRef, and EuroPub.

From 2017 through 2021, MARLAS published a variety of types of scholarly contributions, including research articles, essays, research notes, interviews, commentaries, editorial notes, creative literature, and book reviews. Of the peer-

reviewed categories (research articles, essays, and research notes), the following metrics summarize MARLAS publishing outcomes over this time period:

Total peer-reviewed submissions: 126

- Humanities/arts: 47
- Social sciences: 47
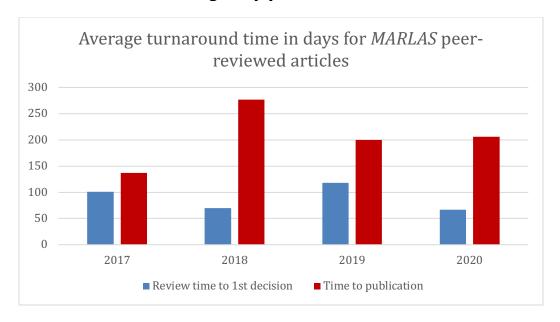- Special issues/dossiers: 32

Total peer-reviewed pieces published: 67

Average acceptance rate: 53%

Average review time from submission to first editorial decision: 89 days

Average time from submission to publication: 180 days

Turnaround time averages by year:

Of the articles published in *MARLAS* in its first five volumes (not including the December 2021 issue), 48% were authored by women or had at least one woman as a coauthor. During the same time period, 22% of published articles had authors based at institutions in the Global South.

Impact metrics:

The articles published in *MARLAS* since its inception have been viewed 13,316 times and have been downloaded 12,222 times. The average was 99 reads per document and 91 downloads per document. The most-read document (531 reads) was Carla Almeida, Ligia Lüchmann, and Carla Martelli, "A pandemia e seus impactos no Brasil," a commentary piece in vol. 4, no. 1 (2020). The most-downloaded document (536 downloads) was Matthew Ford, "The Other Slavery at the Heart of America: Andrés Reséndez, Indian Enslavement, and Looking South to Amazonia," an essay in vol. 1, no. 2 (2017).

During the 2017–2020 period, 82 peer-reviewed citable articles were published. The number of citations of these publications appearing in Google Scholar totals 96 citations.

MARLAS is currently indexed in <u>Scopus</u>, which calculates impact statistics for the journal based on citations within journals found in the Scopus database. During the period from 2017 to the present, Scopus reported 27 citations out of 74 documents that it detected and indexed, giving *MARLAS* a CiteScore Tracker for 2021 of 0.4 (average citations/document). The CiteScore for 2020 was 0.3, and the Source Normalized Impact per Paper score for 2020 was 0.255. More details are available here: <u>https://www.scopus.com/sourceid/21101038533</u>.

MARLAS: THE FUTURE

We are indebted to many people as we reflect on *MARLAS*'s five first years. We extend our warm gratitude to all of you for supporting the birth and growth of our treasured project. As we look forward, we expect to enhance the journal with new perspectives, contributing to well-grounded understandings of Latin American politics, cultures, and societies and the region's relationship with the rest of the world. We envision *MARLAS* as a venue for introducing and assessing theories and methodologies that explain the varied Latin American experiences past and present.

Starting in 2022, podcasts linked to *MARLAS* will be hosted on our website and delve into topics of ongoing discussion. Creative literature by emerging writers will be featured. We will use online technology to bring you visual and sound media relevant to our articles. One of the journal's founding members, Jeffrey Pugh, will assume new functions as managing coeditor with Ivani Vassoler-Froelich for a year of transition, as we continue to uphold our relentless commitment to the journal's extraordinary quality. Cheers!

MARLAS EDITORIAL TEAM