

# Introduction

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The articles in this year's *Yearbook* address various aspects of the contemporary development process, or its recent antecedents, as well as providing examples of historical and cultural geographic research on Latin America. They include studies by geographers, sociologists, a political scientist, a historian, and an anthropologist, once again demonstrating the trans-disciplinary nature of social science research, and the attractiveness of the *Yearbook* as a major publication outlet. The authors not only represent distinctive generations of scholarship, but also provide a truly international perspective on Latin American research.

The first study addresses one of the fundamental issues in contemporary Latin America: what role can, or could, local neighborhood movements play in the process of development? Venezuelan author Rivero-Santos outlines the evolution of such movements in the case of metropolitan Caracas, and identifies their many problems and potentials. While they may be of the people and for the people, it is evident that they are inevitably affected by the politicization of their power base. Once the strident vecino voices have been heard they become ready targets for co-option. Grassroots democracy may sound appealing, but if it results in social and economic segregation and dissonance, is it really a beneficial solution to long-term centralized power? As the author compellingly argues, the locality, the neighborhood, may gain, but often at the expense of the wider urban social order. Does being a good vecino preclude good citizenship? How may these new social forces be best harnessed for the common good, when one neighborhood's gains are often at the expense of its neighbors. Traveling through the elite caraqueño urban districts one notes the newly-constructed gates and barriers: neighborhoods as literally defended spaces, with residents hiding behind the shields of private security agencies and remote access controls. Rich urban districts, like rich regions within the nation state, often fail to see why their struggles and advantages should benefit those less fortunate. In this sense the state as social conscience, as economic equalizer, surely has to play a mediating role? But the past in Venezuela, as in many other Latin American contexts, gives little hope for such enlightened behaviour. With corruption and mismanagement contaminating the political process from presidential to municipal levels, what can the future hold?

The second study examines one of the newest industries in Latin America: the processing of information. Utilizing data obtained from interviews with leading entrepreneurs in the Dominican Republic the author is able to demonstrate the various attempts by the government to diversify its economic base via this innovative component of the service sector. Within the context of Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative, the Dominican government, assisted by preferential tariffs and guaranteed access to U. S. markets, initiated a series of Free Trade Zones. Now mapmakers will need to locate a "Hong Kong del Caribe" near the Haitian frontier, a signal and symbol that Dominicans are actively participating in the new globalizing economy.

For his empirical analysis Warf examines three inter-related forms of information services: telecommunications, computer services, and back offices. He is able to show how each benefits and suffers from the human, capital, and infrastructural [end p. v] resources found on the island. He details the monopolistic power of Codetel (Compañía Dominicana de Teléfonos) that has created on the island the most sophisticated telecommunications system in the Caribbean. The data he has assembled on the types of services available, and the rates of flow of information via international connections are remarkable. Yet he properly explains that all this international connectivity has to be compared to rural areas yet to be provided

with basic services. Behind the back offices of the international corporations exists rural poverty. The Dominican "suburbs" created by fiber optic lines from the data centers in the USA, provide a ready supply of cheap female labor. The next flight we take on American Airlines should remind us that the ticket coupon will (like frequent flier coupons, medical and dental insurance claims, credit card applications, market surveys, etc.) in all likelihood, be processed by Dominicans being paid U\$160 per month. In this way we can witness persistent underdevelopment, alongside industrial innovation and economic growth. We are able to understand better how the particular history of the Dominican Republic provided the conditions for a Caribbean example of a globalizing local economy.

The third article touches on what has to be one of the most delicate of cultural issues that exists in the contemporary Americas: images of, and attitudes towards, refugees. While the ephemeral attention of North Americans to Proposition 167 has been diverted to other instant issues, the author directs our attention to the persistent stresses and strains involved in the reception of Nicaraguans in Costa Rica during the 1980s. She places these troubled relations within the context of the long-established animosity between these *paises hermanos: ticos* versus *nicas*. But much more important is her emphasis on the role of the press in the maintenance and reinforcement of images, and its exacerbation of inter-cultural difficulties. A few refugees could be accommodated, domesticated as it were, but when thousands (32,000 by 1987) flooded into a small country that prides itself on its particular *modo de ser*, then tensions inevitably rose, and problems with crime, drugs, sex, disease and the like were readily blamed on the newcomers. Especially so since there seemed little chance of them returning to Nicaragua. From a careful content analysis of the press reporting we can appreciate how Costa Ricans, fearful of their own cultural identity and economic survival, could so easily find sympathy with strident opinions against their former neighbors.

Austrian geographer Christoph Stadel next takes us to a distinctive developmental setting, the highlands of Bolivia, where he provides a description of the role of sample NGOs in the mobilization of rural resources. In the departments of La Paz and Cochabamba he reviews the many and varied attempts by distinctive development agencies to alleviate rural poverty and infrastructural inadequacies, highlighting the dismal record of grand projects disconnected from peasant recipients. He is able to document the reversal of Plan Internacional's "top-down" strategy of development planning to a more culturally and ecologically sensitive "bottom-up" approach. Participation, sustainability, decentralization, self-help, and local autonomy entered the new developmental lexicon. Agencies became "facilitators" rather than "implementors." Yet problems arose, as they do throughout Latin America, when it came time to prioritize developmental goals. The views of locals and "experts" differed: for the former immediate gains were of the essence; the latter emphasized long-term benefits---but then the latter never not stay long enough to suffer the short-term disbenefits.

While participation became a catchword in the developmental discourse it was evident that only in some communities did the alleged Andean communalism survive. For others it meant the opportunity to get rich at the expense of neighbors (cf. urban Caracas). For yet others the proliferation of agencies wishing to offer aid and assistance unwittingly provided opportunities for regional "development entrepreneurs" who played NGOs against each other. Whatever the nature of the NGOs involved it becomes clear that the problems facing Bolivian rural development will take much more than the actions of a morass of uncoordinated local activities, however willing and able are their participants and advisors. Structural problems of national politics and international markets remain--still well beyond the reach of the Bolivian peasantry.

Territorial politics and nation-state power provide the foci for the next essay, in which Slater examines the origins and development of notions of decentralized democracy and the role of the regional in the two contrasting cases of Chile and Bolivia. [end p. vi] He demonstrates that within the context of the unitary Chilean state it has become increasingly important for those in power (whether for military, political or administrative reasons) to think and act in regional terms. Yet exactly what are the regional units, and the extent to which they should and could participate in democratic government remain matters of concern

both for those at the top, those who theorize and attempt to implement the decentralized state, and those at the bottom---geographer Pinochet's "human mass"-who suffer the consequences. In spite of its *geografía local*, Chile has not been traditionally a state characterized by regionalist identities, and the very process of regionalization and decentralization may yet provoke a reaction to the center that those at the top may regret.

In his second example, Bolivia, the trends are quite distinctive. Here, the enduring fears have been those of secessionism and state disintegration. The nineteenth century witnessed several federalist challenges to the unitary state, especially from the archrivals of La Paz in Santa Cruz and, as Slater emphasizes, the period from the 1860s to the 1930s with persistent territorial losses to its many neighbors, produced a geopolitical insecurity which still affects political rhetoric and action. While calls for decentralization and the transfer of power to departmental and regional units for increased political participation have a rational ring to them, issues such as urban-rural rivalries, the allegiance of Intendents, and not least the potential role of indigenous communities, all make it likely that caution will remain the political catchword. In both Chile and Bolivia (as in Peru, Venezuela and many other Latin American countries), to reform the state, to regionalize for democracy, is to challenge the power base of the corporatist groups who for so long have controlled the center and thus the state. They are unlikely to give up graciously.

The sixth article provides a distinctive view of the development process, in this case an assessment of the impact of expatriates on tourist developments in Belize. While tourism as a theme has frequently appeared in the pages of the Yearbook, this is the first study to examine in detail the impact of non-locals on the form and functions of the industry. The fact that 80 percent of all privately-owned land in Belize is owned by U. S. nationals speaks loudly to the internationalized nature of Belizean development. The author demonstrates the serendipitous nature of the gradual involvement of "Americans" in the construction of resort centers in the Western Cayo District. It was this expatriate group that redirected tourists from the delights of the coastal zone to the scatter of Mayan ruins and adventure sites of the interior.

During the 1970s the San Ignacio area of western Belize became something of a favorite for students who sought cheap, off-the-beaten-track locations to explore. "Mike's" and "Bob's" hotels provided them with minimal comforts. After the establishment of the new capital of Belmopan in the early 1980s, and the opening of the Western Highway, this trickle of tourists venturing into the interior increased significantly with international advertising promoting the exotic (yet safe) sites to be visited. A new type of accommodation developed to meet the needs of the new tourists: the all-inclusive resort. Now eco-tourists searching for Nature and willing to pay first-class prices to enjoy primitive living conditions were provided with thatched-roof huts, screenless windows and cold-water showers-the hardships to capture in diary and on film to take back to the "civilized" world! The only problem, and a common one in many regions in which eco-tourism has developed, is that tourists do not expect or wish to see others like themselves while roaming along selva trails, which means that careful planning will be necessary to ensure that tour groups do not bump into other explorers of the wild. Otherwise low tourist carrying-capacity will limit future growth. As is the case in many other tourist-based developments, success can prove to be the biggest enemy.

The seventh essay shifts the focus of development to the Southern Cone, and provides valuable details of the spatial consequences of Argentinian macroeconomic change, especially during the last two decades when structural adjustments and most recently privatization have characterized governmental policies. After a nuanced explanation of the relations between changes in the international financial and labor markets, and Argentine political responses, especially the differences between those of the military and civil regimes, Sili is able to demonstrate that a new re-focused spatial pattern of economic development is slowly but surely emerging. Now, without the former subsidies, industrialists and workers in the interior confront **[end p. vii]** direct competition from their more advantageously-located competitors on the coast. Geography once more impinges on pricing mechanisms; distance increases costs, and when the central government seeks to

minimize its spending and reduces budget transfers to the provinces the artificiality of past conditions are dramatically felt with rising unemployment and out-migration. Decentralizing goods and services to the provinces may sound democratic, but in the Argentine case it means little more than transferring debt and inefficiency.

The pace of privatization has increased significantly since 1992, involving ports, railways, telecommunications, and state industries. One of the direct impacts has been on the workforce with almost half a million made unemployed, while the majority of non*porteños* have suffered the effects of price deregulation. Yet others have felt the "disconnection" from national life when railways no longer serve their communities, and when a full quarter of the national highways suddenly became toll-roads. The entire economic geography of Argentina is being restructured, and it appears that once more, this time under the guise of free enterprise, those who control the coastal center will reap the benefits.

From the perspective of Bahía Blanca the next paper shifts our attention north to Brazilian Amazonia. The authors offer an interpretation of a key research question: what relations exist between population growth, sex ratios and the nature of women's work in frontier contexts. To address this question they combine a detailed case study of one municipality (Parauapebas, Pará) with analyses of municipal, state and national-level data drawn from censuses of 1990-91. Their findings reflect the substantial coarseness of federal and state census data. They confirm their hypothesis that the higher the growth rate, the greater the shortage of women. Yet such a shortage does not directly ensure a higher female participation rate in the local workforce. Equally significant was the finding that demographic data themselves were confusingly varied depending on the level of aggregation. The age of women emerged as a critical variable in explaining employment rates and job types. Not surprisingly most of the women found jobs in the service sector, one in five in prostitution in 1990. Perhaps the most interesting of the findings of this study is the significance of the timing of surveys and censuses to capture intricate and fast-changing demographic features of frontier societies such as evidenced in Amazonia.

The final three studies in this *Yearbook* move from a focus on political, demographic, and economic developmental, to confront key questions of a cultural and historical nature. Richardson addresses phenomena of deep cultural meaning: how iconic representation, place, behaviour, and locally-interpreted sacred narratives of the Gospels are intertextually related. His empirical base is provided by the two geographically distant shrines to dark-colored Christs, the one at Esquipulas in Guatemala, the other in Buga, Colombia. Close observation and documentary evidence leads him to suggest that the central question to be answered relates to the purpose or meaning of the dark color of the Christs. The darkness/blackness is interpreted as reflecting the gloom of the death of Christ, rather than indigenous involvement in religious practices. It is clear, however, that if one widens the data base to include what must be many thousands of other representations of *Cristo crucificado* in Latin America, some shrines others not, many questions still remain. Have we geographers observed carefully enough to remember their color?

The penultimate essay also deals with a evidence from Colombia, but not the ethnographic present, but rather the eighteenth-century province of Santafé de Bogotá. The central question here is one that has been remarkably under-researched by historians and historical geographers alike: what were the effects of the depopulation of Indians and the relative increase in non-Indian population on the settlement systems and the structure of ecclesiastical and civil authority? By means of detailed *visitas* and cartographic evidence, the author is able to disentangle the complexities of population shifts, and document the progressive encroachment of non-Indians (*vecinos*) on to the Indian reserves (*resguardos*). She is able to demonstrate that the changing composition of the population precipitated a modification in the administrative system at the level of province, *corregimiento*, and parish, thus emphasising the highly integrated character of the colonial experience in New Granada.

Finally our attention is drawn to yet another historical question that has been inadequately [end p. viii] addressed in the literature---the fate of the Jesuit missions in Spanish America after the expulsion of the Order in 1767. While numerous studies exist at the local level describing the departure of the missionaries, and the subsequent destiny of the temporal and spiritual aspects of the missions, no general overview is available. It is for that reason that the present study offers such a valuable panoramic and comparative interpretation. The authors provide details of the number, distribution, and functions of missions and their Indian population (some 267,000) in each of the regional centers of Jesuit activity around 1767, and then proceed to describe their many different fates. For some mission fields it was relatively easy to place the spiritual care of the Indians in the hands of other Orders. When secularization was attempted, often the absence of sufficient well-trained priests created significant problems, and where there were priests, few wished to be sent to the frontier margins. In other cases missions were abandoned in the face of decreased geopolitical threats from the enemies of Spain, or shut down because of the prohibitive costs of maintaining them with small numbers of converts. In all cases the former Jesuit missions experienced economic decline; for some the new civil administration entailed mis-management, for others the opening of competitive trade meant the end of what had been a closed and subsidized economic system. For most of the Indian residents of the missions, the expulsion of the Order meant harsher treatment under new masters. Flight and escape, to the forests and the urban centers, rapidly depopulated the settlements that had become the symbols of an unacceptable challenge to the authority of the Crown.

It only remains for me to thank once again the many authors who submitted papers to the Yearbook, and especially to a group of colleagues who took the time and trouble to provide me with valuable opinions and suggestions regarding the submissions. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the assistance of Lawrence Brown, John Burdick, Toby Ewing, Robert B. Kent, William Mangin, James Newman, André Rego, and Joanna Sharp.

Finally, it is my great pleasure to thank on behalf of the Conference, my right-hand woman, Marcia Harrington, whose unstinting efforts during the last two years have made possible elegant and timely *Yearbooks*. We are greatly indebted. [end p. ix]