

# Introduction

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As in past years the papers in this *Yearbook* reflect the multiple interests of the members of the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers.

The first study deals with one of those colonial phenomena, the *venta* or wayside inn that, like the caminos, the signposts, the mailmen, were so ubiquitous, so commonplace, that for long have lain neglected by historians and geographers alike. By means of diligent researches in the relevant archives Elisabeth Butzer is able to piece together the geographical distribution, functions, regulation and roles of this vital institution that met the needs of the many folk who were required to travel within New Spain. She is able to identify their European medieval Spanish/Islamic origins, as well as construct a cartography of their distribution around the year 1585, and provide sample reconstructions of their form.

The second essay focuses on yet another under-researched topic in Spanish American historiography: the development and dissolution of Indian community lands. Samudio takes as her example the case of indigenous communities in Andean Venezuela and documents how *resguardos* (a term most frequently used in Colombia and Venezuela) or reserves were established in the sixteenth century and slowly but surely eroded both territorially and socially by the press of mestizo farmers and migrants. She demonstrates how the gradual encroachment of private landholdings alienating the usufruct rights of the Indians found support in the new regionalist politics of the nineteenth century. Hundreds of such relict communities and pueblos can still be found throughout Spanish America, further reduced by the mid-twentieth-century flight from the land.

The next two articles shift the focus from the physical landscape and society to the types of evidence that may be used to investigate historical change. For the central Veracruz lowlands of sixteenth century New Spain, Sluyter is able to convincingly demonstrate the validity of using land grant documents available in considerable numbers for key portions of one of Spain's most important colonies, to map densities of livestocking. In the past researchers have questioned the areal coverage of such documents, the alleged temporal gaps in the extant records, as well as the problem of interpreting the colonial land measurements. While some may fail to see the relevance of such methodological issues, the fact is that until we are able to more precisely estimate areas occupied, landuses, and settlement densities, any attempt at reconstructions of ecological change and colonial agriculture will be little more than guesswork. Hence the significance of the cartographic and textual reinterpretations of the present article.

In a parallel study, but in the context of twentieth-century Brazil, Brannstrom is also able to demonstrate the utility of county-level juridical documents in the reconstruction of ecological and agricultural change. While many historians have used to great effect the legal documentation of the *protocolos* sections of notarial offices, very few geographers have ventured into the mass of documents that are available at sub-regional levels. In the case of Assis comarca, a paulista frontier region, Brannstrom demonstrates how documents relating to

land surveys, labor disputes, and land tenure litigation can shed much light on questions of critical significance for historical reconstructions of vegetation change and land use. Detailed probate records also permit one to enter the day-to-day world of possessions, artifacts, and social practices. Cadastral maps, while difficult to manage physically and technically, also provide unique data that allow the researcher to identify settlements, boundaries, soil and forest types.

The remainder of the papers in the volume turn from the past to the present and represent some of the major trends in contemporary Latin American geographic research. Diniz first examines patterns of migration within Roraima state, Brazil. He demonstrates the significance of two contrasted but related processes: the occupation of peripheral frontier zones, and the rapid urban ward migration of population. Using interview data from a sample of migrants in the various sub-sectors of the capital of Boa Vista he is able to show the diversity of migrant types, and some of the reasons for their migrational decisions. Repeat and chain migration and the volatility of population change are key findings.

Migration again provides the central theme of Jokisch's study in south-central Ecuador, though the focus here is not on internal migration but rather the progression from labor circulation to international emigration. One of the most notable features of inter-American population movements of the last two decades has been the steady increase in streams of migrants to specific regions and localities in the USA. From Andean Peru to New Jersey, from Bolivia to Washington, DC, and in this case from Ecuador to New York City. Using migration data from both Ecuadorian and US sources the Jokisch is able to document the impact of out-migration on sex-ratios in south-central Ecuador, as well as the statistical manipulations that are needed to estimate the number of Ecuadorians now in New York City-- perhaps 200,000 --making it the third largest city of Ecuadorians! A very neat example of re-localization brought about by globalization.

The next paper's concern remains within Ecuador, but shifts attention to forest reserves and how they can be monitored using the advanced techniques of remote sensing. After a review of past incidences of anthropogenic disturbances in the Sierra Keating uses the Podocarpus National Park to demonstrate how remote sensing of various types can be applied to an area of tropical montane landscapes. He shows the benefits of repeat black and white aerial photography, as well as the additional data that Landsat imagery may provide for the same areas. He is at pains to point out the relationships between the diversity of data sources, processing and interpretative problems and, perhaps most importantly, their relevance for local forest managers and conservationists. Too often the science and technology run well ahead of on-the-ground implementation systems. This paper elegantly addresses that critical issue and suggests means of accommodation.

The next article moves our attention north to Oaxaca, Mexico, to assess the significance and developmental issues arising from cooperative rural industrialization. Mutersbaugh's case study is provided by the Chinantec community of Santa Cruz, a community rent with conflicts over access to resources and intra- and inter-familial disputes. He carefully documents the strains brought about by the impact of cooperative employment opportunities and tasks on traditional community work patterns and social practices. Gender issues become important as women demand and negotiate their rights in the evolving context. He shows that the village and community organizational structures have to be modified in the light of economic change. Communalism and communal property sound like bedfellows of cooperativism, but that is hardly the case. Just as the household has to adjust to the new circumstances, so too does the entire communal basis of economy and society. The relevance of this finding will hopefully not be lost on those rushing to modernize the traditional world, and assuming that cooperative ventures are the answer?

Migration and industrial development are the central concern of the next article in which Rosner analyzes the impact of Andean migrants on the footwear industry of Trujillo in northern Peru. While many migrants have to adapt to new urban contexts she argues convincingly that in the case of the El Porvenir district, the

city's structure was adapted by the migrants who, by locational concentration and familial labor systems, have made Trujillo the footwear capital of the country. The details provided of the spatial and organizational structure of the industry which is essentially a conglomeration of more than 4,000 small workshops demonstrate the intricacies of the industrial base, as well as the geographical impact it has had on the urban fabric.

In the penultimate study Hays-Mitchell provides an eloquent and comprehensive assessment of the relationships and tensions between development and empowerment. Her principal argument is that in the wake of economic restructuring, development has, in many cases, meant a gendered difference in economic opportunities. She insists that the lack of gender concerns in the very articulation of development theory for long has negated the relevance of women. The analysis is thus an important addition to the literature from the new Gender and Development (GAD) perspective and its comprehensive bibliography provides much that is new.

The last article returns us to Middle America to address the difficult, and for Latin America, novel question of voter turnout. Wall and Lehoucq employ both cartographic and statistical methods to interpret voter turnout in ethnically complex and politically violent Guatemala. They focus on the Guatemalan elections of 1985 and while properly wary of ecological fallacies, and cognizant of the various theoretic perspectives on political participation, provide sound geographical arguments for a multivariate explanation of the turnout-- or non-turnout-- of voters. Utilizing data from more than 300 municipalities they conclude that turnout is a function of the urban percent of municipal population and the percentage of voters who are male and literate. They also demonstrate that the often alleged "backward" Indians actually are more active political participants than their *ladino* counterparts. Their more detailed analysis of the departments (and the Ixil Triangle) hardest hit by political violence shows that this factor had a very variable effect on turnout: one cannot generalize. This is the type of rigorous study that we need for many more Latin American countries in this new era of alleged democratic government.

Once again the *Yearbook* provides one with a plethora of new ideas, novel data and methodological solutions. The past in the present, the present reaching to the past; ecological, sociological, historical, statistical--the perspectives are as wide-ranging as our subfield's membership. And the signs are evident throughout: we are in a very healthy stage of research productivity.

We are grateful, as usual, to all of the authors who agreed with our suggestions and modifications of their text and figures, and even more to those who did not. We also have to thank the many colleagues who reviewed all the manuscripts submitted for the 1997 volume, both those published here, as well as those that, for reasons of space constraints, could not be included. They included: Jock Galloway, Victoria Lawson, Oliver Coomes, Linda Alcoff, William Doolittle, Alfred Siemens, Eric Van Young, Robert Kent, Karl Zimmerer, Timmons Roberts, Jeannette Graulau, Brian Godfrey, Anke Wessels, William Davidson, Josh Dickenson, Tom Veblen, John A. Harrington, John Agnew, Gary Elbow, James Newman, and David Richardson.

Finally, we are again greatly indebted to Marcia Harrington whose skills are evident--to those who know--on every page of this volume.