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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

With great pleasure and pride, we present you with the 2011–2012 edition of Portal, our annual review of LLILAS activities, people, and accomplishments. This year has been especially momentous for us, because we put the LLILAS-Benson partnership into practice and began to reap the benefits of working more closely together. In September 2011, the two units joined under a single leadership team; committees with staff members from each assumed responsibility for collaboratively planned activities in diverse areas, from public engagement to scholarly program to publications; we hired new staff members and reformulated existing job descriptions to encompass this new collaborative vision; and, most important, in January of this year, we began an unprecedented process of strategic planning, through which LLILAS and the Benson worked to outline objectives and aspirations for the upcoming five years, each in its own distinct sphere, and increasingly, as a unified consortium of Latin American Studies.

At the same time, as this issue of Portal attests, in the midst of considerable change we have continued our commitment to the core activities that make LLILAS and the Benson great. Our student program, featured on p. 42, provides outstanding resources for BA and MA degrees in Latin American Studies; our revitalized alumni relations initiative has begun to uncover additional, compelling evidence of this excellence, by tracking our alums more effectively and documenting the diverse, inspiring, and highly successful career paths that so many have followed. In addition, through the strategic planning process, we have decided to recast and modestly expand our PhD degree, building on areas of exceptional faculty strength, offering advanced training that will leave students prepared for both academia and practical applications of their skills. The LLILAS intellectual program has continued to shine, with a highly successful Lozano Long conference (see p. 4), a rich array of activities emerging from our faculty-led research initiatives (the participatory mapping project reviewed on p. 12 is one example), and much more. On the Benson side, we are especially excited to have begun our Jewels of the Benson series, designed to make the extraordinary holdings in the Rare Books and Manuscripts division of the library appreciated by, and accessible to, a broad public. What better way to begin this series than the feature of Sor Juana de la Cruz, with the original confessionary found among the Benson holdings (see p. 34). Other traditional public engagement activities—from the Benson’s ¡A Viva Voz! to the LLILAS Foodways of Mexico—have also continued, enriched by collaboration between staff of the two units.

The LLILAS-Benson Strategic Plan, to be implemented September 1, 2012, charts an exciting upward trajectory of Latin American Studies at UT, propelled by the innovations, mutual benefits, and at times budgetary savings of the partnership. While each unit will maintain its distinct identity and particular functions, by 2017 we expect LLILAS-Benson to operate as a single consortium, following a unified mission. We are already reaping the first fruits of this transformation. We now have a newly created second floor conference room and approval to create an adjacent space for exhibitions: these will allow us to draw audiences into Sid Richardson Hall to showcase all that we have and do much more directly. The Guatemalan Police Archive project, described on p. 18, is another fine illustration: bringing archival documentation, scholarly research, and human rights advocacy together in a single project, achieved through campus-wide and international collaboration. Yet another example is innovative teaching, deepened and enriched through sustained engagement with the Benson Collection. Prof. Lina del Castillo, a newly recruited faculty member of LLILAS and the History Department, developed a course, “Maps in Latin American History,” and held classes in the seminar room adjacent to the Rare Books reading room, taking full advantage of the Benson’s outstanding map collection; other such courses are sure to follow.

These truly are exciting times for LLILAS and the Benson. Our Strategic Plan has set ambitious goals for the next five years, and we urge you to follow our progress toward their achievement. One key to success over the next five years will be to strike the right balance between innovation and affirmation of programs that have been the proven foundation of excellence for decades. Another key will be our outstanding staff, who have risen to the challenge of this partnership, providing many of the ideas, and the creative energy, to make it a reality. Portal itself is a wonderful illustration of this initiative, inventiveness, and talent.

Read with pleasure and please share your thoughts on what you discover in these pages.

Sincerely,

Charles R. Hale, Director
Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies/Benson Latin American Collection
The question posed in this article, and at the Lozano Long conference in February 2012 that inspired it, would appear at a primary level to be a simple one: “Where are Central American–Americans headed in the second decade of the twenty-first century?” After all, Central America is no longer limited to a small collection of nation-states “over there,” south of Mexico, but is increasingly also “over here,” in the United States. Central America is both a real site and a sight, a representation of a place that has gained visibility and significance in the U.S. through discourses, images, and other cultural productions since the 1980s, and Central American–Americans have followed a similar process in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

More recently, Central Americans have regained prominence in the U.S. as “Central Americans” only in the aftermath of infamous operations targeting undocumented migrants like the so-called Postville Raid in Iowa. This heavily militarized roundup by the U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement agency (ICE) became this nation’s largest single immigration operation on May 12, 2008. Hundreds of ICE agents stepped into Agriprocessors’ kosher meat processing plant and detained 389 undocumented workers. Most of them were of Guatemalan Maya origin.

We know that Central American migration also has had an impact on their countries and region of origin since the original mass departure to the U.S. as a consequence of the civil wars of the 1980s. As already documented by countless books and articles, the massive flow of Central American immigrants to the U.S. was a direct result of the brutality of these civil wars and of the toll they exacted on peasant communities. As armies advanced destroying village after village and massacring the occupants, thousands of refugees, primarily from El Salvador and Guatemala, seeking safety for themselves and their children, fled to Mexico. Some remained there in UN-sponsored refugee camps, but many more continued on to the United States and Canada. Anti-Sandinista Nicaraguans also fled their country, heading primarily to Miami and the Florida area.

The earliest U.S. Central American migrations can be traced to the mid-1850s California gold rush, as was the case for other Latin American migrants like Chileans and Peruvians. By the early 1910s and 1920s, increasing numbers of Central Americans were migrating to and establishing communities in places like San Francisco and New Orleans, headquarters of the infamous United Fruit Company that treated the entire region as an enclave economy. But the great migration of Central Americans, of course, occurred during the last three decades of the twentieth century. The 1980s civil conflict created what Nora Hamilton and Norma Stoltz Chinchilla have conceived as a model in which Central Americans “differ from many other immigrant groups . . . in that they are neither strictly economic migrants nor accepted as refugees, but have the characteristics of both” (p. 2).

Ostensibly, after the civil wars of the 1980s, Nicaragua changed course when the Sandinistas lost the presidential election in 1990. Peace was signed in El Salvador in 1992, the same year that the Los Angeles riots took place, and in Guatemala in 1996. This implied, in principle, a process of social reconciliation, reconstruction, and development. Nevertheless, the peace dividend was never fully realized. The arrival of peace did end military combat and state violence in the region, as guerrillas turned in their weapons and formed legal political parties. But the much-promised international aid never materialized in sufficient quantity. What was expected to be a massive Marshall-like plan to fully modernize these nations and uproot social inequalities became only a trickle that dwindled to almost nothing after the economic downturn in 2000. The most delinquent country in terms of economic aid was the United States. Despite President Clinton’s apologies to the populations of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua in 1997 when he visited the region, the U.S. Congress approved only negligible aid to them in the postwar period. As a result, the reality of the postwar period was a time of...
little economic growth, massive unemployment (officially recorded at 50% in both Guatemala and El Salvador, but most likely higher in both countries), and the gradual emergence of an unregulated parallel power to the state produced by criminal gangs and drug cartels. The gangs gained muscle, wealth, and prestige, as unemployed youngsters and immigrants deported from the United States, most of them members of either Mara Salvatrucha or 18th Street Gang (Mara 18)—gangs originally formed in the streets of Los Angeles by young, alienated youth of Central American origin—joined their ranks. These last two factors were direct consequences of the U.S. reneging on most promises made prior to the signing of the peace treaties after the election of George W. Bush in 2000.

After 9/11, security conditions at the border gradually became tighter. Despite this, immigrants continued to enter the U.S. in massive numbers. Nonetheless, safety conditions for the passage through Mexico became harrowing. A corridor running from Colombia to the United States that crosses the entire Central American isthmus to transport cocaine into the U.S. had been complicating matters since the late 1980s. This passageway became the object of dispute by competing drug cartels in the first decade of the present century, exposing burdensome transnational anxieties on violence, public safety, government surveillance, and the implications of repressive anti-gang policies. In the so-called Northern Triangle of Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras), drug cartels gained a foothold in the first decade of the new century as well. They became entrenched in government, recruited important segments of the army and police to their ranks, and created a parallel power stronger than the forces deployed to combat them.

The lack of economic opportunity, combined with the high number of unemployed soldiers, including known torturers and other criminals, as postwar armies were reduced in size and military budgets much reduced, led to a rapid rise in banditry, drug violence, and street crime. Thus, instead of enjoying greater safety as a blissful consequence of the end of the war, most Salvadoran and Guatemalan citizens were exposed to the greatest crime wave in their history. As most social sectors lost faith in their state’s capacity to control these criminal elements, they began to arm themselves, paying for private security or endorsing draconian measures to eliminate them, even when these trampled hard-won civil liberties. Shootings became an everyday occurrence, even in elite restaurants and malls. Imprisoned criminals often enjoyed a high standard of living in jail and continued to direct their criminal activities from the inside with the aid of cellphones, Internet, and other technological equipment.

Express kidnappings—where small sums are paid in a matter of hours upon news of an individual’s abduction—became common, even among the poor. Robberies on city buses and all modes of public transportation, used mainly by the poorer sectors of society, became equally common. These conditions were not uniquely Central American. Colombia had undergone a similar experience in the wake of the cocaine trade boom in the 1990s, and Mexico has been undergoing a similar process since 2005. Still, for those with nothing
to lose, the worsening conditions that followed the signing of the Central American peace treaties became a stimulus for migration. As a result, Central Americans flowed into the U.S. in large numbers at least until 2008, when the Great Recession turned the immigrant tide around and the raid in Postville, Iowa, took place.

The scars of this nightmarish history remain engraved in the Central American–American population, even if the 1980s civil war is no longer an open wound. It is still, nevertheless, a fearsome memory, especially in view of the turn the U.S. has taken toward immigration. Indeed, war trauma now has been replaced by newer traumas, such as the 3,000-mile-long journey from the isthmus to the U.S. border, military service in the Middle East for those with legal resident status, or the daily risk of living without legal papers in the U.S. in an increasingly hostile environment.

Salvadorans are today the sixth largest immigrant group and the fourth largest Latino/a group in the U.S. Indigenous Guatemalan Mayas are present in new areas such as Iowa and the South, where indigenous Mayas sparked a strike and a unionizing campaign at Case Farms, a poultry plant. Thus, it can no longer be denied that Central Americans are making their presence felt within the U.S. and Latino/a landscape at the end of this first decade of the twenty-first century.

Far from presenting Central American–Americans as a complete and coherent terrain, I hope to provide a blueprint for the present, as well as explore how Central American–Americans are gradually becoming another integral component of Latinoness.

Entering the country primarily through California, Arizona, and Texas, this population fanned out throughout the vast North American territory, including Mexico and Canada, where major pockets of Central Americans reside. The bulk of U.S. Central American migrants remain in California and Texas, with Los Angeles and Houston serving as dominant hubs. Despite this, significant Central American pockets are present, and indeed, visible in all U.S. cities. By now it is well-known that the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, D.C., has become a “little El Salvador,” and the Pico-Union district of Los Angeles has been officially designated as “Little Central America.”

Central American migrants either worked the urban service economies or followed agricultural jobs and manufacturing throughout the U.S. Los Angeles Times reporter Hector Tobar’s book Translation Nation documents Central American–American immigrant communities emerging in unexpected places such as Alabama, Georgia, and Nebraska. All of them were formed by immigrants arriving where jobs could be had. Often, they were bused six or seven hours to these sites to provide cheap, illegal labor. Tobar went undercover and worked in some of them himself, making friends and interviewing coworkers or those sharing a dormitory trailer with him. This was the case in Anniston, Alabama, where he traveled by bus from Eagle Pass, Texas, to do swing-shift work dismembering chickens at a food processing plant. Other scholars have documented Central American–Americans along the Eastern seaboard and in the Sun Belt and Florida. This population helped rebuild New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and resided in most U.S. rural areas until the economic collapse of 2008.

The circumstances described to this point, particularly in the current political context, both nationally and more specifically for Latinos/as in this country, indicated that the focus on Central American populations merited a conference that could better locate this population’s experience at this point in time. This was particularly important given the obvious growth and consequent visibility and significance of Central Americans in both the U.S. as a whole and among Latinos/as. We wanted to discuss the implications for Latinos/as and the nation of the fact that Salvadorans are today the sixth largest immigrant group and the fourth largest Latino/a group in the U.S., and the experiences of indigenous Guatemalan Mayas in new destination areas such as Iowa (cf. Camayd Freixas 2008), the South (cf. Odem 2006, 2007), etc. We also wanted to emphasize and detail the ways that Central Americans are now marcando presencia within the U.S. and Latino/a landscape, complicating the concept of Latinidad, by exploring “identities-in-the-making” that challenged what a Latino or Latina could be. Claudia Milian of Duke University, one of our invited speakers, had already argued on behalf of new subjectivities previously uncharted in any form of identity politics, those “Latinities” identifying elements that belonged to blackness, brownness, or dark brownness.

Traditional academic divisions among departments, fields, and disciplines most often prevented an integral study of Centroamericanidades that included what was happening both in the isthmus and among Central American–Americans in the U.S. Thus, Central Americans in the isthmus were studied by Latin Americanists, whereas Central Americans in the U.S. were studied by Latina/o scholars, an artificial division. Migrating Central Americans do not become “Latinas/os” by magic the minute they succeed in crossing the border. This traditional division obscured the extent to which Central Americanness remained
fluid geographically. From economic remittances to deported immigrants to expelled gang members to Maya ritual practices to Garifuna cultural festivities, there is a cultural and economic corridor continually flowing between the isthmus and Canada, crossing through Mexico and settling in the U.S.

This conference sought to investigate the many ways in which Central America, in all its expressions, figures in its original site, in the U.S., and elsewhere by exploring its unfolding identities, practices, and representations. The colonial legacy of racism (although it should be stated that most Anglo residents of Postville were extremely supportive of the immigrants, as AbUSed makes abundantly clear) was one of its central themes.5

Ultimately, despite the passage of time, when we speak of Central American–Americans we are still speaking of a traumatized immigrant population “infecting” Latinoness with their lived experience. We therefore have to ask ourselves not only what this challenge means for Central American–Americans, but also what it means for Latinoness as a whole. After all, to trace Central American–Americans’ presence in the U.S. is also to trace this story of trauma as a different, an alternative, itinerary in the migrant experience, within the broader perspective of globalized coloniality reshaping U.S. cultural citizenship. This coloniality of diaspora is also where discontinuities continue to mark the way subjects are identified and labeled, and explains how they are left grappling with variable structures of power, many exercised by other minorities themselves in relation to them.  

Arturo Arias is Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Texas at Austin and was one of the organizers of the 2012 Lozano Long Conference.

Notes
1. “Central American–American” was originally defined by me as “an anadiplosis that sounds more like a redundancy, a radically disfigured projection of what ‘Latin Americanness’ has been assumed to be…[T]he clumsiness of the sound itself, ‘Central American–American,’ underlines the fact that it is an identity which is not one, since it cannot be designated univocally as ‘Latino’ or as ‘Latin American,’ but is outside those two signifiers from the very start.” See “Central American–Americans: Invisibility, Power, and Representation in the U.S. Latino World.”
2. Guatemalan filmmakers Luis Argueta and Vivian Rivas have produced a documentary film on the raid, titled AbUSed: The Postville Raid. See also Camayd-Freixas’s article “Interpreting after the Largest ICE Raid in US History: A Personal Account.”
3. According to Luis J. Rodriguez, as many as 40,000 people accused of belonging to either the Mara Salvatrucha or the 18th Street gang were deported every year to both Mexico and Central America.
4. See The Maya of Morganton.
5. The film interviews legal defendants, elementary and high school teachers, nuns, etc., all of whom rushed to support those arrested, their children, and their families. All of them are Anglo.

References

LLILAS CONFERENCES
Fall 2011
Politics of Memory: Guatemala’s National Police Archive
V Conference on Indigenous Languages of Latin America
Peace Education and Sustainability in Mexico

Spring 2012
ILASSA32 Student Conference on Latin America
The 2012 Lozano Long Conference: Central Americans and the Latino/a Landscape: New Configurations of Latina/o America (p. 4)
L4titudes

Videos:
The 2012 Lozano Long Conference
http://www.utexas.edu/cola/insts/llilas/media/lozano_long.php

Politics of Memory
http://www.utexas.edu/law/conferences/guatemala/photovideo.php

Afro-Latin Performance Week
http://vimeo.com/27715600
Ciudad Juárez, Violence, and the Social Fabric

by Ricardo Ainslie

VIOLENCE IN CIUDAD Juárez, in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, erupted in 2008, bringing that city the unenviable distinction of being the most dangerous in the Americas, if not the world. The prior year’s 301 registered homicides had set a record (even for a city that had lived in the shadows of the infamous femicides a decade earlier), raising considerable alarm in Ciudad Juárez, which lies across the border from El Paso, Texas. The 1,604 homicides in 2008 would mark a five-fold increase over the previous year, most of which were associated with the drug cartels and their street gangs. By the end of 2011, the total number of executions in Ciudad Juárez since the beginning of the government-declared war against the drug cartels stood in excess of 10,000 victims. By any measure, those figures are astounding. In fact, they exceed the combined U.S. losses over the course of ten years of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, this in a single city whose population at the time was approximately 1.5 million residents.

Although the dramatic spike in murders related to organized crime was not on anyone’s radar, including both American and Mexican intelligence services (Ainslie, in press), a wide-ranging study published in 2007 thoroughly documented the idea that Ciudad Juárez was a tinderbox waiting to explode. La realidad social en Ciudad Juárez: Análisis social was coedited by Clara Jusidman, an economist with many years of social policy research experience, and Hugo Almada Mireles, a professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez. At the time it was published, there was no reason to believe that Ciudad Juárez would soon be embroiled in a drug war pitting two of Mexico’s most powerful cartels against one another. What the volume captured, however, was a city whose social fabric was already in tatters, a society where all of the conditions were in place for a social implosion that had been in the making for decades.

Through a series of surveys, focus groups, interviews with key scholars and NGOs, and the mining of statistics from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Información (INEGI) comparing data from Ciudad Juárez, the state of Chihuahua, and the nation, the book tracks many of the key variables relevant to a social diagnosis of the city’s frayed social fabric. These include demographic changes (the city had doubled in size between 1980 and 2000), the quality of family life and the factors affecting it, employment, the role of the maquiladora industry in the city’s economy, education from preschool through college, health issues in the city and the resources available to address them, security in neighborhoods and the problem of criminal impunity, and the availability of housing and city planning. This remarkably prescient analysis pointed unambiguously to the fact that Ciudad Juárez was a social time bomb long in the making due to a variety of complex, but interpenetrated, variables. In addition to providing a clear, detailed analysis,
Jusidman and Almada set the observations of their fellow researchers within a well-articulated framework, documenting the intimate linkages between individuals, families, and the social conditions governing communities. What La realidad social makes clear is that governments may choose to defer the social cost of neglected communities, but eventually such neglect will demand a reckoning.

Social conditions in Ciudad Juárez were already seriously deteriorating by 2007. Pick any variable. For more than a decade, the maquiladora industry’s preference for hiring women represented a highly distorting social force that affected family relations and is considered one of the variables that could account for the high levels of domestic violence in Ciudad Juárez. In addition, La realidad social reports that women who were mothers typically returned home from long days at the maquila to assume child care and other family tasks. In other words, there was no comparable shift in the culture of domesticity to accompany the shift in the culture of work. With a population consisting of a high percentage of migrants from other parts of Mexico who had come seeking assembly plant jobs, families were often isolated with few resources to take care of children’s socioemotional needs (Jusidman and Almada 2007).

La realidad social observed that the educational system was severely taxed. There were schools in the older sections of the city that were underutilized because of population shifts within the city, while areas with high densities of school-age children lacked schools, especially beyond middle school. There was also a severe shortage of supplies (in many schools, even chalk was rationed), and few schools had playgrounds or recreational facilities. The school schedule was such that for several hours every day children arrived home hours before their parents returned from maquila jobs. A significant number of children were dropping out of school after primary school and, especially after middle school. In fact, Ciudad Juárez has the highest “school desertion” rates in the state of Chihuahua. The 13–16 year olds who were dropping out at high rates in poor neighborhoods all over the city were easy pickings for neighborhood street gangs that form the bottom rung of the Ciudad Juárez crime culture.

La realidad social reported high levels of addiction and noted that organized crime and a network of entrenched neighborhood gangs were creating a climate of insecurity affecting the entire city but especially those living in marginalized communities. The book attempted to sound the alarm to anyone who would listen. The numbers were stark and unambiguous. The reports from Ciudad Juárez’s academics and NGOs—people who had been looking at these troubling circumstances at ground level for some time—were uniform in their concern. The book was published a year before the drug war erupted in Ciudad Juárez, and the research had been done a couple of years prior. In view of the torrent of bloodshed and violence that shook the city beginning in January 2008, rarely in the annals of social science has there been a circumstance that lent itself more to an “I told you so” moment.

“Boys and Girls First!” is a program for children run by the Organización Popular Independiente (OPI), a small nonprofit in Ciudad Juárez. The NGO operates out of a rundown building in Altavista, a neighborhood that has seen more than its share of executions since the drug war started in earnest. I interviewed its director, Laurencio Barraza, in the fall of 2009 as part of my research for my book The Fight to Save Juárez: Life in the Heart of Mexico’s Drug War (Ainslie, in press).

Typical street scene in a poor Ciudad Juárez neighborhood.
La realidad social had documented. In interviews with some of the architects of the TSJ program the common references were to efforts by the Colombian government to address the violence in Medellín as a model for what might be done in Mexican cities experiencing high levels of violence.

Todas Somos Juárez was an extremely ambitious social intervention. The federal government stated that the goal was to "break the vicious cycle of insecurity by providing the population with social and economic opportunities, launching the reconstruction of the social fabric, and lowering the incidence of anti-social behavior within the city." The heads of key ministries assigned high level, trusted staffers to the effort, giving them authority to make decisions. They met with their counterparts in the state and municipal government and representatives of the city's key sectors focusing on six areas: security,
economy, employment, health, education-culture-sports, and social development. Each of these working groups developed actionable items along with corresponding budget allocations for each. In all, between the six working groups 160 actions were targeted with 100-day goals.

I had the opportunity to observe several of the working groups in Ciudad Juárez. They were impressive to watch. For example, for the small business owners working group, 50-60 representatives presented specific concerns, complaints, needs, and proposals. These were discussed and documented. In subsequent meetings, this list was distilled into actionable items that ultimately became the basis for that group’s (and the federal government’s) 100-day goals. In this working group, the most consistent concern was the prevalence of widespread extortions (cuotas, as they are termed in Ciudad Juárez) by organized criminal groups (“We can pay our taxes, we can pay our employees, or we can pay the cuota, but we can’t pay all three” was the common refrain). Another complaint was the high cost of gas to heat their buildings and the fact that inefficiencies in the economic system made it cheaper to purchase business-related goods across the river in El Paso rather than locally, thus handicapping Ciudad Juárez vendors.

Todos Somos Juárez remains a work in progress. While the status of the 160, 100-day goals are specified on the program’s website, and while there are obvious and notable successes (e.g., Ciudad Juárez became the first city in Mexico where universal health coverage is available via the Seguro Popular program), systematic evaluation of the impact of the program has yet to be conducted. In addition, a comparative analysis of TSJ in relation to similar attempts to intervene in communities experiencing catastrophic levels of violence, such as Medellín, Colombia, or Río de Janeiro, Brazil, has yet to be carried out. Yet, a unique opportunity exists to examine these three case studies, and perhaps others, for the insights they might yield to governments and NGOs working to address the needs of communities where a frayed social fabric becomes the fuel that feeds high levels of violence.

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**Ricardo Ainslie is Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin.**

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**Notes**

2. Ibid., December 31, 2011.
3. Molly Molloy, Research Librarian at the University of New Mexico and organizer for the fronteralist, January 4, 2012.
4. Originally referring to “shooting galleries” where people could buy and use drugs, a *picadero* has become a general term for places where drugs are sold.
5. From “Ni estudian ni trabajan”—they neither study nor work.
6. In the summer of 2011, I interviewed Adriana Obregón at Presidencia and Enrique Betancourt, at the time with SEDESOL.

**References**


The Power of Maps and Mapping
Maps fascinate us; they entertain and they educate. And in recent years, with the profusion of web-based mapping interfaces operating on ubiquitous communication tools such as GPS units and Smartphones, we have all become cartographers of sorts. But for those who study maps—how they are made, how they are used, and with what consequences—maps are not innocent objects but rather social productions that are vested with authority and rhetorical power. Through their authority, maps produce and reproduce social relations in multiple, complex, and often poorly understood ways.

The power of maps derives from the role of symbology—colors, fonts, icons—to convey meaning and shape our perceptions of people and places. Their power also stems from their selectivity: maps by their very nature include certain places and features and exclude others, and this holds true in Google Maps as well as maps produced by NGOs and government agencies. And, more subtly, the power of maps derives from our assumption that they are “accurate,” especially since they are products of the authoritative science of cartography and the sophisticated technologies of Geographic Information Systems. This elusive, intrinsic power of maps has long been the focus of interest by scholars in such diverse fields as urban planning, geography, and anthropology, all joined in their concern with how the world is categorized, divided, bounded, and represented in maps, and with what social, political, and economic consequences (Crampton 2001; Harley 1989; Kitchin and Dodge 2007; Pickles ed. 1995; Wood 1992).

In this article I turn my attention to the recent scholarship, activism, and professional practice associated with participatory approaches to maps and mapping, particularly in indigenous territories in Latin America. Much of this work takes as its starting point the troubling relationship between cartography and colonialism, which, in fact, continues today in the close associations between state-sponsored cartography and global capital. This is to say, maps have long been the means and metaphors of state dominance in Latin America and elsewhere.

Maps (and mapmakers) have served the process of coloniza-
tion and neocolonial projects of territorial control through their powerful representation of boundaries and new place names superimposed on indigenous lands. They have served the economic development of the neocolonial state through their selective representation of “natural resources” in indigenous spaces; they have served the disciplinary purposes of the state through their demarcation of “protected” lands; and they have contributed to the criminalization of indigenous livelihood strategies through their exclusionary and rigid “zoning” of land uses in traditional lands. Other examples of how the rhetorical power of cartography has been used to marginalize indigenous people abound: indigenous toponyms have been eliminated from state maps; indigenous lands have been labeled as “empty” and ripe for development; and contiguous indigenous land-use zones have been fractured in isolated “reservations,” “agricultural communities,” and so on (Bryan 2011; Craib 2004; Wainwright and Bryan 2009).

Indigenous and Participatory Mapping
But indigenous people are now trying to harness the power of cartography to better represent their material cultures and conceptions of space and place. This alternative cartography typically involves some form of participatory mapmaking designed to capture indigenous spatial knowledge, often through community-based workshops where indigenous representatives work with cartographers and GIS specialists to describe, document, and represent indigenous landscapes. In indigenous lands throughout Latin
America and beyond, indigenous communities and organizations are forming alliances with scholars, activists, and NGOs to render legible community rights, resource uses, sacred places, and other important spatial features to outside entities (Caballero Arias 2007; Mansutti 2006; Offen 2003; Sletto 2010).

Because of the potential of such participatory mapping projects to bring forth indigenous knowledge and perspectives, they are increasingly becoming central to participatory approaches to biodiversity conservation and land-use planning in areas populated by indigenous people. In some cases, participatory mapping projects have contributed to greater indigenous self-determination and more democratic planning and resource management. But more important, this new counter-mapping (Peluso 1995) represents the potential for an alternative means of storytelling and place-making, a radical change in the ways landscapes and places are documented, represented, and vested with meaning. The rhetorical power of maps and GIS, which for so long has served to marginalize indigenous people, thus ironically becomes the source for indigenous community building, territoriality, development and land-use planning, and cultural survival (Caballero Arias and Zent 2006; Chapin et al. 2005; Chapin and Threlkeld 2001; Fox et al. 2005; Herlihy and Knapp 2003; Stocks 2003).

The creative productions of new forms of maps in such participatory mapping projects have been made possible by technological and political developments: cheaper and more user-friendly tools for participatory mapping are readily available, an increasing number of NGO and academics are engaged in participatory mapping, and the postdictatorship and postwar period has opened up access to mapping technologies and data previously available to only the military, including much cheaper and easier access to satellite imagery and georeferenced spatial data produced by state agencies, international organizations, and NGOs.

Rethinking Participatory Mapping
The availability of these new technologies, coupled with decentralization of state power and increasing capacities on the part of indigenous cartographers and their allies, has resulted in an explosion of creative, participatory mapping practices and collaborative deliberations of this emerging field among indigenous people and their allies. These articulations of intellectual explorations with activism and technical innovations have broad implications for scholarship on space, power, and identity in the post-neoliberal state, but are only beginning to be systematically documented in academia and beyond. At the University of Texas, scholars associated with the LLILAS Faculty Research Initiative “Participatory Mapping and the Struggle for Land and Resources”1 are now working with colleagues in Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Venezuela, and elsewhere to provide a space for reflections on these recent, exciting trends in participatory mapping. This includes a series of international conferences on participatory mapping starting at Cornell University in 2006 and followed by Rio de Janeiro in 2010; Bogotá, Colombia, in 2011; and Rosario, Argentina, in 2012.

The Cornell conference, hosted by the Cornell Society for Humanities, and the Bogotá conference, co-sponsored by the Rights and Resources Initiative and LLILAS and hosted by the Universidad de Los Andes, were both chaired by the author, and both events sought to bring together indigenous and nonindigenous leaders, scholars, and practitioners to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue and publications (Sletto 2009a, b; Sletto ed. 2012). These exchanges and collaborative scholarship have revealed three principal trends in what can loosely be called a new, participatory cartography: innovations in the practices and conceptualizations of the process of mapmaking; a rethinking and expansion of the role of mapmaking for indigenous community building and resource management; and inventions in the forms of maps and the conceptions of what maps and other spatial representations are and can be.

As our thinking about maps and mapmaking continues to evolve, we are seeing a shift in focus from “maps” to “cartographies.” This is to say, the work currently done by indigenous practitioners and scholars and their colleagues is resulting in a wealth of creative, radical, and alternative spatial representations that push the boundaries of what was commonly considered a “proper map.” We are seeing a reconceptualization of maps as creative re-presentations of space and culture, constructed by indigenous peoples on their own terms through a multitude of forms and media, and ultimately serving to reconstruct spatial and social relations to their benefit. These radical innovations in techniques and representational forms promise to better reflect spatial phenomena that were excluded or poorly represented in traditional

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participatory maps, such as the deeper spiritual meanings of places and landscapes, the variability of boundaries depending on kinship and other social relations, and the temporality of landscapes and land uses.

For example, in the Cauca region of Colombia, the Fundación Minga has developed innovative mapping projects resulting in mapas parlantes, that is, living maps that serve to facilitate critical conversations and endogenous documentation of local knowledge among residents in Afro-Colombian communities. In Venezuela, the author has worked for the past five years with the Yukpa to develop an interactive web-based map that includes video, photos, and drawings, and that is intended for preservation of culture as well as territorial claims-making. And in Ecuador, the Kichwa de Pastaza have adapted participatory mapping tools to their own cultural context, producing endogenous re-presentations of space that incorporate spiritual significance and social relations associated with landscapes with Western cartographic standards.

This reconceptualization of what constitutes a “map” also requires new thinking about the process of mapmaking. The discussion surrounding participatory mapping has tended to emphasize maps as products rather than mapping as process. Maps, however, are not neutral objects divorced from social context, but rather evolving stories of space and culture that are shaped by the engagement of readers (Kitchin and Dodge 2007; Sletto 2010c). Mapping can be thought of as a space of engagement where social and spatial relations are reconfigured, and where representations of these relations will take a multitude of forms. In order to productively reconceptualize maps as cartographies and take advantage of their potentials for democracy and liberation, mapmaking must be situated within community-led social processes, that is, mapmaking should follow from social mobilization. We see this reconceptualization of the process of participatory mapmaking in the Projeto Nova Cartografia Social da Amazônia (PNCSA) in Manaus, Brazil, where social cartography is conceived of as a means for expression of collective identities. Within the quilombola communities, for example, mapmaking has been reconceptualized as a natural extension of endogenous, community-led social processes, that is, maps follow from social mobilization, not the other way around.

Finally, this new thinking about process has been accompanied by innovative uses of participatory mapping within indigenous communities for purposes of social development, cultural preservation, and endogenous resource management. By reconceptualizing participatory mapping as social engagements, the “power of maps” can be used to strengthen social bonds and a sense of community, to reproduce cultures and identities in the face of social change, and to rebuild connections to a common heritage. Indigenous peoples are now increasingly using social cartography for purposes of place-making and resource management: documenting traditional resources and resource uses in ways that accord with local realities; developing socially embedded, sustainable land-use and resource management strategies; and perhaps more important, using creative mappings to reestablish their own, unique relationships with place and nature.

In Peru, for example, indigenous communities in the Cuenca del Río Corrientes have already gained titles to their lands, but they continue to suffer from contamination caused by oil companies and external pressures exerted by extractivist interests. In order to document this contamination and create community-based master plans and resource management strategies, they have adopted participatory mapping as a principal research and planning tool. They are not, however, simply copying strategies used elsewhere, but instead they are constantly innovating and adapting these tools to serve their future needs.

Discussion

In coming years, scholars at the University of Texas at Austin and beyond will continue to reflect critically about the social implications of participatory mapping in indigenous lands. Productive dialogue between indigenous and Western scholars and practitioners about the potentials and pitfalls of participatory mapping has long been lacking, and critical thinking about the politics, potentials, and pitfalls of these technologies has been spotty and uneven. By its very nature, Western cartography results in maps that fail to represent the complexities of indigenous landscapes. Indigenous land tenure and boundaries are fluid, overlapping, and changing; indigenous conceptions of space reflect complex social relations, and the meanings of landscapes are interwoven with spiritual relationships. Often, participatory mapping projects result in maps that simplify indigenous cultures and gloss over the contested relationships between identity formations and constructions of histories and landscapes. Also, participation in such

Section of the participatory map of Yukpa territory, Venezuela.
mapping projects is often limited, and participatory mapping projects may reshape identity formations and exacerbate local inequalities.

As participatory mapping technologies are increasingly appropriated and refined by indigenous peoples themselves, however, the possibilities increase for more representative and socially appropriate processes and more innovative and productive forms of maps. One such technological frontier is the Internet and the host of rapidly developing web-based mapping technologies, which allow indigenous people and their allies to use Google Earth, Google Maps, and other user-driven mapping interfaces to facilitate participation in mapping projects, and to publish online maps where users can explore not only spatial information but also other data such as photographs and video. These new Internet technologies can make possible representations that are more true to the complex articulations of space, time, and culture that characterize indigenous landscapes. On the other hand, while the Internet permits indigenous people and their allies to rapidly disseminate their own representations of space and culture worldwide, wide dissemination does not necessarily translate into effective claims-making, and the use of digital technologies carries the risk of increasing inequities between those with access to these technologies and those without. Participatory maps thus constitute increasingly important elements of broader indigenous representational strategies, reflecting the complex entanglements of local and global processes that accompany the productions of postcolonial landscapes.

Participatory mapping is shifting rapidly from being the purview of North American and European scholars and development practitioners to a set of tools and epistemologies of spatial production that is increasingly driven by indigenous people, on their own terms, embedded within their own community-driven social processes, and oriented toward their own ends. In the process, indigenous practitioners and intellectuals and their collaborators have brought participatory mapping from a prescriptive set of Western-driven tools to a fulcrum for creative thinking and intellectual exploration. The innovative practices and theory development in participatory mapping promise to expand the frontiers of postdevelopment theory and, most important, to further the struggle for justice in indigenous communities and other marginalized communities that have long lacked a map of their own—let alone the means to make one.

Bjørn Sletto is Associate Professor of Community and Regional Planning and coordinator of the dual degree program in Community and Regional Planning and Latin American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

Notes
1. See http://www.utexas.edu/cola/insts/lillas/faculty/fri.php
2. The Bogotá conference was made possible through financial support provided by the Rights and Resources Initiative (http://www.rightsandresources.org/) and generous staff and logistical support from the Departamento de Historia de la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales at the Universidad de Los Andes (http://historia.unianandes.edu.co/index.php). The examples discussed in this article were presented at the Bogotá conference and are available for download at https://docs.google.com/leaf?id=089h8MnJQyEmMDATb8G5zMyZC00WN11W4Yz5dMTZIYJWhOD5NZm8h=em_US

References
Since its inception in 2008, the Student Journal of Latin American Studies (SJofLAS) has provided an outlet for student research on topics relating to Latin America. The journal is dedicated to publishing original research from students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels from across the globe. It stands out as one of the few venues for students to bring a fresh perspective to themes new and old and to make valuable contributions to the canon of existing knowledge, despite being confronted with limited avenues for presenting their work.

In the spring of 2008, a group of students at the University of Texas at Austin met to discuss the formation of a student-led and -run journal to showcase original research from students about Latin America. After a period of exploration into the academic publishing community, the students began to organize and garner support for a journal that would be unique in its focus. Thanks in large part to support from the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies and the College of Liberal Arts, the first edition of the journal was released in print and online in the spring of 2009.

As the only student-operated journal of its kind, SJofLAS has relied on the dedicated efforts of undergraduate and graduate students across a broad range of disciplines, from the social sciences such as sociology and anthropology to art history, economics, and even social work. The staff of the journal comprises teams of editors who carefully review article submissions and shepherd the chosen researchers through a rigorous process of revision, contributing insight and recommendations based on their own fields. These talented and hard-working students bring their respective knowledge and abilities into the collaboration that makes the journal truly interdisciplinary.

The process of review is the most involved phase of the editorial board’s work. In the fall of each year, the editing staff puts out a call for submissions to universities and Latin American Studies centers across the world. In previous years the journal has had anywhere from 10–50 submissions by the December deadline. The editorial board reviews the original round of submissions and makes a short list of articles that demonstrate insight and contribute to the existing body of knowledge on Latin America.

From this short list, experts are chosen as readers for each article, depending on the subject of the submission. Often, readers are recruited from the University of Texas, which has a wealth of Latin Americanist faculty. Given the diverse subject matter of the submissions, however, the journal also recruits readers from institutions nationwide. For a previous submission on criminology, for which UT has no department, the journal contacted the Criminal Justice Department at the University of Houston–Downtown, which supplied two faculty readers.
Readers like these review the work to make sure it is of sound quality; this is the most instructive part of the publication process, given the level of expertise of reader feedback to the authors.

If the article is reviewed positively, we then communicate the readers’ concerns, questions, and comments to the author, who has one month to make the appropriate changes. After a final round of revisions, the authors are provided with proofs, and they finalize their publication with SJofLAS.

To date SJofLAS has published two editions and completed work on the third in May 2012. The articles published in the first two editions reflect the breadth in both the Latin American themes covered and the backgrounds of the published authors. Women’s rights in rural Guatemala, interethnic relations in seventeenth-century Chile, the economics of fair trade in modern-day Peru, and architecture in postrevolutionary Cuba are just some of the topics discussed. The student authors of these articles and others pursue study in their respective disciplines at academic institutions across the United States, England, and even Japan. They represent a broad spectrum of scholars from around the world who also cross gender, racial, and ethnic lines.

The third edition will continue the journal’s mission of collecting and promoting original research related to Latin America from a wide range of academic fields. As with previous editions, it will be placed in the UT Digital Repository for long-term access online. Shortly after publication, SJofLAS editors will begin work on the next edition, with the goals of expanding the call for submissions, including more reviewers to bring in new perspectives, and, finally, increasing readership and efforts to promote academic research by students.

As editors of the journal, we appreciate the opportunities afforded by our proximity to the University of Texas at Austin and its faculty and staff. More important, we appreciate the research itself. Although we publish only a small fraction of the articles submitted, we have seen an impressive variety of research and have witnessed the thriving interest in Latin America. There exists a dearth of support for young Latin Americanists, and we hope to continue providing an avenue for their participation in the years to come.

If you are interested in becoming a reader or submitting to the Student Journal of Latin American Studies, please contact us with questions or submissions at SJofLAS@gmail.com.

Steve Karson graduated in 2011 with BA degrees in economics and mathematics; Nicholas Woodward is a 2011 MA of LILAS and an MSIS candidate in information studies.

Student Journal of Latin American Studies online.

The editorial team at work (left to right): Steve Karson, Nicholas Woodward, Affonso Reis, and Matthew Drews. Not pictured: Allison Ramirez and Corinna Jay.
Collaborative Digital Collection Building: The Guatemalan National Police Historical Archive

by Kent Norsworthy

LLILAS is proud to be a key player in the collaborative venture that, in December 2011, resulted in the public launch of the Guatemalan National Police Historical Archive (AHPN) online. The culmination of years of diligent work by archive staff in Guatemala, this unhindered access to the AHPN digital archive opens up many new avenues of research into the country’s past by scholars, human rights activists, prosecutors, and family members of those killed or disappeared during Guatemala’s armed internal conflict.

The Police Archive was discovered fortuitously in 2005 by investigators looking for the source of explosions in an abandoned portion of a sprawling military base in Guatemala City. The existence of such an archive had long been denied by police, military, and civilian government officials, particularly during truth commission investigations in the 1990s. The investigators stumbled upon a series of rat- and cockroach-infested buildings with rooms piled floor to ceiling with immense bundles of moldy, rotting, and decaying documents. By the time AHPN archivists had concluded their calculations, nearly 8,000 linear meters of documents had been accounted for, in total more than 80 million folios of records stretching from 1882 when the police was founded to 1997 when the force was disbanded under the Guatemalan Peace Accords.

The archive contains many types of documents, including logbooks, identification cards, case files, photographs, memoranda, correspondence, and reports. It also includes loose files on kidnappings, murders, and assassinations created during nearly four decades of intense civil conflict beginning in the 1960s, a conflict that claimed 250,000 lives and displaced more than a million people.

After this discovery, the Human Rights Ombudsman office assumed custody of the archive under an order issued by the nation’s Civil Court. In 2009, responsibility for the AHPN was transferred to the Ministry of Culture where it is under the direction of the Archivo General de Centro América (AGCA), Guatemala’s national archive. With its over 80 million pages of documents, the AHPN represents the largest single repository of documents ever made available to human rights investigators. The AHPN is an integral part of the documentary patrimony of the Guatemalan people, with the mandate to ensure the preservation, safekeeping, and custody of the documentary record of the disbanded Guatemalan National Police in order to make this record accessible to the public at large.
Working under very challenging conditions, the AHPN has built a professional archive that serves as an international example of development and implementation of best practices, policies, and procedures. The AHPN has worked closely with a broad array of leading archivists as well as key national and institutional actors in the area of memory, human rights, and justice, including Dr. Trudy Huskamp Peterson, the Swiss Federal Archives, the Archivo General de Centroamérica, the Fundación de Antropología Forense, Bencotech, Archiveros sin Fronteras, and the National Security Archive. The tireless efforts of a dedicated staff of over 100 at the AHPN in Guatemala, in conjunction with these institutional partnerships, has allowed the archive to move into uncharted territory in terms of preservation and access to these valuable records.

Following years of painstaking work to clean, identify, classify, organize, describe, and digitize the documents, in 2009 the AHPN opened a professionally staffed public reading room to provide access to the digitized documents to anyone able to visit the archive in person. Reading room staff also accept requests for specific documents from prosecutors, human rights investigators, families of the disappeared, scholars, and journalists. Currently, the Guatemalan Attorney General’s office has several staff members assigned full time to work at the archive researching ongoing cases of criminal human rights violations by police officials, primarily during the most intense period of the armed internal conflict in the 1970s and 1980s. Numerous such cases are working their way through the courts, and several convictions already have been obtained, some relying substantially on documentary evidence from the archive.

Among these is the case of retired National Police director Héctor Rafael Bol de la Cruz, arrested and charged for his command role in the forced disappearance of labor leader Fernando García in 1984. In December 2010, a delegation from the University of Texas at Austin met in Guatemala with AHPN officials, human rights groups, and Guatemalan scholars to explore areas of collaboration. In a subsequent Letter of Understanding between the AHPN and UT—represented by the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice, the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, and the National Security Archive. The tireless efforts of a dedicated staff of over 100 at the AHPN in Guatemala, in conjunction with these institutional partnerships, has allowed the archive to move into uncharted territory in terms of preservation and access to these valuable records.

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In April 2011, the UT Libraries received hard drives containing copies of millions of digital images scanned by the AHPN in Guatemala. UT Libraries partnered with UT’s Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC) to create access derivatives from the initial set of master files. As digitization of the 80 million total physical pages proceeds in Guatemala, UT Libraries will receive additional files for inclusion in the online archive.

With the December 2011 public launch of the digital archive at http://ahpn.lib.utexas.edu/, AHPN and UT Austin took the bold and unprecedented step of putting the entirety of the digitized collection, totaling over 10 million pages of documents, online for universal access. In a departure from traditional practice, none of the records were screened, redacted, or access-restricted in any manner. Thus, an important part of the nation’s historical patrimony has been preserved and opened up for all citizens to consult as they work to discover and make sense of their own history. In the first 72 hours following the site launch at the conference, the digital archive received more than 10,000 pageviews.

To underscore the collaboration between archivists, academics, and human rights activists, the digital archive was launched as part of a full-day conference, Politics of Memory: Guatemala’s National Police Archive, sponsored by the Rapoport Center, the Benson Latin American Collection, and LILAS and held at the UT School of Law. During her keynote address, Archivo General de Centro América director Anna Carla Ericastilla summed up the significance of the conference: “Today’s event is important because it gives the Guatemalan people greater access to documents from an archive that has been instrumental in the processes of historical clarification and justice. This opportunity for Guatemalans to be able to examine the documents directly, without intermediation of any kind, contributes to their ability to form their own opinions and to take their understanding of what happened and corroborate it, juxtapose it, with other versions.” Other speakers at the conference included LILAS and Benson Collection director Charles R. Hale, Rapoport Center codirectors Karen L. Engle and Daniel M. Brinks, AHPN systems director Jorge Villagrán, National Security Archive senior analyst Kate Doyle, and vice provost and UT Libraries director Fred Heath.

Since the digitized documents, many of which are hand-written, cannot be full-text searched, users must rely heavily on metadata and on browsing the hierarchical structure of the archive to locate relevant records. As the archives profession has long recognized, item-level metadata is impractical, even impossible, for collections of this size and scope. The AHPN created an arrangement and description...
system that implements international standards and best practices, and the Benson Collection and UT Libraries were able to translate those standards and practices into an online environment to provide seamless access to the more than 10 million and growing digitized records. The online archive reflects and maintains the archival principles of respect des fonds, provenance, and original order that AHPN staff so diligently excavated from the rotting piles of paper and painstakingly implemented. The online archive provides access through archival arrangement of record groups, record series, and subseries, and description in finding aids created and published using the ISAD(G) standard. The goal of the Benson Collection and UT Libraries’ technical team was to recreate in the digital environment the experience of using the AHPN in person. The online archive recognizes the unique value of archival arrangement and description, and serves as a model for providing broad digital access to an extremely large historical collection with truly archival metadata.

The AHPN has generated an unprecedented collaboration between archivists, academics, and human rights activists in Guatemala, and its agreement with UT Austin has yielded an innovative plan for broadening these relations of collaboration. In the words of AHPN national coordinator Gustavo Meoño, “This alliance secures the perpetual public availability of the archive, which is so important for Guatemala. The University of Texas at Austin’s prestige and commitment to academic inquiry gives us an opportunity to guarantee the right to information in the most democratic and permanent manner possible.”

Without moving the physical archives outside of the country, the UT Libraries has made the collection universally accessible online. The activities contemplated in this partnership will improve on and use that accessibility to anchor a world-class archival, research, and transitional justice community all directed to greater understanding of the conflict in Guatemala and committed to preventing anything like it again. In short, with its unique collaboration between entities in Guatemala and the United States, between academics and activists, and between digital library and archive experts in Austin and the relatives of victims of a genocidal war in the highlands of Guatemala, this project marries peace-building to the digital twenty-first century. It encourages, across generations and geographical locations, the creation and animation of the intellectual capital essential to underpinning efforts for lasting peace—in Guatemala and elsewhere.

Kent Norsworthy is digital curation coordinator for LILAS and the Benson Latin American Collection and coordinator of UT’s AHPN Project Collaborative Coordinating Committee.
Narco Violence in Mexico: A Spatial Analysis of Drug-Related Bloodshed

by Mónica Medel

Mónica Medel, who graduated with an MA from LLILAS in 2012, received the award for Best LLILAS Student paper at the ILASSA32 Conference in February. Her paper is reprinted here in an abridged version. The full-text version with complete references and graphics is available in the LANIC Etext Collection/LLILAS Archive at http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/LLILAS/ILASSA/2012/.

Introduction

Organized crime is violent by definition (Geis 1966). Criminal syndicates pursuing profit through illegal means often face threats from new competitors who look to rip away segments of their business and steal their profits. Intimidation and violence against rivals, coupled with a demand for unwavering loyalty from members of one’s own gang, are the typical responses of threatened organizations attempting to preserve the status quo and retain control over their illicit operations (Conklin 2007: 316). As with other types of crime, organized crime has a spatial component as well (Rossmo 2000; Chainey and Ratcliffe 2005; Ridgeway and Tita 2007). It is committed in a certain area, and the offenders generally occupy a distinctive geographical zone (Herbert 1976) where they enforce rules that carry punishments if they are not followed. Mexican drug organizations certainly have been territorial since the beginnings of drug cultivation in Mexico almost a century ago. But violence generally remained clustered in certain areas where production and smuggling were most pervasive: specifically, the Pacific Coast along the Sierra Madre Mountains (Astorga 2005).

It was when Mexico began to become the main drug supplier for the United States that violence levels increased sharply. Also, the unprecedented wave of brutality began spiking in 2000 when opposition party President Vicente Fox took office, ending 71 years of single party rule by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). That prompted the emergence of new political powerbrokers and a series of fresh strategies against drug producers and smugglers, many of whom had been openly protected by the old regime in exchange for bribes. Things have only gotten worse more recently. Drug violence has killed nearly 50,000 people in the last six years, and claimed 15,273 victims in 2010 alone, according to Mexican government figures. Killings not only skyrocketed, they also became more brutal, featuring beheadings, victims dumped in mass graves, and corpses hung from crowded highway overpasses or tossed into rush hour traffic.
The powerful illicit narcotics trade of today’s Mexico didn’t happen by accident. The country’s close proximity to the United States, the world’s economic powerhouse and also the largest global market for illegal drugs, pushed Mexican syndicates toward developing drug-trafficking prowess. But the shift in the country’s drug smuggling hierarchy after Fox took power was also heavily influenced by a larger, international reorganization of the illegal narcotics market — a reorganization that was decades in the making. Mexico had long produced drugs like marijuana and opium poppy, but its kingpins gained stature in the late 1980s and early 1990s when they began smuggling cocaine. Then, unexpected help came from Washington. A U.S.-led crackdown on Caribbean smuggling routes that had moved cocaine from the jungles of South America to Miami via tropical islands forced gangs to alter how they smuggled cocaine into the U.S., pushing the flow of illegal narcotics toward Central and South America. American authorities also helped bring down the Cali and Medellín cartels in Colombia, leaving a power vacuum that Mexican-based drug gangs had little trouble filling (Cook 2007: 1).

By the early 2000s, cocaine was flowing north through Mexican territory as seamlessly as native drugs like heroin and opium poppy always had, and Mexican trafficking groups had supplanted all others around the hemisphere as the top source of illegal drugs reaching the United States (INCS 2008, 2009). It was then that violence reached unprecedented levels.

**Hypothesis and Methodology**

The central hypothesis of this study is that there is a relationship between areas that are drug hubs (i.e., municipalities that produce and/or smuggle at least two types of drugs) and the number of killings taking place there. Killings spread out across the country as new municipalities become drug hubs over time.

**Determining Areas under Study**

Tracking correlations between demographic data and the main drug-smuggling and production areas of Mexico can help us better understand the dynamics of drug-related violence over time. Due to the lack of demographic data disaggregated to the municipal level, population density and marginalization were selected as main descriptors. Marginalization is defined by Mexico’s Secretary of Social Development (SEDESOL) as an index that integrates poverty levels, access to education and health benefits, as well as the level of development of basic and productive infrastructure in the country’s different municipalities. Population data was obtained from Mexico’s Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), while the data on drug-related killings corresponds to the database released by the Office of Mexico’s Presidency in January 2011. This study included only the municipalities that had had at least one drug-related homicide every year (2007–2010), because the inclusion of municipalities with no crime could bias the results. The data on drug eradictions (marijuana and opium poppies) and seizures (cocaïne and methamphetamine labs) was obtained through a Freedom of Information Act Request (FOIA) by the author of this paper.

**Times Series Analysis**

Drug production areas are determined by certain physical characteristics like soil type, altitude, and climate, and thus are not very likely to totally change locations from one year to another, but rather expand to new, better, and/or safer places. Taking this caveat into consideration, the study determined the main producers for the total four-year period by querying the data to select only the municipalities where drug eradictions of marijuana and opium poppy of at least 10 hectares had occurred each year, between 2007 and 2010. The process that was followed to establish the main cocaine smugglers was different. Considering that cocaine started being heavily smuggled through Mexico only in the late 1990s, and cocaine seizures greatly shift year after year, just those municipalities were selected where at least 10 kilograms of cocaine were seized in at least one of the four years under study. For synthetic drug labs, which have been developed still more recently, the count followed municipalities where at least one lab was seized in one of the four years between 2007 and 2010. The areas of drug-related killings for each year of the period being studied were determined by establishing the homicide rate per 100,000 people.

**Drug Hubs and Killings Distribution**

To determine the relationship between these two factors, data on drugs was queried to calculate the many possible combinations of two and three different drugs for production and/or smuggling. Using factorials, the combinations were determined as 6 for the former (4C2 = 6) and 4 for the latter (4C3 = 4). After determining the combinations for every series, an algorithm was created using Boolean algebra to detect by iteration those municipalities that fulfilled the requirements for every combination. To complete the process, municipalities with more than 10 killings for each of the years under analysis were selected by querying the data.
Analysis

An overlay analysis showed a relationship between areas with high marginalization levels and generally low population density, and areas that are the main drug producers.

The main areas for marijuana, opium poppy, and synthetic drugs are located along the Sierra Madre Mountains, particularly on the Pacific Coast, while cocaine shipments have been detected on both the Caribbean and the Pacific Coasts, and even more often in areas bordering the United States and near major ports and highways.

A time series analysis showed a progression, both in killing rates and in their spread along the Pacific Coast and the border with the U.S. By 2007, the situation seemed more under control, with drug-related killings limited to certain areas including the border cities of Tijuana and Juárez and the coastal region of Guerrero state and the areas surrounding Culiacán, the capital of Sinaloa state. Only a few municipalities had a drug-related homicide rate of more than 40.1 per 100,000 people, which is fairly high in comparison to international figures and the rate reported by Mexico to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which for 2007 was 8.1 per 100,000 for the whole country (UNODC 2011).

For 2010, killings were totally out of control, with most of the municipalities hardest hit recording rates above 25.1 per 100,000 people. That compares to 21.6 in Panama, 24.9 in the Dominican Republic, 11.3 in Costa Rica, 33.4 in Colombia, 4.6 in the U.S., 1.2 in Ireland, and 0.8 in Germany for the same year (UNODC 2011). Mexico, meanwhile, officially reported a national homicide rate of 12.7, 17.7, and 21.5 homicides per 100,000 people, respectively, for the years 2008, 2009, and 2010.

Again, an overlay analysis showed a spatial relationship between the areas hardest hit by drug-related killings and municipalities that are drug hubs, defined as those areas that produce or smuggle two and three different drugs in the same year. The maps (see full-text online version) show that these areas are not necessarily the main producers. The series also shows a relationship between killings and the main highways (those that have at least four lanes).

The series shows how the number of drug hubs across the country has been increasing since 2007, particularly in the areas near the cities of Acapulco, Morelia, and Chihuahua. From 254 municipalities that were two-drug hubs in 2007, the number jumped to 307 in 2010, while the three-drug hubs went from 20 to 87 in the same period.

These maps also show an increasing concentration of killings around Mexico City, especially in Morelos and Mexico states over time. Meanwhile, gruesome homicides started appearing along the Gulf Coast, a territory in dispute between the Zetas and the Gulf drug cartels, in an area where no drug hubs have yet been detected because of insufficient available data.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

It is easy to discern that not all the municipalities that are main producers of at least one drug are necessarily violent. Conversely, municipalities that bear the brunt of drug-related homicides tend to become drug hubs because they are well connected via infrastructure or close to main highways. But drug hubs are not necessarily in main production areas and vice versa. A good example of this is the state of Oaxaca, which has many municipalities that have been traditional producers of marijuana. There are almost no drug hubs there, however, and no related killings reported.

One of the main conclusions of this study is that violence is not strictly tied to drug trafficking and production but also to marginalization. Municipalities that are drug hubs coincide with areas of great marginalization in Nayarit, Guerrero, and Michoacán states, as well as in the “Golden Triangle” of heightened narcotics production located in the conjunction of Durango, Chihuahua, and Sinaloa states.

The fact that homicides in 2010 greatly increased along the Gulf Coast, particularly in Tamaulipas state—where the data collected does not allow us to determine whether drug hubs exist there—may indicate the changing business of the drug organizations. The Gulf Coast is an area in dispute between the fierce Zetas and Gulf cartels, and the Zetas have become known for kidnapping immigrants heading north in an attempt to sneak into the U.S. Zeta operatives then often kill the immigrants they kidnap. In this way, the growing drug-related violence in this area suggests that, in the ever-evolving environment in which drug organizations develop, trafficking is only one of the criminal activities in which cartels now engage. Therefore, their new crimes may very well cause much greater, and new forms of, violence in the near future.

This paper’s analysis indicates that any serious effort at reducing Mexico’s growing drug violence should start with further study of the country’s elaborate transportation networks for illegal drugs, as well as additional research to determine which kind of narcotic has more incidence in the killings.

References


IN THE LATE 1940S, Donald Goodall, then Professor of Art History at the University of Texas at Austin, learned Spanish and Portuguese and began traveling extensively throughout Central and South America, visiting museums and artists' studios wherever he could. In 1963, Goodall was named the founding director of the University Art Museum at UT Austin. While the Museum of Modern Art in New York had seemingly diminished its initial interest in Mexican Art, Goodall fully embraced Latin American art at UT in the 1960s, making it a collecting priority for the institution. Key to this effort was Goodall's encounter with John and Barbara Duncan in 1966. The Duncans began collecting Latin American art during the late 1940s when they lived in Lima, Peru. Unique to their collecting strategy was their sense of history and appreciation for written records. As they acquired artwork, they also gathered documents and books on mostly South American artists, creating an impressive archive that is currently housed at The Blanton and the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at UT. Captivated by the University Art Museum and UT's interest in Latin America, the Duncans began donating their art collection to the museum in 1971, gifting the work of artists such as Argentine Antonio Berni, Chilean Eugenio Dittborn, German-Mexican Günther Gerzso, Uruguayan Joaquín Torres–García, and Peruvian Fernando de Szyslo, among others.

Latin American art has been part of The Blanton's DNA since its founding. The department's most emblematic characteristic during its first decades was its pioneering spirit. Over the years, curators who presided over the department created opportunities to study, display, and document art from a large and diverse region while producing innovative scholarship that shaped the emerging field of study. For example, in 1974 The Blanton organized the exhibition Joaquín Torres-García 1949–1974, curated by Barbara Duncan, becoming the first North American museum to present in depth the work of one of the great masters of modernism. Furthermore, while most American institutions that considered Latin American art privileged work from Mexico, The Blanton's collection and programming was distinguished by its inclusion of art from across the region. Throughout the years, the museum's collection and exhibition program revealed the richness and complexity embedded in different art practices throughout Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Uruguay, Venezuela, and beyond.

The year 1988 would be pivotal in The Blanton's history. In a risky and visionary move that signaled the depth of its commitment to Latin American art, the museum became the first North American institution to establish a curatorial position exclusively dedicated to this field. Mari Carmen Ramírez was the first curator to hold this post, developing groundbreaking exhibitions such as The School of the South: El Taller Torres–Garcia and Its Legacy (1991) and Cantos Paralelos: Visual Parody in Contemporary Argentinean Art (1999). In 2002, two years after her departure, Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro became the second curator to lead the department. His six-year tenure saw
the reinstallment of the permanent collection as America/Americas at the then newly opened Mari and James A. Michener Gallery Building (2006), the redefinition of the institution’s mission as serving both the university and Austin communities, and concluded with the award-winning exhibition Geometry of Hope: Latin American Abstract Art from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection (2007). While both curators shaped and presided over one of the few North American curatorial departments exclusively devoted to Latin American art, they also became leaders within this growing field that transformed debates, displays, and missions of museums and universities in the United States.

In 2008, the year that I was given charge of the Latin American department following Pérez-Barreiro’s departure, The Blanton faced great new challenges and changes. Its director of thirty years, Jessie
Otto Hite, retired, followed by a two-year search for a new director. Ned Rifkin then briefly served two years before the appointment in 2011 of Simone Wicha as director of the institution. While these changes took place, the field of Latin American art saw exceptional international expansion, resulting in the founding of several Latin American art departments in museums and the growth in numbers of Latin American art enthusiasts around the world. These developments transformed the topography and geography of the field and outgrew the infrastructure that defined debates, collecting practices, and exhibitions. As a result, the role The Blanton played when it first began collecting and exhibiting Latin American art dramatically changed in a matter of years. Today, Latin American art no longer lives exclusively within region-specific departments or museums. In recent years, specialists of American and European modern and contemporary art have organized and presented work from across Latin America, enriching the current debates and discourse—particularly when considering issues such as identity, gender, and geography. Within this context, The Blanton’s approach to Latin American art shifted from displaying North and South American art as parallel but different histories, to the aforementioned America/Americas, a platform that redefined the political map to create a borderless geography for art from the Americas. Co-curated by Annette DiMeo Carlozzi, current deputy director for art and programs at The Blanton and then curator of American and contemporary art, and Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, this display of the permanent collection combines the museum’s modern and contemporary American and Latin American art holdings, making connections between the artistic movements, history, politics, economics, and cultures of the entire continent. This proposition responded to the changing landscape of the study of art and intended to expand horizons and revisit assumptions of how region-specific art should connect with art from other localities.

In addition to the changes developing in the field at large, The Blanton’s location—a research university with a strong commitment to Latin American studies—has significantly informed our methodology for researching and producing exhibitions and publications on Latin American art. First as a university
Installation view of America/Americas, 2006, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin.
The Blanton's Latin American art project has grown alongside one of the most important art history departments in the nation. In 1981, UT Austin became the first institution of higher education to establish an academic position devoted to the study and teaching of Latin American art. Dr. Jacqueline Barnitz first held this position, and in later years, the Latin American art faculty grew to two posts, currently occupied by Dr. Andrea Giunta and Dr. George Flaherty (see related story p. 51). These academic voices have had great value in the development of The Blanton's Latin American art project. Indeed, many of our exhibitions were conceived and organized in conjunction with faculty and graduate students. Exhibitions like the aforementioned The Geometry of Hope, The New York Graphic Workshop, 1965–1970 (2008), and Recovering Beauty: The 1990s in Buenos Aires invited the participation of faculty and students through related research seminars, public programs, and publications. These critical discussions have greatly contributed to each project, resulting in tangible decisions that positively shaped exhibitions and publications. In addition, the participation of students, art history, and art education in academic and curatorial projects has enriched their graduate school experience and shaped their young professional careers.

As the debates around Latin American art transformed, so did the art market. In 1998 the museum was able to acquire one of the most important works by now internationally recognized Brazilian artist Cildo Meireles, the installation Missão/Missões (1987). However, in the face of escalating prices over the past decade, The Blanton has changed its collecting strategy in order to continue to grow its holdings within its purchasing capabilities. By 2004, the museum was collecting the work of artists from the 1990s generation. The idea behind this initiative was to collect key artists working in different cities throughout Latin America in order to contextualize the contemporary artistic production developing in contexts as different as Santiago de Chile and Guatemala City. This strategy not only allowed us to document art “scenes,” it also led to the development of research projects that centered on the urban nucleus of the works. Such was the case of the aforementioned Recovering Beauty, the first historical examination of artistic production in Buenos Aires during the last decade of the twentieth century.

While the study, presentation, and collecting of Latin American art has rapidly diversified, creating a richer and more complex field, this does not imply that specialists in this area of study are no longer needed in order to produce scholarship and exhibitions. On the contrary, experts in Argentinean, Mexican, Brazilian, and Guatemalan art, among others, should take the lead in shaping the debates taking place around Latin American art. In an expanding world where borders are easily crossed in the digital sphere, specificity in the face of integration is more important than ever. In a way, the history behind The Blanton’s Latin American art project serves as a blueprint of the field’s early beginnings, development, and growth. It is important to recognize that key to The Blanton’s identity and Latin American art project is its relationship with UT, a university that houses one of the most important Latin American studies programs in the world. This setting demands a curatorial practice that is open to debate and questioning, and that integrates critical voices and embraces experimentation—exactly the kind of environment that prospers in any university.

We are once again at a crossroads that calls for a visionary program and commitment to excellence. With this in mind, the museum’s future programming in Latin American art grows out of a commitment to bilateral collaboration. We recently established a partnership with the Fundação Iberê Camargo (Porto Alegre, Brazil) to develop the first career survey of recognized Brazilian artist Waltermcio Caldas. This exhibition will open first in 2012 in Porto Alegre, and then during spring of 2013 will travel to the Pinacoteca da Estado de São Paulo and in fall of the same year to The Blanton.

Whenever I am asked why I specialized in Latin American art my answer is: because the art from this region has density, agency, and history, and the artists never cease to take risks allowing for the unexpected while mirroring the specificity of their own reality. Indeed, Latin American art allows for a multidimensional and sensorial experience. The vision to define a curatorial practice focus on Latin American art should therefore come from the source itself: the art and its creators.

Notes
1. In 1980 the University Art Museum was officially renamed the Archer M. Huntington Gallery, and in 1997 it became the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art.
2. It is important to mention that MoMA is considered one of the first institutions of international prominence to devote attention and resources to art from Latin America. Their involvement with the field has been episodic. Beginning in the 1930s, the museum mostly collected art by Mexican artists. The following decade the institution expanded its purview to other artists from South America. The postwar years saw a decreasing interest in acquisitions and display of art from the region. However, since the 1990s, a resurgence of collecting activity devoted to Latin American art as well as the display of monographic exhibitions of artists from Venezuela and Mexico, among others, have reenergized MoMA’s Latin American program.
3. Donald Goodall met Barbara Duncan in 1966 at Yale University during the symposium organized in conjunction with the exhibition Art of Latin America Since Independence: 1800–1965, curated by Stanton Loomis Catlin, from Yale University Art Gallery, and Terence Grieder, from the University of Texas. The exhibition was displayed at the Blanton Museum (then the University Art Museum) April 17–May 22, 1966.
4. The Duncans donations to the museum continued through 1999.
5. Previous to the Duncans’ donation, The Blanton received a major gift of American art in 1968 from writer James Michener and his wife. The Michener donation of close to 300 works played a role in the Duncans’ decision to offer their collection to the museum.
6. Mari Carmen Ramirez is currently the Wortham Curator of Latin American Art and the director of the International Center for the Arts of the Americas at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.
7. Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro is currently director of the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros.
8. I was the curator of Recovering Beauty: The 1990s in Buenos Aires. The exhibition, displayed at The Blanton February 20–May 22, 2011, was developed in collaboration with UT and Universidad de Buenos Aires graduate students.

Ursula Davila-Villa is associate curator of Latin American art at the Blanton Museum of Art.
Tucked away on the first floor of the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas at Austin is an interdisciplinary center dedicated to facilitating knowledge, learning, and understanding about the ancient indigenous cultures and peoples of present-day Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador: The Mesoamerica Center.

Directed by David Stuart, the Linda and David Schele Professor of Mesoamerican Art, the Mesoamerica Center focuses primarily on the integrated study of the arts, languages, and archaeology of Mesoamerican indigenous cultures. In addition to acting as a hub for scholars, students, and the general public, the Mesoamerica Center oversees Casa Herrera, a facility in the heart of the city of Antigua, Guatemala, and the Maya Meetings, a premier academic conference and symposium on Mesoamerican culture.

Casa Herrera, a colonial house in the center of Antigua, has dramatically changed the reach of the Mesoamerica Center. The new research, conference, and teaching facility is operated year-round by the Department of Art and Art History at UT Austin in collaboration with the Fundación Pantaleón. This nonprofit organization was founded in 1992 with a mission to support education, health, and environmental projects that offer an opportunity to improve the level and quality of life in Guatemala.

During 2011, the Mesoamerica Center oversaw its inaugural semester abroad. Casa Herrera’s mission of bringing interrelated disciplines together to study pre-Columbian art, archaeology, history, and culture comes alive during the semester abroad. Studying abroad at Casa Herrera is a unique experience. Dr. Stuart, who served as the faculty leader during the first semester, explains the appeal of the program: “Antigua is a jewel, regarded by many as one of the most beautiful towns in the Americas. The Casa Herrera is the base of our operations, with classroom space and study areas. It’s a beautiful example of Spanish colonial architecture, and it’s been fully renovated with all modern amenities. The students stay with local host families in Antigua, sharing meals with them and interacting almost as family members. That

David Stuart, Director of the Mesoamerica Center.
kind of intense personal experience of another country and culture will allow the students to expand their horizons and learn in ways far deeper and richer than many other study abroad offerings offered at U.S. universities.”

As one of the most important cultural and artistic centers in Central America, Antigua has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site and draws a large number of international visitors and students every year. Students take part in learning a broad range of subjects, along with immersion in the Guatemalan Spanish and Maya language and culture. Beginning with spring 2013, the semester-long Study Abroad program will take place at Casa Herrera annually.

This is an exciting time for Maya studies. The 2012 phenomenon has highlighted public awareness, and recent excavations in projects in Guatemala and Mexico have yielded new discoveries that are adding to our knowledge about the ancient Maya. In 2011 a team of archaeologists uncovered a small room at the Maya site of Xultun in northern Guatemala. Barely missed by a looters trench, the walls and ceiling still retain a rare example of original painting. This find is especially significant; depicted on the wall are several human figures and hieroglyphic writing. Stuart, who works with the Xultun project and deciphered the glyphs, says, “This is tremendously exciting,” noting that the columns of numbers interspersed with glyphs inside circles is “the kind of thing that only appears in one place—the Dresden Codex [one of the few remaining Maya manuscripts].”

Many of the recent new archaeological findings in the Maya area will be the center of attention at the 2013 Maya Meetings. Titled The Art of Maya Architecture: Cosmology and Dynasty in the Built Environment, they will take place January 15–18, 2013, at UT Austin.

The annual Maya Meetings bring together scholars and interested individuals to study and explore the richness of ancient Maya art, archaeology, and writing. The celebrated Mayanist Linda Schele, a Professor of Art and Art History at UT Austin until her untimely death in 1998, founded the conference in 1977, then known as the Maya Hieroglyphic Workshops. Since their inception, the Maya Meetings have featured lectures, forums, and research workshops, many geared toward the study and learning of ancient Maya hieroglyphs. More than thirty years later, the meetings continue to feature cutting-edge scholarly gatherings on Maya studies.

In 2010 the Maya Meetings were held for the first time at Casa Herrera. The topic for the first conference away from Austin was Early Maya Iconography and Script. Many of the lectures focused on new research being carried out right in the “backyard” of the conference, and a number of participants who are unable to travel to the United States were able to participate in the hieroglyph workshops and conference.

In 2011 the Maya Meetings returned to Austin to tackle the problem of Maya time. 2012: Time and Prophecy in Mesoamerica...
brought in scholars to talk about the influence of the Maya calendar and time itself on ritual and daily life. Lectures ranged from topics on the mechanics of the Maya calendar to “New Age” beliefs about 2012.

The 2012 Maya Meetings returned to Casa Herrera in Antigua. Beyond the Glyph: Maya Inscriptions as Literature was the first international conference devoted to the topic of ancient Maya literature. Presenters and attendees grappled with the question of how to study deciphered hieroglyphic writing as true texts. Can different genres of writing be identified? How did scribes design their texts rhetorically and visually to convey and highlight information? Questions such as these were addressed not only by specialists in ancient Maya writing, but scholars of contemporary Maya literature as well.

The Mesoamerica Center will continue to make Antigua a routine location for Maya Meeting conferences, alternating each year with our traditional venue on the UT Austin campus.

The Mesoamerica Center in Austin is equally active throughout the year. On any given day, you can find David Stuart diligently deciphering the latest hieroglyphic discoveries or Julia Guernsey decoding the enigmatic “potbelly” sculptures that were erected at dozens of sites across Mesoamerica during the Preclassic period. The Mesoamerica Center affiliated faculty engage in research on a variety of topics ranging from ancient to modern Maya studies.

Julia Guernsey is an Associate Professor from the Department of Art and Art History and affiliated faculty of the Mesoamerica Center. Guernsey’s research and publications focus on the Middle and Late Preclassic periods in ancient Mesoamerica, in particular on sculptural expressions of rulership during this time. Her latest book, Sculpture and Social Dynamics in Preclassic Mesoamerica (Cambridge University Press, 2012), examines the functions of sculpture during this period and its significance in statements of social identity. She recently received the 2012 Department of Art and Art History Teaching Excellence Award.

David Stuart’s interests in the traditional cultures of Mesoamerica are wide-ranging, but his primary research focus is the archaeology and epigraphy of ancient Maya civilization. His early work on the decipherment of Maya hieroglyphs led to a MacArthur Fellowship in 1984, the youngest recipient of the “genius” award. His publication Ten Phonetic Syllables (1987) laid much of the groundwork for the now-accepted methodology of decipherment.

Stuart’s latest book, The Order of Days (Random House, 2012), is a popular account of Ancient Maya calendars and cosmology. Stuart also has discussed the recent 2012 phenomenon on his own blog (http://decipherment.wordpress.com). Dispelling the myths surrounding this date, he explains that the Maya calendar does not end in 2012: “What will happen is a recurrence, an anniversary of sorts, of a key mythological date in the distant past. The Maya wrote this as 13.0.0.0.0 in their ‘Long Count’ calendar (an abbreviation of a much bigger number), which fell on August 11, 3114 BC. This ‘creation date’ was not the beginning of everything, however. Maya mythological texts tell us that plenty was happening long, long before this starting point of the current era.

On December 21, 2012 (some say December 23) we come again to a numerological recurrence of 13.0.0.0.0. The Long Count calendar continues well beyond this date, too. In fact, the numerology of the calendar demands that there will be other similar recurrences of this same date in the far distant future, on a scale of octillions of years. The scale of Maya time reckoning dwarfs anything in our own cosmology by many orders of magnitude.”

The mission of the Mesoamerica Center consists of fostering communication among many academic units on campus, highlighting the interdisciplinary strengths of faculty and students at UT Austin. “We’re trying to dispel some of the mystery, and show the ancient and modern Maya as real people with a real history and identity in today’s world,” says Stuart. “The ancient Maya did not disappear—they transformed.”

Paola Bueché is senior program coordinator for the Mesoamerica Center.

Julia Guernsey lectures at the 2012 Maya Meetings held at Casa Herrera.
My memories of LLILAS are foggy. I remember going to Mexico to the Latin American Studies Association Congress in a van with fifteen other anxious students and not attending a single panel. I remember very large parties at the house where I lived with my fantastically garrulous and social roommate who rarely went to class but taught me everything I know about how to enjoy life. I remember learning how to cook and make beer. I remember spending a lot of time on my porch, then going to another porch and spending a lot of time there as well. I remember the music—always live, always in a rustic, genuine place with a lot of slow-cooked ribs within reach.

But while those great memories stir my soul when I think of my time in Austin, it’s what I learned at LLILAS that keeps me employed and doing what I love. I currently run a small think tank that focuses on organized crime in Latin America and the Caribbean called InSight Crime (insightcrime.org). My partner and I are both former journalists. I went into journalism after I finished LLILAS, first with an oil services newsletter, then a business news outlet, and eventually into the mainstream with National Public Radio, the Washington Post, and others.

I have spent my entire career working on issues in Latin America and the Caribbean, and from the start, I felt that LLILAS had given me an advantage over my colleagues. The intellectual foundation I obtained in Austin gave me a different optic from which to probe leftist guerrillas during my first years as a freelancer in Colombia. I had spent most of my time at LLILAS studying Colombia, particularly the leftist guerrillas there, so meeting them in person was a tremendous opportunity to test what I’d learned in graduate school.

Most of the guerrillas I spoke to looked at me sideways when I asked them these long-winded, historical questions, but they obliged and some of them relished the opportunity. One of them, alias “Simon Trinidad,” was a former banker and might have been a sociologist if he hadn’t become one of the most feared commanders on the northern coast of Colombia. He and I spent a long time trying to determine how the rebels would actually implement a crop-substitution program in the areas under their control. (Trinidad was later captured, extradited to the United States, and convicted in a Washington, D.C., court of participating in the kidnapping of three U.S. Pentagon contractors; he is now in a Colorado prison serving a sixty-year sentence.)

That same intellectual approach served me as well with the guerrillas’ arch enemies, the right-wing paramilitaries. One of them known simply as “Pedro the Pretty One” was the commander of close to 900 men in the banana-growing region along the country’s northern coast. As we drove along a lonely road one sweltering afternoon talking politics and guerrilla warfare, he posed a question: “If you had to choose between being a guerrilla and being a paramilitary, what would you choose?”

Of course, I thought carefully before I answered. “Pedro,” whose real name is Raul Hazbun, had led a bloody takeover of the area he commanded. His men had killed hundreds of suspected guerrilla sympathizers. He had sent men to kill union leaders inside a Coca-Cola bottling plant that led to a civil suit in the U.S. It later emerged that he also was the mastermind of the pay-for-protection scheme that got Chiquita Banana into a terrible fix with the Justice Department and is now the largest civil justice suit to ever be heard in a U.S. courtroom ($15 billion).

“Well, Pedro,” I replied, slowly, feeling as if I were in one of those small rooms in Sid Richardson Hall and hadn’t done the reading, “I would probably be a guerrilla.”

Pedro paused and smiled. “Me too,” he finally said.
I reached that “intellectual” stage with people like Pedro and Trinidad in part because of my experiences at LLILAS. We were not debating life and death. We were in the classroom debating ideas. I wasn’t sucking information from them. I was learning about who they were and how they thought through deep and difficult problems.

These days I am the “big” thinker of our organization. The Internet has changed everything about how we manage and present information, and part of that game is illustrating that you are taking on the big questions. We spend a lot of time trying to figure out things like: How much are the Zetas making on small-time drug trafficking in Monterrey? Do the Rastrojos in Colombia control the entire chain of distribution? Does the kingpin strategy make for more or less violence? Should governments negotiate with street gangs?

We produce numerous news and analysis articles every day and are producing numerous longer investigations that range from measuring potential violence during elections to studying the financial ledgers of criminal groups to better understand their criminal portfolios. We are currently in the midst of coordinating a four-partner investigation into human rights and organized crime, which will appear simultaneously on the five websites in two different languages. And we are coordinating numerous other think tanks on a project that explores the relationship between elites and organized crime.

What sets us apart is the same intellectual, rather than journalistic, curiosity that set me apart from my colleagues. And that is due, in large part, to my experiences at LLILAS. When I arrived at the University of Texas at Austin in August 1996, I had narrowed my career choices to two: journalism or work for a nongovernmental organization. What I did not know is that I was going to do both at the same time. What I did know was that LLILAS would prepare me to do either.

Steve Dudley graduated with an MA from LLILAS in 1998. He is author of Walking Ghosts: Murder and Guerrilla Politics in Colombia (Routledge, 2004).

Chair Established in Latin American Art History and Criticism

Prof. Andrea Giunta has been appointed to the newly established Endowed Chair in Latin American Art History and Criticism in the Department of Art and Art History, College of Fine Arts. President Bill Powers allocated $1 million in proceeds from the Longhorn Network to create the chair. A $1 million matching gift from an anonymous donor will endow the Center for Latin American Visual Studies (CLAVIS) program. Giunta founded CLAVIS in 2009 and currently serves as director.

In 2008 Giunta cofounded the Permanent Seminar, an arena for presentations and joint debate. By using the Permanent Seminar and CLAVIS, Giunta has sought to build a nexus of initiatives for the study of Latin American art by reaching out to other programs across the country, as well as within Texas between the University of Texas, Southern Methodist University, and Rice University.

Giunta is also working with Mari Carmen Ramírez, curator of Latin American Art at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, to forge relationships between the International Center for the Arts of the Americas (ICAA) and CLAVIS to combine UT students’ research practices and the ICAA archives.

The endowed chair was created to help the Department of Art and Art History retain outstanding faculty in Latin American art history and consolidate the university’s long-standing distinction as one of the leading research and teaching institutions in Latin American art history and criticism.

The $1 million endowment to the CLAVIS program will fund student scholarships and fellowships, visiting scholars and artists, and student travel. CLAVIS brings together scholars, museum and library professionals, and collections in Latin America, the United States, and Europe to outline a complex vision of Latin American art and its evolving modernity.
The Tenth Muse:

The Life of

Sor Juana Ines

de la Cruz

by Ann Twinam

This is the written version of a talk delivered November 3, 2011, by Prof. Ann Twinam of the Department of History at the University of Texas at Austin, as part of the ongoing presentations showcasing the “Treasures of the Benson.” That night the audience viewed the entry book of the Convent of San Jeromino in which Sor Juana had placed her signature in blood as “I the worst of all.” This is one of the rarest “treasures of the Benson,” seldom open to public viewing given its fragility. Also brought from the Rare Books section were some first editions published by this brilliant “Tenth Muse,” who overcame her gender and illegitimacy to become one of the most esteemed writers of colonial Mexico.

Historical Context
I will start, as I always start when talking to my students about Sor Juana, with my memory concerning the first time I heard her name. I was a sophomore, taking my first class in Latin American history. I didn’t know that my professor Benjamin Keen was a major colonial scholar—students rarely know those kinds of things. What I do remember was that I loved his class. I will never forget what he said as he moved to the topic of Sor Juana. His face lit up as he said, “And now I’m going to talk about Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz—a light shining from the darkness of colonial Mexico.” I thought, “Wow, what does that mean?” Thinking back, I wouldn’t characterize colonial Mexico as dark, but I certainly understand what he meant about Sor Juana being a beacon. Sor Juana was born out of her time. Today she would be president of Harvard or head of the Council of Economic Advisers or a Nobel prizewinner in literature. Instead, her world forced her to use her talents to navigate as safe a place as possible to be able to exercise her passion and brilliance as a thinker and writer handicapped by the fact that she was a woman. I will consider three questions here:

1. What were the possibilities for a brilliant and beautiful girl in mid-seventeenth-century Mexico?
2. Why was the convent probably her only choice and what was her life like within it?
3. How did she become whipsawed by the ecclesiastical politics of her time, which led to one of her greatest works, “The Reply/La Respuesta.” In the end, was her spirit crushed? Was she defeated?

A Girl in Seventeenth-Century Mexico
What were the possibilities for this beautiful girl in seventeenth-century Mexico, given her background? Sor Juana started out with a number of variables against her. She was not rich, she was illegitimate, she was a woman. Her family was neither wealthy nor poor—her mother managed a farm near Puebla. Although in 1669 Juana...
Image of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz by Miguel Cabrera, National Museum of History, Chapultepec Castle, Mexico City.
of patronage. In this instance, the outcome was favorable. When a
ables that shaped Sor Juana's world—the critical presence or absence
for her beauty. She attracted the attention of the viceroy and the court.
She began to be lionized in high society for her intelligence and also
was able to read philosophical and theological works in the language.
There, she remembers, after only a mere twenty lessons in Latin, she
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described herself as the “legitimate daughter of Don Pedro de Asbaje
y Vargas and of Isabel Ramirez,” this was not so. The death certificate
of her mother—finally discovered in 1946—admits that Juana was
a “daughter of the church.” This meant that she was illegitimate,
which could have barred her from entrance to the convent. Although illegitimacy was not that uncommon for either the rich or poor in
Mexico, it was a disadvantage worth concealment.
No doubt Juana’s heaviest burden was that she was not only a
woman, but also brilliant. Her justification for the life of the intellectual,
“The Reply/La Respuesta,” provides insights into her early years. At
age three she learned to read, displaying her early genius. Around the
age of six, her desire for learning became so intense that she begged
her mother to let her dress up in men’s clothes and allow her to go and
study in Mexico City at the university, which only men were allowed
to attend. When she was nine (in 1660), she was sent to the capital
to live with her maternal aunt and the latter’s husband, Juan de Mata.
There, she remembers, after only a mere twenty lessons in Latin, she
was able to read philosophical and theological works in the language.
She began to be lionized in high society for her intelligence and also
for her beauty. She attracted the attention of the viceroy and the court.
Here in every aspect of her story we encounter one of the key vari-
bles that shaped Sor Juana’s world—the critical presence or absence
of patronage. In this instance, the outcome was favorable. When a
new viceroy, the Marquis of Mancera, arrived from Spain, Juana
was invited to court in 1662 at the age of eleven. She soon became
a favorite of Mancera and his wife, Leonor, and eventually became a
lady-in-waiting. It was during these years that she astonished forty
learned men who asked her questions on theology, science and his-
tory, which she answered with brilliance. Praised as a prodigy and a
beauty, Juana began to write, although not yet to publish her works.
The Option of Convent Life
The problem was that Juana could not remain a lady-in-waiting
at court forever. Women had few options in seventeenth-century
Mexico. They could marry, live at home, or enter the convent. Juana
faced additional problems given her illegitimacy and absence of a
dowry. She was not inclined to marry; she wanted to continue to
study, to read, and to write. The convent seemed a possible option. In
1667 Juana spent time at a Carmelite monastery but left after a few
months, as it was too strict. Two years later, at the age of eighteen,
she permanently entered the less austere monastery of the order
of San Jeromino, where she took the name Juana Ines de la Cruz.
Did Sor Juana have a vocation? Probably not the way we think of
it today. She certainly was religious, as were most women in colo-
nial Mexico. However, she was likely no different from girls today
who seek a career that will offer both economic security and social
respectability, but her options were limited.
What was Sor Juana’s life like in the convent? To the modern eye,
some colonial nunneries more resembled contemporary gated con-
dominium communities, with the key proviso that the residents were
not allowed to go outside the walls. Here the nuns owned two-story
apartments—as did Sor Juana in Mexico City. These included spacious
rooms, their own kitchen, a space to keep coal and firewood, and a
basin of water for drinking and another for washing. Sor Juana also
had a slave girl as a servant. Juana’s friends at court had raised the
3,000 pesos that would serve as her dowry and ongoing endowment
to maintain her lifestyle. She then continued to manage her own
funds, which she apparently did quite competently.
Nor was Sor Juana totally isolated in the convent; indeed, she
remained in active communication with the outside world. Although
she could not leave, outsiders could visit and converse with nuns
through the loctorio, a gated window. Numerous visitors, including
the viceroy, his wife, and the ladies of the court, visited Juana. Other
distinguished persons such as theologians and priests also commonly
visited nuns in convents. At times there were nonreligious entertain-
ments with singing, dancing, and theatre, usually performed by the
girls who were studying with the nuns.
We know that Sor Juana received many gifts from the elite of
Mexico City and also from abroad. Her belongings included jewels,
musical instruments, scholarly books, and mathematical instruments.
She spent her days writing poems and plays and studying philosophy,
music, and science. She also attended to her religious duties, observed
convent rules, and held positions including that of accountant.
In 1673, Viceroy Mancera and his wife left for Spain, and for the
next seven years the Archbishop of Mexico, Payo Enriquez de Rivera,
would act as viceroy. Under his patronage Sor Juana continued her
scholarship and writing. She began to receive ecclesiastic commis-
sions, and she wrote songs to be sung at religious ceremonies and
plays. In early 1680 she was commissioned to design one of two arches that would be built to welcome the new viceroy arriving from Spain. She also wrote a pamphlet explaining the allegorical meaning of the arch she had designed, published as *Neptuno alegórico*. One of the remaining copies of this work is preserved in the Benson.

The new viceroy, the Marquis de la Laguna and his wife, María Luisa, the Countess of Paredes, became even stronger patrons of Sor Juana. During the eight years that the Lagunas remained in Mexico, Sor Juana would write the bulk of her work. This included courtly and religious poetry and her long poem, “El Sueño/The Dream,” an allegorical interpretation of the limits of human knowledge.

The Lagunas protected Juana, and now she needed such protection. Her confessor, Antonio Núñez de Miranda, had publicly criticized her for her writing and her studies, but with viceregal patronage, she was safe from interference. Her problems began in 1688 when the Lagunas returned to Spain, taking with them much of what Juana had written to date, to arrange for publication.

**Ecclesiastical Politics and Later Life**

How did Juana become whipsawed by the ecclesiastical politics of her time, which led to one of her greatest works, “The Reply/La Respuesta”? In the end, was her spirit crushed? Was she defeated?

These last five years of Sor Juana’s life have been the subject of much debate. It is important to understand the context of what happened. For years, Juana’s confessor Antonio Núñez de Miranda had chastised her for publishing at all, much less writing secular court and love poetry. Juana had never, however, ventured into the realm of theological commentary, the exclusive terrain of male ecclesiastics. However, she finally analyzed and critiqued a sermon published by Brazilian Jesuit Antonio de Vieyra more than forty years before in which he debated the key qualities of Christ. Sor Juana did not agree with his choices and suggested others.

What happened next occurred on two levels. On the surface, the Bishop of Puebla Fernández de Santa Cruz somehow obtained a copy of Sor Juana’s writings on Vieyra’s sermon, which he thought were brilliant. It is unclear whether he asked Sor Juana for permission to publish them.

What is suggestive is that also underlying Bishop of Puebla Fernández de Santa Cruz’s promotion of Sor Juana’s publication may have been an attack on a rival. The bishop had recently been in competition for promotion to the highest ecclesiastical position in Mexico, Archbishop of Mexico City. His competitor was the Bishop of Michoacán Francisco Aguiar y Seijas. Apparently Aguiar y Seijas was a great admirer of the Jesuits, who had supported his candidacy for the post. He was also a particular admirer of Antonio de Vieyra, the Jesuit whose sermon Sor Juana had criticized, and he had even published some of his works. Aguiar y Seijas was also known for his extreme aversion to females.

According to Octavio Paz, Puebla Bishop Santa Cruz was miffed. He had originally been the favored candidate for promotion to the archbishopric. However, in Madrid there was political manipulation, and his rival Aguiar y Seijas received the coveted post. Therefore the bishop of Puebla was secretly striking back at his new superior—he was publishing an essay by a woman that criticized Archbishop Seijas’s favored preacher. Even though Bishop Santa Cruz might plan to embarrass his rival, he did not directly challenge the archbishop, for he did not identify his own role in the process. Instead, he published Sor Juana’s critique of Vieyra as the first part of a letter supposedly sent to Sor Juana from a Sor Filotea, a nun in a convent in Puebla. No such Filotea existed; rather, the bishop wrote the letter. While it praised the brilliance of Sor Juana’s arguments, it also severely critiqued that she wrote secular and theological works because she was a woman.

Bishop Santa Cruz’s plot to get back at a rival backfired. It unleashed a firestorm of criticism against the publication and its female author. Archbishop Aguiar y Seijas stormed against women in general, and against Sor Juana in particular. Bishop Santa Cruz, who had gotten Sor Juana in this mess, then turned on her and also reprimanded her. Sor Juana’s response was “La Respuesta/The Reply,” now considered the first work of feminist literature in the New World. In it, she provided a brief autobiography in which she brilliantly defended the life of the intellectual and the right of everyone, even women, to seek after knowledge. She also promised to follow a more “religious” routine.

The years of 1692 and 1693 were difficult ones for Mexico City, marked by flooding, disease, and food riots. They were also hard times for Sor Juana, for she lacked influential civil or church patrons. There was intense pressure for her to give away her possessions and to stop thinking and writing. In 1693 it appears that the church began an investigation of Sor Juana, and it was unclear if she might be a target of the Inquisition. The next year, 1694, Sor Juana celebrated a quarter century since taking her vows. That was when she signed in blood in the official book of the San Geronimo convent that she was the “worst of all.”

She abjured under great pressure; some say she was forced to sell her books and musical and scientific instruments. She donated some (but not all) of these to be sold to help the suffering poor in the city. The following year she died, during an epidemic that killed most of the nuns at her monastery.

At the end, was she broken?

Octavio Paz notes that the nuns of San Jeronimo estimated (and proved) that the archbishop’s agents had removed, in addition to the jewels, a sum equivalent to 5,200 pesos after her death. He suggests that those who said that she was defeated and had given up her library and collections, keeping only two or three devotional works and a few hair shirts, were wrong. This remains a debate among scholars.

Did she remain unvanquished? We can only speculate as we look at the page on the register of the convent of San Jeromino, one of the real “Treasures of the Benson.”

I would like to conclude, however with, another note: I would like to emphasize that the real treasure of the Benson is the Benson itself.

I will once again appreciate it next semester when I bring my introductory colonial Latin American class here to see the famous Lienzo de Tlaxcala, an indigenous portrayal of the conquest. Students get so excited about coming that they sometimes bring their boyfriends and girlfriends; some even drag their parents. Also, next semester, I’ll be teaching a graduate research seminar. The first thing the syllabus says is “Get thee to the Benson.” This is the repository of amazing research materials that will make it possible for students to fulfill the goal of the course: to write a publishable research paper. Finally, I’m about to send a book to press. I cannot tell you the number of research materials that will make it possible for students to fulfill the goal of the course: to write a publishable research paper. Finally, I’m about to send a book to press. I cannot tell you the number of research materials that will make it possible for students to fulfill the goal of the course: to write a publishable research paper. Finally, I’m about to send a book to press. I cannot tell you the number of research materials that will make it possible for students to fulfill the goal of the course: to write a publishable research paper. Finally, I’m about to send a book to press.
RIVER SYSTEMS ARE the primary agents of erosion, transportation, and deposition in most landscapes. Transfer of sediment by rivers is a key component of the global denudation system and provides a general measure of the rate of denudation of the continents and of the efficacy of erosion processes in lowering the land surface of the globe. In other words, sediments transported by rivers are the firsthand indication of how the landscape is evolving. Also, an important proportion of the sediment transported by many of the world’s rivers represents soil eroded from mining and deforested and agricultural lands. Deviations from the ambient sediment flux therefore provide a measure of land degradation and the associated reduction in the global soil resource.

It is well documented that human-induced factors and natural influences, such as climate and river runoff, and many characteristics of the drainage basin, including size, geology, morphology, and vegetation, control the “normal” transport of sediment along hydrological pathways. Rivers and their watersheds are Earth systems that evolve across time, with modern river dynamics mostly influenced both by paleo conditions within the drainage basin and by perturbations of humans. Variability in fluxes of water and sediment from rivers reflects the influence of both long-term (century to millennial) and short-term (annual and interannual) fluctuations in climate. Superimposed on these influences are the effects of human-induced change on both the drainage basin and the river itself (Restrepo and Syvitski 2006).

Many authors have documented the relevant role played by so-called technological denudation, the human contribution to sediment generation. A good discussion on the human role in recent landscape change is given by Bonachea et al. (2010). According to these authors, human mobilization of sediments could be one or two orders of magnitude greater than denudation/transport by natural processes. In fact, global erosion rates from natural processes are between 0.1 and 0.01 mm yr⁻¹, while land loss due to human activities accounts for 1 mm yr⁻¹ (e.g., Rivas et al. 2006; Syvitski et al. 2005). There is no doubt that human impact on land surface is one of the main drivers of global change. Human capability to alter soils, land erosion, and sediment transport in rivers triggers a geomorphic response in the form of increased rates of natural disasters such as landslides and floods, and produces other associated environmental changes like...
soil denudation, desertification, habitat loss, and sedimentation. According to this global picture of human intervention on the territory, a relevant and unsolved issue in the Andean region as well as in other world river catchments is whether land-use change or climate change is the main trigger of accelerated erosion-accumulation processes and related extreme events (e.g., floods and landslides).

Similar to other rivers worldwide, the northern Andean rivers of Colombia are experiencing environmental consequences due to soil degradation, including increased sediment production; reduced soil resilience to erosion; mass movements (landslides); sediment deposition in rivers, lakes, wetlands, and coastal zones; reduced hydrologic storage in water bodies; and increasing frequency and magnitude of floods.

During La Niña event 2010–2011, Colombia and its larger Andean river, the Magdalena, experienced the worst flooding event on record, called the “wet wave.” Economic losses were almost US$15 billion (3% of the national GDP), twice the economic losses as those of the last major earthquake in the coffee region in 1999. Environmental institutions, including the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the National Environmental System (SINA), the regional corporations, and the central government, are blaming climate change as the major trigger of the “wet wave.” In the last decade, scientific studies by the Universidad EAFIT of the Andean rivers of Colombia formulate a different hypothesis. They suggest that there is an increase in the rate and magnitude of natural disasters associated with soils (floods, landslides) that could be due mainly to growing land-surface modification caused by human activity, and to a lesser extent, by climate change. If this hypothesis is proved for the Andean region, it could have a major impact on mitigation strategies, since funds could be directed towards soil conservation rather than climate change mitigation. The first approach has a regional impact, and its results are more measurable at local and regional scales, while the second is a global issue that depends on developed countries and economies.

One of the first studies assessing the human impact on soil erosion in Colombia (Restrepo and Syvitski 2006) shows that erosion for the whole central part of the northern Andes can be explained by natural variables, including runoff and maximum water discharge. These two estimators explain 58% of variance in erosion. Temporal analyses of sediment discharges and land use show that the extent of erosion within the Colombian catchments has increased over the last 10 to 20 years. Many anthropogenic influences, including a forest decrease by 44% in a 20-year period, an agriculture and pasture increase by 75%, poor soil conservation and mining practices, and increasing rates of urbanization, may have accounted for the overall increasing trends in erosion on a regional scale.

The percentage of forest cover in the Andes of Colombia was estimated to have declined from 66% in 1970 to 22% in 1990, with an annual deforestation rate of 1.9%, or 274,000 ha yr⁻¹ (Restrepo and Syvitski 2006). For the whole country, a recent assessment of deforestation by IDEAM (National Institute of Hydrology and Environmental Studies) between 2000 and 2008 indicates a national rate of forest loss of 336,000 ha yr⁻¹. This rate is considered to be among the highest in the world. For instance, when comparing this rate of deforestation to the global rates published by FAO (2010), Colombia, with an area of 1.14 million km² and representing about 0.1% of the global land, contributes with approximately 5% to the global forest loss. According to the recent study on numerical modeling of erosion in the northern Andes by Universidad EAFIT and the University of Colorado at Boulder (Kettner et al. 2010), human activities in terms of deforestation explain about 32% of the observed variance in erosion! Thus, the amount of sediment transported by Andean rivers of Colombia to the Caribbean Sea, approximately 50 Mt (million tons) annually, is due to deforestation.

The illicit drug trade of coca in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia also has been identified as a contributor to deforestation in the tropical Andes (Harden 2006). The U.S. State Department (2001) estimated that a minimum of 2.4 Mha (million hectares) of forest was cleared for coca production in the Andean region over the previous 20 years. The environmental report of Colombia, a study made by the World Bank (Sánchez-Triana et al. 2007), estimated that at least 850,000 ha of forest were also cleared for coca production in the Colombian Andes between 1978 and 1998. A recent survey in the Pacific forests of Colombia, including the Patía River drainage basin, has shown a dramatic expansion of the area of deforestation due to cocaine crops. In the Patía River catchment alone, including a major tributary system, the Telembí River, approximately 12,000 ha of forest were also cleared for coca crops since the mid-1990s. This is the largest area of coca cultivation in the country. Overall, one-third of the deforested area in Colombia is due to cocaine crops (Report of United Nations Office Against Drugs 2011).

Agriculture plays a major role in the dynamics of landscape fragmentation. As in other tropical highland regions, agricultural intensification has been documented in the northern Andes of Colombia. Since 1985 the participation of agricultural activities in the gross domestic product has increased five-fold. It includes, with more or less equal frequencies, forest conversion for permanent cropping, cattle ranching, shifting cultivation, and colonization agriculture. According to Geist and Lambin (2002), agricultural expansion is by far the leading land use change associated with nearly all deforestation cases in tropical regions (96%). Also, this study on proximate causes and underlying drivers of tropical deforestation points out that permanent agriculture displays low geographical variation in tropical areas; that is, regional values for permanent cultivation in Latin America, for example, are close to the global value (i.e., 50%). For the Andes of Colombia, the results presented by Restrepo and Syvitski (2006) and...
previous evidence from other assessments of land cover change in Colombia suggest that forest loss and expansion of agricultural land are directly correlated. In addition, an estimate of the Republic Bank of Colombia shows that land for cattle ranching increased from 16 Mha in 1984 to 66 Mha in 2008.

Although agriculture may be the dominant cause of catchment disturbance and accelerated erosion in most areas of the world, other forms of land disturbance, including logging and mining, can also have a significant impact on sediment mobilization and increase specific erosion from small basins by as much as 20-fold. For the central Andes of Colombia, mining activities have increased their participation in the gross domestic product by approximately 70% during the last 15 years. Within the Magdalena River, the Cauca basin shows a dramatic increase in sediment transport for the last 20 years. The most extensive and profitable gold mining is located in the lower course of the Cauca and its tributary, the Nechi. Gold extraction has increased from 6.6 T/yr of gold in 1990 to 25 T/yr in 2008. Associated high concentrations of suspended sediments, often greater than 1,600 mg l⁻¹, have resulted from the rapid erosion of the lowlands, partly because of ongoing gold mining.

Currently, Colombia is having a huge debate about the relationship between economic growth and mining activities. Many environmental issues are discussed in the media, including how multinational mining companies are acquiring land, soil, and resources. Environmentalists argue that increased economic growth by consuming natural resources is one of the main drivers of environmental deterioration. The Colombian government is providing tax incentives to multinational companies to come and explore the territory. This is how the government plans to increase the national GDP in the short term. The income obtained from mining companies in 2011, including oil industries, was $6.53 billion, but the government gave back to these companies $3.51 billion in tax exemptions. It is well known that mining is the first driver of deforestation in the Andes and in the Amazon regions of Colombia since 2000. Furthermore, illegal mining has increased exponentially between 2004 and 2012. Between 2004 and 2008, the government issued licenses to mining companies for 10% of the Colombian territory. For example, the total number of mining licenses issued to companies in 2004 was about 1,047. By 2008 that number increased to 8,444. Right now some assessments indicate that near 60% of the Colombian territory is being negotiated for mining by multinationals.

All environmental facts mentioned above indicate that land use in the Andes of Colombia during the last four decades has altered river hydrology and soils, which in turn have produced geomorphic responses in the upstream and river floodplains. The observed magnitude of floods during the so-called wet...
wave in 2010–2011 appear to be due to the increasing trend of erosion and further sediment deposition in rivers, lakes, and wetlands, a process that has reduced hydrologic storage of these water bodies and has increased the frequency and magnitude of floods.

In Colombia, deniers of land-use change and its impact on floods argue that climate change is the main trigger of the experienced floods during the last four years. Nevertheless, the following arguments at a global and regional scale, based on reports and models by the IPCC (International Panel of Climate Change) and regional studies, allow us to rule out changes in precipitation as the main cause: (1) only 2%–7% of the global analyzed time series of precipitation show increasing trends; (2) the observed exponential increasing trend of global floods does not match with trends in precipitation at any geographical scale; (3) there is no proven scientific connection between the occurrence of La Niña events and climate change; (4) there are no reliable predictions of precipitation trends in Latin America; (5) a recent study on precipitation trends in Colombia during the last three decades (Cardona and Poveda 2011) shows no regional sign of increasing trend in rainfall; and (6) Andean rivers of Colombia exhibit increasing trends in sediment transport and water discharge, while no trend in rainfall. Thus, it appears that rivers are having more water in their channels for the same amount of precipitation received in their catchments (Restrepo 2005).

If the working hypothesis were correct, that is, that humans are the main cause of erosion and recurrent floods, this finding would have important consequences for mitigation and adaptation. Thus, the institutional policies should also consider land-use change due to human activities in addition to climate change. The latter depends on international policies, while the former is easier to address at local and regional scales.

James Hansen, a well-known climate scientist, affirms: “Our current challenge in environmental science relates to how research should be communicated to the public and policy makers.” A social process designed to bring the findings of science to bear on the needs of decision-makers should rely on scientific assessments. The judgment of experts to existing knowledge provides scientifically credible answers to policy relevant questions.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a region that seeks to balance economic growth with environmental sustainability, the connection between science and decision-makers is the missing piece of the environmental puzzle. Government institutions are not well informed about the kind of science accomplished in many disciplines, and scientific results are not incorporated within future development planning and mitigation strategies against natural disasters. Sybil Seitzinger, the Executive Director of IGBP (International Geosphere Biosphere Program), says: “What is needed is a science-policy interface that connects the dots, proposes solutions and sounds alarm bells on emerging issues.” This is the part that governments in developing countries, including Colombia, are omitting: the communication between environmental scientists and policy makers.

Imagine a country like Colombia, located in the Intertropical Convergent Zone within the humid tropics, full of biological productivity and biodiversity (second only to Brazil with more biodiversity per square meter), and sixth top country in water resources. With all these geographic conditions it is hard to conceive that this could be a land similar to Haiti. In fact, Colombia is rapidly headed in that direction. The same situation occurs in many Latin American and Caribbean countries. Thus, the way to approach this socioeconomic and environmental challenge is to develop capacity building to assess the effects of human activities in our territories, reviewing the way to value and include ecosystem services into the economies. In other words, we need to get rid of the climate change speech and focus on the way we treat our land.

Juan D. Restrepo, one of Colombia’s top hydroographers and professor at the Universidad EAFIT in Medellín, was Tinker Visiting Professor at LLILAS during fall 2011.

References


The Graduate Program in Latin American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin

by Henry Dietz and Kimberly Terry

THE TERESA LOZANO LONG Institute of Latin American Studies (LLILAS) may well be the oldest degree program of its kind in the United States. The institute went into operation in the fall of 1940 and was built upon the Latin American Collection that was started in the early 1920s, a longtime Texas interest in Latin America and Mexico, and the Good Neighbor Policy of the Roosevelt administration. The institute was from its beginning a major player in creating and sustaining academic and public interest in the region.

The graduate program in LLILAS has always offered two degrees—the master’s and the doctorate. The MA is a two-year degree that allows all students to develop a flexible program of work tailored to their own interests. For many MA students LLILAS is a stepping stone toward a PhD in an academic discipline; for others it is a terminal degree that prepares them for work with the federal government in Washington or a nongovernmental or private-sector organization, or to return to Latin America and work there.

The MA offers three plans of study: first, Plan A, which involves writing a thesis in the student’s major area during the second year of work; Plan B, which requires two reports in two disciplines in lieu of a thesis; and Plan C, which lets the student take necessary coursework in methodology that by definition has no Latin American content but that is necessary for completion of a thesis (economics is one such common discipline). All coursework must contain a substantial element of Latin American content to count toward the degree. However, courses that examine a major theme or topic (e.g., ethnic politics) that does not concentrate on Latin America but permits the student to write a seminar paper on a Latin American topic enable students to obtain disciplinary training while focusing on Latin America.

Each MA student thus creates his or her own program of work. In recent years a prose seminar has been required for all first-year students; it offers a rigorous overview of research questions and methodologies that introduces the students to the current state of inquiry dealing with Latin America, but otherwise students put together their own programs. In Plan A, for example, students name a major field (five courses) and a minor field (three courses). These can be academic disciplines or departments such as anthropology, economics, government, history, sociology, or a language or literature. But the major or minor can also be a regional focus (e.g., Mexican, Brazilian, or Central American studies), or it can be a concentration or theme such as human rights or development studies or race and identity. Students who select either Plan B or C follow this same general scheme, except that in Plan B three fields must be present. With this wide and indeed limitless range of options available, students can create their own course of work to suit their academic interests and career plans.

This flexibility of program creation rests upon having significant resources available on the campus. These include, first, a large number of faculty members, many of whom are concentrated in the humanities (languages and history) as well as the social sciences (anthropology, economics, geography, government, sociology), but who also include scholars from across the campus in architecture,
engineering, law, the natural sciences, and public affairs. In total, around 125 faculty members have Latin America as their major focus of research and teaching. This large number of faculty generates about forty to fifty graduate-level courses every semester with Latin American content. And all of this has as its foundation the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, which is the largest and most comprehensive university library in the United States, and arguably in the world, dedicated to the region. Its total holdings are close to a million volumes, and more, of course, are added each year.

For decades LLILAS has had a range of dual degree offerings with several of the university’s professional schools, including the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs, the School of Law, Community and Regional Planning in the School of Architecture, the McCombs School of Business, the Information School, and the College of Communication (journalism, radio-television-film, and communication theory). Students apply and are admitted to each program and complete degree requirements for each MA; they also write either a thesis or a professional report on a topic relevant to both Latin America and the additional program. These dual degree plans prepare the student not only with regional expertise but also with professional training.

LLILAS graduate students can also combine their work with several multidisciplinary institutes on campus, including the Center for Women’s and Gender Studies, the Center for Mexican American Studies, the Warfield Center for African and African American Studies, and the Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice. These and other centers and institutes allow LLILAS graduate students to expand their expertise and to include insights and perspectives from such areas in their own research.

As noted earlier, LLILAS has from the start offered a PhD degree in Latin American Studies. This degree has been available to a small number of qualified students who can demonstrate to the Admissions Committee that they require a multidisciplinary doctorate that cannot be undertaken in a single academic department. Such students must enter the doctoral program with an MA degree already completed, either at UT or elsewhere. Upon admission, students form a committee that will see them through coursework, comprehensive exams, the development and defense of a proposal, and the dissertation.

The doctoral program recently has undergone some restructuring, and at present has developed three tracks: cultural agency and Maya studies from the Classic period to the present; social inequality, emphasizing race, gender, class, and human rights; and sustainable democracy, with concentrations of law, political institutions, governing resources, and territory. The program also now focuses much of its attention on students from Latin America who have the appropriate training and who will be returning to their home countries in academic capacities.

Latin American Studies at the University of Texas has a long and distinguished history of producing informed and motivated graduates who are well trained to undertake academic work or to become involved in either the public or private sector. With more than seventy years of excellence to build on, the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies looks forward to continuing its mission of encouraging and sustaining highly motivated students to make a difference.

Henry Dietz is the LLILAS graduate adviser and University Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Department of Government; Kimberly Terry is the LLILAS Graduate Program coordinator.
The Land of My Consciousness

by Nancy A. Preciado Rodriguez

In 1953, Juan Rulfo, one of the most renowned Latin American writers of the twentieth century, published El llano en llamas (The Burning Plain), a collection of realistic short stories about rural life in the land of his childhood in Jalisco, Mexico. Almost sixty years after Rulfo’s publication, this daughter of campesinos ejidatarios also has decided to write about the land of her childhood. For many, Rulfo’s burning plain is a geographical and imagined space that emerged from the literary discourse, but for me it has become the land of my consciousness.

I am the daughter of campesinos in Mexico and farmworkers in the U.S., who were forced to migrate as the result of a system of more than 500 years of exploitation, humiliation, and elimination. I have twenty-four years of experience living development under a capitalistic, neoliberal, or “modern” context in Mexico and in the U.S. In other words, I am a member of los de abajo (those at the bottom). The oral stories of humiliation, exploitation, and death, too common for us, have constructed my pessimistic reality and utopian ideology.

However, it was during the summer of 2011 and winter of 2012 in my return as “researcher” that my voice finally had the legitimacy conferred upon it by its manufacturers, that is, the intellectuals. In this article, you will learn that my “research” experience is our struggle for survival. I write from a particular position, and I will continue to write in this way as long as our conditions of oppression exist. My academic education may solve my personal problem of survival, but my personal problem will remain unsolved as long as it is not solved for los de abajo. The story you are about to read is the story of our new conquest, which takes place in the communities of the llano en llamas.

The Story of Our New Colonization

In his short story “Nos han dado la tierra” (“They Have Given Us the Land”), Rulfo relates the stories of campesinos and their land struggles after the agrarian reform. In my story, “Nos han quitado la tierra” (“They Have Taken Our Land”), I will provide a summary of my “research” experience, which describes the appropriation by colonization of the burning plain, a region whose primary colonizers are the invernaderos (greenhouse tomato producers) and the mining industry. This story began with trying to understand how the invernaderos have changed the livelihoods of campesinos in my community, Tonaya, and of the jornaleros (migrant workers). My conversations with the people of Tonaya revealed that a very small proportion of the population is employed by the invernaderos. The reason is simple: hard work for low wages. In addition, most of the population is subjugated by the caciques of the town, those who are buying and renting territory for the production of agave used for the tequila industry. As I continued to “research” communities with closer proximity to the invernaderos, I entered into the region known as the llano en llamas where the invernaderos are located. At their labor camps, I heard the stories of the migrant jornaleros, primarily indigenous, who for survival have engaged in contract labor and are the main workforce of the invernaderos. I sat down in houses with a single room shared by two or three families and listened to the stories of their jornalero children and their lack of alternatives to contract labor. I was given the best lesson in economics by a jornalera and her family who told me, “On a good day I earn an average of 100 pesos a day; a chicken costs 80 pesos and tortillas are 20 pesos a kilo. You tell me if you consider this a ‘decent wage’?” The company, however, continues to brag about paying their workers twice the minimum wage (minimum wage in Mexico is approximately $5 a day). The stories of the jornaleros made me realize that the current power structure at the llano en llamas is the same as during our initial colonization. Instead of chains, however, this new power structure uses modern methods such as the “corporate social responsibility” discourse, which is nothing more than the crumbs of a modern system that does not solve the problem of the oppressed, but placates them and consequently silences their outcry. This is the “vivir mejor” (live better) discourse of the Mexican state or its oligarchy. It is not “vivir bien” (live well) or “el buen vivir” (a life concept that roughly translates to collective well-being). It is simply providing its labor force with enough resources to keep them alive.

For the local communities, the invernadero has become a social agent that maintains general control of the social realities of the people in the communities. In addition to regulating the people’s lives via “employment opportunities,” they control natural resources...
such as water. The communities that are tired of the historical false promises made by the government guaranteeing access to water have, via the ejidatarios, started negotiations with the company Bioparques de Occidente S.A. de C.V. in an attempt to increase access to water for domestic use. Currently, they obtain water for domestic use only once a week, and their alternative access to water is a polluted river that they use to irrigate their plants and crops. In this sense the communities of the llano en llamas and the migrant laborers are employing the concept of uno no muere la mano del que te alimenta, aunque sea la misma mano que te golpea (you do not bite the hand that feeds you, even if this is the same hand that hits you), or hegemony in Gramscian terms.

“¡Diles que no me maten!” (“Tell Them Not to Kill Me!”) and “Es que somos muy pobres” (“It’s Because We Are Very Poor) are not simply the titles of works by Juan Rulfo, but the reality for us, the people of Tonaya, and our struggle to protect our natural resources. On July 21, 2011, I attended a community gathering and listened to the people of Tonaya demand the immediate closure of the mine Minera Metalúrgica Tapalpa S.A. de C.V., because the pollution of the river has caused the death of cattle and the loss of crops. I also heard mine workers from Chiquilistlan discuss the poverty that forces them to protect an income of 900 pesos a week. It was the events following the plebiscite, however, that revealed not only what Anibal Quijano calls a colonialism without a colonial administration, but also the reality reflected in Rulfo’s title “¡Diles que no me maten!” “Tell them not to kill me” is the silent outcry of the people in Tonaya, where the movement against the mine has ceased because of public intimidation and death threats to community activists. Despite my privileged status as a foreign researcher, I have been denied access to information about the mine from federal, state, and local institutions. The reasons given are that the information is “nonexistent” or it has been classified as confidential to avoid generating “problems that might destabilize the established procedure.” The local government simply argues that the mine is not in our territory. They did, however, provide me with questionable lab tests indicating that the river is no longer contaminated, but I have yet to receive results from the lab tests that CONAGUA made during a toxic discharge from the mine into the river. The more telling response of the Mexican government toward the local movement, however, was to attack a community activist, who was publicly silenced and assaulted when he refuted claims by local and state official that the river is clean. Soon thereafter the documentary Agua: El Verdadero Tesoro (Water: The True Treasure) about the mining conflict was mysteriously removed from the Internet. Despite the removal of the documentary and threats against community activists, the message of the campesinos to the Mexican government continues to be queremos vivir y queremos vivir bien (we want to live and we want to live well).

My father shows me the difference between our traditional maize (right) and the hybrid version.

Type of housing provided by some invernaderos for workers.

Nancy A. Preciado Rodriguez is in the master’s program in Latin American Studies.
Las complejidades del retorno: A Xicana in Mexico

by Roxana Jaquelyn Rojas

A

AMID SPILLED coffee and the playback of interviews in the background, the voices of those whose faces are now somewhat a fiction, probably more a false memory, resound impregnando mis memorias como las manchas de café, círculos imperfectos, sobre mis apuntes en una libreta ya débil de viajar. Attempting to find the points of convergence between scribbled notes and static-filled audio, I find that not only were those I interviewed telling me their stories and processing their own experiences of returning to Mexico after forced migration, but I too was unraveling a story that was my own, my own return to Mexico. I was in Jalisco conducting fieldwork for my thesis and a project on the social impacts of deportation; the struggle of “proving” my Mexican identity was the least of my concerns, or so I thought. Each deportee I spoke to had his or her own identity issues to battle. Some were due to changes in traditional gender roles, the stigma of their identity as deportados, the reality of being a Mexican citizen without “papers,” in essence undocumented in their own country, or because the trauma of coming back to a country they barely knew was shaking their core. When I first set up interviews, I was not concerned about my own Mexicanness or my cultural capital. I grew up Mexicana in the U.S.; I learned Spanish as my first language and know the life story of the Mexican immigrant—I lived it. I had nothing to worry about when speaking to my fellow compatriotas. Then the interviews began, and I discovered I was wrong. The interviews were a whirlwind of emotional breakdowns, fierce anger, and eager hope; the disaster after the storm of each interview was what I was left with, to pick up the debris, the broken pieces, to put back the pieces, to find lost pieces. I am sure each person’s process of telling me their story left them with a similar impression and added vulnerability, doubt, maybe even emptiness at not knowing where I would take their story. Who was I to ask them to put themselves in a place of emotional vulnerability for me, a “researcher,” a “gringa,” an outsider? I questioned my own perceived privilege. I could do what they could not—move, migrar. I can cross the border, that gaping wound between our countries, without risking my life or emotional stability (for the most part). I had an identification card and a well-rehearsed spiel that would get me into all the government offices I attempted to enter, offices that even a deserving, concerned citizen would not be allowed to enter, or at least not easily allowed. Questioning my own identity as Mexicana, Xicana, Latina, migrant, educated woman, and a U.S. passport holder was vital to understanding my own place in the picture. Deconstructing the inherent complex power structures...
Migrants wait outside the doors of FM4, an organization in Guadalajara, Jalisco, that provides food, clothing, and temporary shelter.
that existed as a result of my intersectionality of identities and that of those I spoke to was key to the learning I was to experience on that trip, those that followed, and those that are yet to come. I learned a vital lesson that has changed the way I see research and research methods. Interviews are not data. They are stories, people, lives. I cannot speak of a person as a research subject and feign objectivity.

A professor I had once said, “I laugh whenever academics think that what they write has anything to do with reality.” My hope is that my work, not as an academic, but as a socially responsible member of humanity, gets a bit closer to addressing reality. It is difficult after seeing and hearing the realities of deportees to consider doing anything to the contrary. I do not think of quantifying or categorizing the pain of someone's story. It is another way of looking at research, one in which you place yourself as a part of the picture—like a photographer being represented not only in how the picture is taken and how it is presented, but inserting oneself into the vulnerability of the space focused in the lens, sharing the vulnerability with those you wish to capture in the photo. It is a critical perspective that does not feign an unbiased position. It is this perspective that can help us to question and to challenge the way we “do” research and the way we present it as well as the impact it can have.

Challenging the hegemony of traditional academics is what I learned to do. I learned to apply in my methods a challenge to what is considered “valid,” “scientific,” and “legitimate” and to appreciate the space and the relationship between myself and other migrants, not objectify it into the “researcher–research subject” dichotomy. I was able to apply what I had already decided was a necessary method for myself as a researcher and what I think is a more humanizing approach to the scientific process. If we want to be more active researchers, we need to deconstruct the hierarchy of power that exists in social science research. I was a Xicana in Mexico crossing borders of culture and language, a battleground in essence, where those I spoke to were fighting for their identity, and in the process so was I. In the words of Gloria Anzaldúa, “Yo soy un puente tendido/ del mundo gabacho al del mojado,/ lo pasado me estira pa’ atrás/ y lo presente pa’ delante.” I reasserted my migrant status, did not feign superiority, and placed myself in a vulnerable position, sharing my own personal story of migration and discrimination. It is this repositioning that has allowed me to see and feel things that I would not otherwise. It is what has allowed me to reconceptualize research and fieldwork into a space of decolonization of power, knowledge, and knowledge production.

Roxana Jaquelyn Rojas is a graduate student in the LLILAS master's program.
With the presence of distinguished visiting professors and researchers contributing to the scholarly mission of the institute, LLILAS Publications is able to draw from this collaboration by publishing some of their work. Guillermo Giucci, who was Tinker Visiting Professor at LLILAS during spring 2005, is author of a landmark work in Portuguese and Spanish that we are proud to present now in the LLILAS Translations from Latin America Series.

The Cultural Life of the Automobile: Roads to Modernity
By Guillermo Giucci. Translated by Anne Mayagoitia and Debra Nagao
LLILAS Translations from Latin America Series, University of Texas Press

Illuminating the question of what it means to be a mobile human anywhere in the modern world, this strikingly original work of cultural history examines how changes in consciousness, identity, and expression, both national and individual, resulted from the technological innovation and freedom of access represented by cars.

From its invention in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, the automobile crisscrossed the world, completely took over the cities, and became a feature of daily life. Considered basic to the American lifestyle, the car reflected individualism, pragmatism, comfort, and above all modernity. In Latin America, it served as a symbol of distinction, similar to jewelry or fine clothing. In The Cultural Life of the Automobile, Guillermo Giucci focuses on the automobile as an instrument of social change through its “kinetic modernity” and as an embodiment of the tremendous social impact of technology on cultural life.

Material culture—how certain objects generate a wide array of cultural responses—has been the focus of much scholarly discussion in recent years. The automobile wrought major changes and inspired images in language, literature, and popular culture. Focusing primarily on Latin America but also covering the United States, Europe, Asia, and Africa, Giucci examines how the automobile was variously adapted by different cultures and how its use shaped and changed social and economic relationships within them. At the same time, he shows how the “automobilization” of society became an essential support for the development of modern individualism, and the automobile its clearest material manifestation.

Guillermo Giucci is Professor at the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. Anne Mayagoitia and Debra Nagao are American translators living in Mexico.
Spotlight on Our Faculty: A Fellowship of Collaboration

Recognized for the quality of their teaching and their scholarship, the faculty profiled here share a dedication to their students and their research, continuing to shape Latin American Studies at UT as a dynamic, collaborative area studies program.

Eugenio Arima
For Eugenio Arima, summer is a time he looks forward to for conducting fieldwork and interviewing colonists, farmers, loggers, and politicians in the Amazon basin. Regional climate change models predict that if deforestation in the Amazon continues to expand, the climate regime could reach a tipping point, shifting to a new, drier state. Consequently, large portions of the evergreen tropical forest could become permanent savannah.

Arima, who came to UT in 2011, is Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography and the Environment. His research focuses on modeling how land use cover and land use change manifest spatially, using a combination of quantitative tools such as econometrics, geographic information systems, computer simulations, and remote sensing. His fieldwork and the interviews he conducts during his summer visits provide him with insights into the influence of political economy on environmental change processes as well as the role of human behavior in climate change. Professor Arima is currently working on two collaborative projects: one, supported by NASA, investigates the role of climate change, land use, and mitigation efforts in shifting fire regimes in the United States, Australia, and the Brazilian Amazon; the other, supported by NSF, examines forest fragmentation processes resulting from roads built by private agents such as loggers, colonists, and miners.

A PhD of Michigan State University, Professor Arima wrote his dissertation on the forest fragmentation patterns that emerge as a result of roads built by loggers in the Brazilian Amazon. In addition to his current research there, he reports that one of his most satisfying work experiences was codirecting a study abroad program in Peru and Ecuador.

Regarding his teaching and fieldwork, Professor Arima says: “My research is computationally intensive and I spend a lot of time in my office, but I really enjoy conducting fieldwork. Teaching and fieldwork actually have many similarities: both are difficult, require a lot of preparation and planning, but the rewards are immense. It’s gratifying when you see how much students have learned by the end of a semester. Likewise, I am always excited about new questions and research possibilities that we inevitably come up with by the end of a field campaign.”

Luis E. Cárcamo-Huechante
A scholar of Mapuche origin and Associate Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Luis Cárcamo-Huechante grew up in Tralcao in Valdivia, southern Chile. It wasn’t until the age of six that he first heard the Mapuche language on a radio broadcast from Argentina, a moment that was to change his life and shape the direction of his future research. The Mapuche are an indigenous group of 1.2 million residing in Chile and southern Argentina who are struggling to regain their lost lands and identity. Luis has focused his current research on how this culture is being revitalized by Mapuche radio programs, poetry, and music. In 2010 he was recipient of a $15,000 Humanities Research Award from the College of Liberal Arts, which has provided vital travel support to continue his research.
Professor Cárcamo-Huechante is a PhD of Cornell University. He taught at Harvard from 2001–2009 before coming to the University of Texas, where he teaches courses focused on Latin American and indigenous literatures and cultures. He is author of Tramas del mercado: Imaginación económica, cultura pública y literatura en el Chile de fines del siglo veinte and coeditor of El valor de la cultura: Arte, literatura y mercado en América Latina (with Alvaro Fernández-Bravo and Alejandra Laera). In 2011 he was an invited speaker at the LLILAS-sponsored Foro Urgente—La democracia en juicio: Derechos Mapuche y gobernabilidad democrática en Chile y Argentina. Also in 2011, Professor Cárcamo-Huechante was elected a member of UT’s Society for Teaching Excellence, and in 2012 was a recipient of the prestigious Raymond Dickson Centennial Teaching Fellowship.

Commenting on the value of research support in an earlier interview, he said, “It is very important to feel that the university stimulates research in the humanities. Support for research is a way to support me not only as a scholar but as a teacher. When I travel, I get new readings and experiences that come back with me to the classroom.”

**George Flaherty**

George Flaherty is Assistant Professor of Art and Art History at the University of Texas. He joined the department in 2011 and specializes in Latin American and Latino visual and spatial cultures in the post–World War II era. He received his PhD in the history of art and architecture at the University of California, Santa Barbara. In May 2012, he presented at the annual congress of the Latin American Studies Association in San Francisco, giving a paper on how images of victims of the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre in Mexico City have been used to commemorate and even reimagine the historic event for political and commercial purposes.

Professor Flaherty is currently working on a book manuscript that explores the spatial dimensions of the 1968 student movement in Mexico and its popular representation, including photography, film, and literature. He has held fellowships from the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, the Social Science Research Council, the Society of Architectural Historians, and the Mexico-U.S. Fulbright Commission. In collaboration with colleague Prof. Andrea Giunta, and with the support of the Getty Foundation, he will be organizing a series of research seminars over the course of the next three years on neo-avant-garde art in the 1960s and 1970s throughout the Americas.

Along with Giunta, Flaherty is part of the CLAVIS (Center for Latin American Visual Studies) community at UT, which has contributed to formalizing and coordinating, in conjunction with the Blanton, the university’s decades-long commitment to Latin American art, not only as object but also as object of historical study and academic field. CLAVIS is literally and figuratively a space that brings together leading art historians from around the world and the UT community, especially graduate students, who have benefited tremendously from this interaction.

Commenting on his time at UT, Professor Flaherty says, “The resources available to scholars of Latin America at UT present an embarrassment of riches, but it has been the tremendous sense of intellectual community here that I’ve come to very quickly relish.”

**Christen Smith**

Christen Smith is Assistant Professor in the Departments of Anthropology and African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas. She is also an affiliate of LLILAS and the Warfield Center for African and African American Studies. Her research takes a critical look at the politics of performance, race, violence, and the body in Brazil and the Americas. A PhD of Stanford University, she was the recipient of the Robert Bayard Textor Award for Outstanding Creativity in Cultural and Social Anthropology at Stanford and has been a Ford Foundation Diversity Dissertation and Postdoctoral Fellow for Excellence in College and University Teaching and a Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation award recipient.

Since 2001 Professor Smith has conducted ethnographic field research with black activists in Salvador, Bahia, focusing on issues of racism and violence that plague the community. This work has led to her ongoing collaborations with activists and investigation of the global politics of racialized state violence. Her interest in the role of performance led to her participation in March 2012 in the LLILAS cosponsored Brazilian Frevo Music: From Carnaval to the Concert Hall on the panel “Brazilian Music and Culture on the Streets.” Her current book project, Tearing Down the Big House: Violence, Performance and the Embodiment of Blackness in Brazil, investigates the politics of performance, racial formation, violence, and racism in contemporary Brazil through an ethnographic look at the multiple registers of racial violence that frame everyday social interactions in Bahia. Dr. Smith teaches the undergraduate courses Politics of Race and Violence in Brazil and Image, Race, and Latin America, and the graduate courses Race, Violence, and Brazil and Performance, Race, Violence, and the Body.

Regarding her teaching and research, she says, “One of my passions has always been redressing the injustices of the world one mind at a time. If I can do anything to positively impact the lives of those who suffer at the hands of inequality through my research and my teaching, and be true to the legacy of those torch bearers who have come before me, then I have done what I came here to do.”
Visiting Professors for 2011–2012 at LLILAS

Bringing new perspectives and regional insights to the study of Latin America is the goal of LLILAS's Visiting Professors programs. Distinguished Latin American scholars are brought to UT to teach courses or a set of classes, sharing their expertise and facilitating the exchange of ideas.

The Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Annual Visiting Professorship was established as part of the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Endowment and supports visiting scholars to teach at UT for one semester. David Mauricio Solodkow was our Lozano Long Visiting Professor for spring 2012. He holds a PhD in Latin American literature from Vanderbilt University and is an Associate Professor at the Universidad de los Andes, Colombia. His areas of expertise are colonial studies with an emphasis on representation of identities, racial and ethnic classification, and ethnographic writing.

The Tinker Visiting Professor program dates back to 1973 when it was endowed by the Edward Larocque Tinker Foundation. The goal of the program has been to bring pre-eminent thinkers from Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula to provide an opportunity for U.S. scholars, students, and the general public to discover the contributions made by Latin American and Iberian scholars in a broad range of disciplines. Juan Darío Restrepo was the fall 2011 Tinker Visiting Professor. He holds a PhD from the Marine Science Program at the University of South Carolina. Dr. Restrepo has been head of the Magdalena River Science Initiative in Colombia and is Professor of Geological Sciences at Universidad de los Andes, Colombia. He has been involved as a resource scientist for the sub-programs of LOICZ-IGBP Basins, SAMBas (South American Basins), and CARIBas (Caribbean Basins), and also as a member of the Scientific Steering Committees of LOICZ-IGBP and Colciencias (Colombia) in the Marine Science Program. (See related story p. 38.)

The Mañás Romero Visiting Chair in Mexican Studies was created in 2003 through an educational and research cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Relations of Mexico and UT Austin to bring to UT distinguished Mexicans from the public and private sectors, as well as from academia, to foster greater understanding of Mexican culture and society. Gustavo Vega, Director of the Center for International Studies at El Colegio de México, held the chair in spring 2012. He holds a PhD, in political science from Yale University, where he specialized in international relations, comparative politics, and international political economy. Dr. Vega is an expert in U.S.-Mexican economic relations and North American integration.

In 2010, the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies and the Fulbright Commission of Brazil signed an agreement to create a Fulbright Visiting Professorship in Environmental Sciences and Policy. It will bring an eminent Brazilian scholar to UT for one semester per academic year from 2011 through 2015 to teach a graduate course and conduct research. Edson Peters was the spring 2012 UT-Fulbright Visiting Professor in Environmental Sciences and Policy. He teaches environmental law at the undergraduate and graduate level in various universities throughout Brazil and is a prosecutor for Paraná’s State Public Ministry of Justice. He received his MA in the law of public relations and his PhD in federal law from the Universidade Federal de Paraná.

**LLILAS Visiting Resource Professors**

The LLILAS Visiting Resource Professors (VRP) program allows for scholars to come to UT for shorter periods. Visiting Resource Professors are invited by UT Latin Americanist faculty members to lecture for one to two weeks in either undergraduate or graduate classes. The VRP program addresses three academic goals: to enhance the international community of scholars working on Latin American topics; to establish and strengthen contacts between Latin American institutions of higher learning and the University of Texas; and to allow Latin American scholars access to UT library collections and archives. For the 2011–2012 academic year, LLILAS welcomed the following Visiting Resource Professors.

**FALL 2011**

**Ricardo Grau**

Ricardo Grau is Associate Professor of Landscape Ecology and Director of the Remote Sensing Laboratory at the Universidad Nacional de Tucumán (UNT) in Argentina, and an independent researcher at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET). His research focuses on climate change, processes of urbanization, and land use in Latin America. Dr. Grau earned his PhD in geography from the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he was also a Fulbright Scholar.

**Hugo Mondragón**

Hugo Mondragón is Assistant Professor of Architecture at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. Professor Mondragon’s research focuses on how the national images of Chile, Colombia, and Brazil have been shaped by modern architecture. Dr. Mondragón obtained an MA in architectural history from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and a PhD in architecture and urban studies from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

**Catalina Smulovitz**

Catalina Smulovitz is Professor and Director of the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella in Argentina, and is also an Associate Researcher at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET). She is a leading scholar in political science, particularly in areas of social accountability and judicial mobilization. Dr. Smulovitz earned her MA and PhD in political science from Pennsylvania State University.

**SPRING 2012**

**Jorge Contesse Singh**

Jorge Contesse Singh is Assistant Professor and Director of the Center for Human Rights at the Universidad Diego Portales (UDP) in Chile. His research focuses on human rights and indigenous issues, especially the relationship between the Mapuche and the Chilean state. Professor Singh received his LLM from Yale Law School and is also the recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship and the Presidente de la República Scholarship from the government of Chile.

**Christian Spencer Espinosa**

Christian Spencer Espinosa is a social historian and musicologist and recently completed a double PhD in history and music sciences from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and the Universidad Nova de Lisboa. He is a scholar of the popular traditions of Chile and Chilean cueca.