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Final preparations for the publication of Portal provide a welcome opportunity for us to pause, take stock of the year we are bringing to a close, and gather energies for the challenges that lie ahead. What an exciting and productive year this has been! Fall semester 2012 was especially momentous because this marked the inauguration of our five-year strategic plan, which for the first time in the history of Latin American Studies at UT brought LLILAS and the Benson together to work under a single leadership, according to a unified vision. During the spring semester, we devoted considerable energy to a major initiative to raise the profile of the University of Texas in Brazil, strengthening student exchanges, research collaboration, and inter-institutional relations. Since these Brazil activities are just coming to a close as I write these words, I’ll start there and then touch briefly on two other topics—our scholarly program and cross-campus collaboration—leaving details to emerge from the fascinating in-depth articles and reports that these pages contain.

Months of coordination and planning culminated in five intense days of activity throughout Brazil, with keynote events in Brasília on June 5 and São Paulo on June 6. UT President William Powers signed an agreement with Prof. Jorge Almeida Guimarães, President of CAPES, which makes UT a preferred partner for receiving Brazilian students in the “Science without Borders” program, whose studies—both grad and undergrad—will be fully supported by the Brazilian government. In order to complete this student picture, we need to increase the number of UT students who study or conduct research in Brazil, a goal that is now high on the university’s agenda. The best evidence of this support is the composition of the Brazil delegation: some thirty faculty members from eight schools or colleges, accompanied by Deans Diehl, Zayas, Mosher, Hicke, and Stuifbergen, and Vice President for Research Juan Sanchez, as well as President Powers. Thanks to support from all these UT leaders, as well as Vice Provost Janet Ellzey, UT has negotiated for the first time in history a joint research program with two state foundations—in São Paulo and Minas Gerais—with a total value of $640,000. The dual role that LLILAS Benson played in these activities embodies our vision for the future: we are initiators of our own student and research programs in Brazil, and in addition, we seek to serve as catalyst or facilitator for parallel efforts of other schools and colleges across the university. In turn makes the final area of the LLILAS Benson presence in Brazil so crucial: on Thursday, June 6, LLILAS held its biannual Advisory Council meeting, hosted by one of our new Brazilian members, Sr. Rubens Mello. We look forward to working closely with our Advisory Council to generate support for the ambitious agenda of deepened UT relations with Brazil in coming years.

Collaborative research, drawing together faculty from across the university to work on problems of common interest, and inviting the best minds in the field to join in these endeavors, continues to be the lifeblood of the institute. This year’s Lozano Long conference beautifully illustrated these goals (see p. 24). Titled Refashioning Blackness: Contesting Racism in the Afro-Americas, and coordinated by Professors Juliet Hooker and Frank Guridy, it included a keynote address by Minister Luiza Bairros of the Brazilian Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality, a workshop organized by Lozano Long Professor Javier Ayuero, and a photo exhibit in the Benson. The conference brought together scholars from throughout the hemisphere with research expertise in the social, political, and economic implications of the rising collective assertion of Afro-descendant peoples: what explains this emergence, and how far do newly achieved rights and visibility go as remedies to centuries of racism and marginalization? Building on this very successful conference organized jointly with the Warfield Center, we now are in conversations toward a comprehensive plan for inter-institutional collaboration.

There is much to look forward to for the 2013–2014 academic year, but let me conclude by mentioning two highlights. Under the leadership of Prof. Sergio Romero, a joint faculty member of LLILAS and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese (see p. 43), our newly conceived indigenous language instruction program will be inaugurated in the fall with a class in K’ich’e Maya, taught for the first time in the history of our university. Second, building on a very successful Brazil endeavor that culminated this summer, we look forward to conceiving and carrying out a similar initiative in Mexico for 2014. As you receive this Portal, the new academic year’s programs already will have begun; with great pleasure and enthusiasm, we welcome you to join us.

Charles R. Hale
Director of LLILAS Benson
Microcredit in Latin America and the World: Are We Better Off?

by Alejandro Drexler and Marc Janus

CARMEN WELCOMES US into the living room of a modest apartment in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and kindly shares her business experiences. Two years ago she was looking for a job but did not find one. A friend suggested approaching a microcredit institution where she obtained a DR$3,000 loan (approximately US$80) that she used to buy and sell clothes. Nowadays she makes DR$4,000 per month selling clothes and costume jewelry; if she had a higher income she would increase her food spending. She complains about bad luck in business, and she would get a job if she could.

Norma is attending a client in her colmado (small convenience store) while telling us about her life experience. She divorced five years ago and needed to find a source of income. Her illiteracy made it difficult to find a job; instead she started selling products among friends and neighbors using a DR$3,000 loan from a local bank. Last month the bank extended a DR$16,000 loan for her successful colmado. She estimates a monthly profit of DR$20,000, but keeping the house and the business money together makes it difficult to come up with an accurate figure. Happy about her income, she has no intention of expanding the business or finding a job. Her colmado is attached to her house; thus, she can work and take care of her family.

Jorge meets us outside his warehouse where he is loading a guagua (Dominican expression for pickup, van, or bus). He used to work in a big retail chain, but started his own convenience store using a DR$10,000 loan from a local bank. Currently, he owns a small food distribution company that employs two drivers and two salesmen. The business monthly sales are DR$400,000 (approximately US$10,000); however, Jorge does not have an accounting system and does not know his margin of profit. Looking at his facilities, though, one sees what appears to be a promising, growing business.

These cases illustrate how diverse microfinance is: a source of prosperity for some, but a poor alternative to unemployment for others. They also illustrate how microlending is shaping the lives of millions of people around the globe. In Latin America and the Caribbean alone, there are more than 18 million microcredit borrowers, and the number is growing rapidly.

In this article, we explore the microcredit market in Latin America and how it compares to microcredit in other parts of the world. We also describe more general aspects of microfinance, such as its cost structure, the relevance of loan officers in the lending process, and the challenges to improve microfinance effectiveness.

Overview

After its initial emergence in South Asia, microfinance, and especially microcredit, has become available in many countries around the world. By 2011, 382 microfinance institutions (MFIs) operated in Latin America and the Caribbean (LATC) alone; this is 158 more MFIs compared to South Asia. The gross loan portfolio in LATC has grown steadily over the last decade, reaching US$28 billion outstanding in 2011—making it the second largest region in the world in dollar terms right after East Asia and the Pacific, and well above South Asia.

Nonetheless, the number of microcredit borrowers is still three times higher in South Asia (18 million borrowers in LATC, 50 million in South Asia). This leads to substantially different average loan sizes across regions. In LATC, the average loan balance per
Intuitively, the phenomenon of a higher average loan size in LATC is easy to grasp; while US$200 in South Asia may help in starting a microenterprise, it most certainly will not in the region of LATC where relative wages and other production inputs are much higher. However, the gap in average loan size reflects the differences in the type of borrowers targeted by microlending in each region. While in South Asia many loans are allocated to entrepreneurs at subsistence level, in LATC entrepreneurs at subsistence level often do not have access to the credit market or do not want to participate in the formal financial system. Those who do not participate might find it easier or safer to look for a job rather than start a microbusiness; others might find strong support from the government. For example, in Chile, the average loan size is US$6,217. The average loan size increases because the most vulnerable people find strong support from the government and thus prefer to avoid getting into debt. Indeed, the governmental agency FOSIS (Fondo de Solidaridad e Inversión Social, or Social Investment Solidarity Fund) annually helps 120,000 vulnerable people in Chile to find a job or to start a business.

While microlending in LATC has been an example of steady growth, large variation within countries still exists. For example, in Peru 44.4% of people below the poverty line have access to microcredit, while in Haiti only 1.5% of people below the poverty line have this access.

**Cost Structure and Importance of Loan Officers**

Microcredit is an expensive service; average interest rates on the order of 30% per year might seem abusive. However, once you do the math, microcredit loans seem to be fairly priced. In figure 3, we present a simplified analysis of the price and costs of microcredit. Historically, interest rates in LATC have been higher than in South Asia, but the gap is mostly explained by a difference in costs. The margin between price and costs has narrowed over time in both regions, getting close to zero in South Asia and to around 3% in LATC by 2011. In figure 4, we see that microcredit institutions’ return over assets in LATC has gone down over time, reaching 3% in 2011, which is consistent with our cost analysis. Surprisingly, NGOs have been more profitable than for-profit institutions, but the gap in profitability has disappeared over time. In South Asia, NGOs also have been more profitable than for-profit institutions. Furthermore, for-profit institutions experienced a significant loss in 2011, while NGOs returned 5% over assets in the same period.
In figure 3, we also observe that salaries account for a 10% cost as a fraction of the total loan volume, which represents one-third of the total costs. The rest of the costs, not displayed in the figure, are distributed as follows: one-third goes to administrative expenses, a little more than one-sixth goes to cover financial expenses and other operational expenses, and the remaining cost is the loan expected loss, which is the cost imposed on the system by the borrowers that do not pay back. While administrative costs as one-third of total costs (or 10% as a fraction of total loan volume) seem high, we have to keep in mind that the administrative work to issue a $200 loan is not too different from the administrative cost to issue a $10,000 loan. Therefore, in relative terms a smaller loan will be more expensive.

The cost analysis shows how important labor is in the microcredit industry both in LATC and in South Asia. In particular, more than 50% of the employees in a microfinance institution are loan officers, which are crucial in the lending process. Indeed, loan officers play a fundamental role in screening potential borrowers, making credit assessments, and monitoring the borrower over the loan cycle. These tasks are particularly challenging in the microcredit industry because, as opposed to large companies, the repayment capacity of a microcredit borrower cannot be obtained from formal records like balance sheets or income statements. Actually, many of these borrowers do not even have informal record keeping, as seen in the examples at the beginning of this article. The lending is then based on the perception of the loan officer about the borrower. The variables used by the loan officer to form a perception about the client are often referred to as “soft information”; this information is usually private and tacit.

It has been shown in the management and social literature that a close and trusting relationship between the loan officer and the borrower is seen to be instrumental in obtaining “soft” information. Thus, loan officers need to gain the trust of the borrower, which requires costly time. This limits the number of clients that a loan officer can have in his/her portfolio. In Latin America, the median number of clients per loan officer is 260, while it is 320 in South Asia.

A recent study by Drexler and Schoar (2012) conducted in a large bank in Latin America measures the importance of the social relationship between the loan officer and the borrower. In particular, it measures how the credit capacity of the borrower as well as repayment behavior are affected when a loan officer has to be absent unexpectedly for a long period of time. During the absence of the original loan officer, the credit availability for the borrower (measured as access to new loans) is reduced by almost 20%, and the probability that the borrower stops paying the loan installments shoots up by more than 20%. Furthermore, clients are also 10% more likely to get credit in other banks, which might indicate a decrease in the loyalty of the client toward the original bank. All the findings in the study point to first-order implications of the social relationship between the loan officer and the borrower in the lending process.

All in all, the high interest rates are a consequence of a very costly lending process and not related to companies making outrageous profits. In practice, microlending still represents a significant reduction in the lending costs for this segment of the market that would otherwise borrow from loan sharks, who charge rates that can be as high as 100% a month.

### Table 1. Microcredit Market in LATC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>i</th>
<th>ii</th>
<th>iii</th>
<th>iv</th>
<th>v</th>
<th>vi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>8.77</td>
<td>3637566</td>
<td>2410</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>2289703</td>
<td>2320</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1026190</td>
<td>2970</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>845309</td>
<td>2641</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>6067058</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>2007737</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>263756</td>
<td>6217</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>500660</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>407570</td>
<td>1581</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>148256</td>
<td>2487</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>315248</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>180114</td>
<td>1451</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>367722</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela, RB</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>44874</td>
<td>3436</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>116828</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>16445</td>
<td>3963</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>39915</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>14866</td>
<td>1489</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>13895</td>
<td>1184</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Columns: (i) number of microcredit financial institutions; (ii) total lending in US$ billion; (iii) number of clients; (iv) average loan size US$; (v) percentage of clients with microcredit (over total population); (vi) percentage of clients with microcredit (over population below poverty line).
Microfinance Effectiveness

Microfinance proponents often stress the importance of expanding access to microfinance, and use the ratio of the number of borrowers to the people in need as a measure of poverty reduction. In all of LATC, 10.4% of the people under the poverty line are serviced by microcredit. This compares to 29% in all of South Asia. Peru stands out as an outlier in LATC with the highest market penetration of 45%, similar to the 44% penetration of South Asia’s leading and most referenced example, Bangladesh.

However, the reach of microfinance is not necessarily a good measure of success; some people below the poverty line may prefer to seek a potentially safer form of employment rather than starting their own business. Thus, it is possible to observe a successful microcredit market with low penetration. For example, if 95% of the people under the poverty line prefer to get a job, then a microfinance penetration of 5% would satisfy all microcredit demand. In practice, we do not know the actual demand for microcredit or the fraction of people who have funding constraints, but it is clear that significant room for growth still exists. On a global scale, Deutsche Bank Research (2007) estimates a market potential of 1 billion borrowers worth US$275 billion of funding demand. This leaves a funding gap of close to 900 million borrowers and US$185 billion.

But even satisfaction of demand might be a misleading measure of effectiveness. The real question is not whether entrepreneurs get microcredit but whether they benefit from it. CGAP, a branch of the World Bank, concludes that microcredits are valued by their recipients as there is little to no advertising need, a very high repayment percentage, and the willingness to pay high interest rates. To sort out these different opinions, one has to focus on specific welfare measures and see how these increase or decrease with the expansion of microfinance.

Proponents of microfinance associate several benefits with the provision of credit services: the eradication of hunger and poverty, gender equality, health improvements, and better education. The effectiveness of microcredit in these dimensions is difficult to measure because we often lack data to the contrary. For example, while we suspect that Peru’s flourishing small business activity has improved people’s lives, we cannot reject the possibility that things might have been equal or better without microfinance. An alternative to address this concern is randomized trials, where a fraction of the population is offered microcredit and the other fraction is not. While this type of evaluation is theoretically correct, it might prove to be extremely difficult to implement, either for operational or political reasons.

In the first randomized evaluation of the impact of microcredit, Banerjee et al. (2010)
find that access to microcredit increases total borrowing, number of new businesses, and expenditures on durable goods, especially durable business goods. However, no effect on average monthly expenditure per capita was found—indicating no improvement to well-being. The extent to which expenditures on durables cannibalize consumption of nondurables varies largely from household to household and also depends on their propensity to become business owners. While the study does not find a short-term increase in consumption, the observed increase of investment might generate a delayed increase in consumption they are not able to capture. Moreover, Banerjee et al. find no impact of access to microcredit on health, education, or gender equality. Again, delayed impact might be assumed in these cases as well and needs further research. A setup like the one in Banerjee et al. is difficult to replicate, and thus its results have been difficult to confirm. Nonetheless, their study suggests that microcredit does not seem to have the strong effect on economic growth that we would expect, or at least not in the short term, which might be discouraging.

The fact that we observe conflicting evidence regarding the effectiveness of microcredit might indicate that entrepreneurs have difficulties making efficient borrowing decisions, that is, some entrepreneurs might take loans that cost more than the benefit they generate. This is not surprising given that many studies have detected that the general population does not have the minimal skills required to make basic financial decisions on credit and savings.

Several financial institutions and NGOs have high hopes that financial literacy might improve the financial decisions of low-income people, making microcredit more effective. The potential benefits of financial education programs also have captured the attention of researchers.

A first study conducted in Peru examines the impact of teaching basic finance concepts to microentrepreneurs, and finds a large impact on the microfinance institution clients’ knowledge of financial terms and reported business practices (Karlan and Valdivia 2011). Results are more mixed on real outcomes such as sales or consumption.

A study in the Dominican Republic takes a closer look at the real implications of financial literacy, Drexler et al. (2010). A novelty in this study is that two different types of training are tested: a standard account-keeping training and a more basic rule-of-thumb training that focuses on a simple premise: If you separate the cash of the business from the cash of the household, you will be able to see at the end of the week or month whether or not you have made a profit. The authors show that the rule-of-thumb training was implemented more often, but they also find that the people implementing it were able to increase sales during bad weeks. These results indicate a better ability to manage cash once entrepreneurs are able to identify profits.

The findings in the former studies hint that given the right financial education, borrowers might better understand whether a loan will increase or decrease their business outcomes. This can significantly improve the overall effectiveness of microcredit. Yet, implementing impactful financial education programs is still a challenge for most banks in Latin America and the Caribbean. Currently, only three of the twenty-five largest microfinance institutions in the region have financial education programs for their borrowers.

It will be interesting to measure the impact of microcredit after these financial education programs are implemented on a large scale. One hopes that the right combinations of microcredit and financial education programs will unambiguously show a positive effect on economic growth. Such a study is yet to come.

Both authors are at The University of Texas at Austin, where Alejandro Drexler is Assistant Professor of Finance in the Red McCombs School of Business and Marc Janus is an MBA student in the Graduate School of Business.

Notes
1. Both price and costs will be expressed as a fraction of the total loan outstanding, and price over total loan outstanding will be referred to as “the interest rate.”
2. Salaries are 10% as a fraction of total loan outstanding, while total costs are 30%.
3. For example, if the total loan volume is 100 million but it is expected that 5 million is not going to be recovered, the issuer of the loan must increase the interest rate by 5% to cover this expected loss.
4. The relative importance of labor is similar in other regions of the world but for brevity is not presented in this study.

References
Microfinance Information Exchange Database.
AMÉRICO PAREDES. The League of United Latin American Citizens. Emma Tenayuca. César Chávez. José Ángel Gutiérrez. Gloria Anzaldúa. To students, scholars, and community members familiar with Mexican American history, these names invoke a timeless spirit of intellectual and political activism that galvanized the fight for social progress on behalf of the Latino/a community over the past century. We find their stories of struggle, pain, hope, and endurance in several rich archival holdings located throughout the United States, but we are also fortunate that many of these invaluable histories have been collected and preserved right here in Austin within the Mexican American and Latino/a Collection housed at the University of Texas’s Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection.

In 1974, the Mexican American Graduate Association sought to establish a new archival collection on the University of Texas campus that would document the rich heritage and vast historical experiences of Mexican Americans. With the assistance and support of community organizations, the Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS), and the Benson Collection, the association succeeded in creating the Mexican American Library Program (MALP) with financial support provided by the University of Texas General Libraries.¹ In time, MALP would be renamed the Mexican American and Latino/a Collection in recognition of its expanding reach into the fuller range of Latino histories found throughout the United States and abroad. Today, the collection endeavors to build upon the initial repository created nearly four decades ago by continuing to acquire and preserve the necessary archival material needed for students, scholars, and community members to develop and advance the growing intellectual fields of Borderlands, Latino/a, and Mexican American Studies.

From the Gloria Anzaldúa Archive.
Since its inception, the Benson has collected an estimated 20,000 books and journals, well over 70 manuscript collections, and approximately 2,500 reels of microfilm to document the experience of Mexican Americans and Latinos. In addition to correspondence and personal papers, the library has collected artwork, ephemera, posters, photographs, and audiovisual recordings to deepen our knowledge and understanding of the past. In keeping with the tradition of the early graduate students who founded MALP, we as history graduate students affiliated with the Center for Mexican American Studies conceived of a national conference that would provide a retrospective examination and assessment of these invaluable collections with the goal of creating a space for critical dialogue about the archive’s future development.

In collaboration with the faculty and staff of CMAS and the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies and the Benson Collection (LLILAS Benson), we invited scholars who had utilized the Benson’s collections in their published scholarship to assess the archive’s role within the fields of history, education, literature, and media and cultural arts. This interdisciplinary conference showcased how various collections such as the nineteenth-century writings of Catarino Garza and the twentieth-century papers of George I. Sánchez and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) influenced and shaped the historical literature about Mexican Americans. For instance, the expansive VOCES Oral History Project has helped to correct the historical record that has largely discounted the extensive role played by Latinos and Latinas within several theaters of war including World War II and the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Further, we are only now beginning to see the significance behind the recent archival additions of Chicana feminist papers to the Benson including the personal manuscript collection of Gloria Anzaldúa as well as the early papers of Austin-native and civil rights activist Martha Cotera. These two manuscript collections represent a growing strength of the Benson’s holdings that help illuminate our understanding of women in the Chicano movement and beyond. Within the realm of media and cultural arts, the recently acquired Sam Coronado art collection also holds great importance in the way we view Chicano art and its significance to Chicano identity construction and community building. These materials are among the priceless artifacts, documents, and cultural pieces that one can find within the Mexican American and Latino/a Collection at the Benson.

**A Brief Survey of the Collections**

While the Benson now houses many collections of diverse importance for the study of Mexican Americans and Latinos in the Americas, the conference highlighted a select number of collections that have made significant contributions to a variety of disciplinary fields. The scholars who presented their work at the conference represent only a small fraction of the numerous scholars who have used the Benson holdings to advance our understanding of Mexican Americans and Latinos throughout multiple fields of study across a range of disciplines.

For example, students and scholars interested in researching the international politics and social history of the nineteenth-century U.S.-Mexico border will find the Catarino Garza Manuscript (1859–1895) particularly helpful. Born Catarino Erasmo Garza Rodríguez on November 25, 1859, near Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico, he wrote an autobiography titled, “La lógica de los hechos: O sean observaciones sobre las circunstancias de los mexicanos en Texas, desde el año de 1877 hasta 1889.” In this 431-page unpublished manuscript that remains unpublished, Garza detailed his experience as a recent Mexican immigrant in Texas that highlighted the racial strife and violence but also the cooperation that existed between Anglo Americans, Mexican Americans, and Mexican nationals. Analyzing the autobiography through a gendered lens also has allowed historian Elliott Young to interpret various constructions of masculinity along the border, including how Garza applied nineteenth-century understandings of gender roles to the concurrent struggles over property, territory, and cultural superiority throughout the region.

Scholars such as Cynthia Orozco and Gabriela Gonzalez also have utilized gendered methodological approaches in their recent examinations of the LULAC papers. In her work No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed, Orozco offers a nuanced approach that incorporates an analysis of “masculinities, genders, and homosocialities,” to understand the relationship between women and men within the organization from women's positions as nonmembers and auxiliaries to their eventual integration into the organization as full members. In her upcoming publication, Redeeming La Raza, scholar Gabriela Gonzalez traces the intellectual development of political thought and consciousness among the wider membership base that includes women. These newer works have built upon even earlier generations of scholars who first utilized the Benson archives to build the foundational works for later Mexican American scholarship. These scholars include individuals like Mario T. García, who utilized the Benson archives to construct his seminal study of the Mexican American generation titled Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930–1960 that has provided future generations of scholars with a useful generational framework for understanding both traditional and enduring time periods of Mexican American history. Through these works, we can see how generations of scholars like García, Gonzalez, and Orozco have utilized similar archival material at the Benson to arrive at completely different research projects. Their scholarship demonstrates the capacity of the Benson’s archival holdings to produce even more cutting-edge scholarship.
Among the most important of the Benson’s recent acquisitions have been the papers of the late Chicana feminist theorist Gloria Anzaldúa, whose pathbreaking work *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza revolutionized* Borderlands Studies. Anzaldúa utilizes the methodological construct of *autohistoria*, which incorporates her autobiography as an evidentiary base, in order to deconstruct the multiple dimensions of borderland identities; yet the increasingly growing literature on Anzaldúa has still to reconcile the unpublished details of her life with her own formal self-representation delivered through her abundant writings. For instance, in *Interviews/Entrevistas*, she describes the Chicano movement as the pivotal turning point in her life when she learned to embrace her Chicana heritage. Her papers, however, reveal a more nuanced personal experience through her diary entries and handwritten letters to her sister and mother that reveal a young woman studying at UT who actively questioned her place within a rapidly changing world. The intimate details of Anzaldúa’s life can be traced through her own everyday ephemera as well as published and as yet unpublished writings, which she actively collected until her death and that form the basis of her collection.

Beyond Anzaldúa, the Benson holds an impressive and growing array of sources about Mexican American and Latina women. Martha Cotera, who played a pivotal role in developing MALP by organizing the acquisition of important collections, transferred a portion of her own papers covering her early years of Chicana activism to the library. Cotera’s contribution has aided scholars by further adding nuance to our understanding of the Chicano movement. In her study *¡Chicana Power!*, scholar Maylei Blackwell provides the first full-length analysis of the political consciousness of Chicanas during the *movimiento* as they strove to assert their autonomy in the midst of sexual and gender stratification. The Benson’s holding of oral histories and personal papers on Chicanas during the Chicano movement reinforce the need for additional research on the significance of women on the gendered and “sexual politics of the movement.”

Finally, the recent addition of the Sam Coronado Papers (1970–2008) illustrates the merging of community activism and intellectual scholarship with the process of archive building. At the closing panel for media and cultural arts, art history graduate student Tatiana Reinoza described the importance of “working in alignment with marginalized and underrepresented communities” as a “valid practice from which to build new scholarship.” In this spirit, Reinoza helped convince the Austin-based Latino artist and printmaker Sam Coronado to donate the organizational papers associated with his Serie Project to the Benson. These papers tell the story behind the project that pairs little-known Latino and other underrepresented artists with master printers to create limited-edition fine art prints.

In this sense, we can see the tradition of the 1970s generation of Mexican American graduate students who created MALP continue to this day with the culmination of this conference and through the efforts of activist-scholars who continue to advance archival development in order to produce future scholarship about the Mexican American and Latino past and present.

Valerie Martínez and David Villarreal are graduate students in the Department of History at The University of Texas at Austin.

Notes

1. At the national conference held April 18–19, 2013, at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, Dr. Emilio Zamora (UT Department of History) gave the keynote address that provided a historical overview of the circumstances that gave rise to the call for a Mexican American archive on the UT campus. These pioneering graduate students, who were led by Andrés Tijerina, came from various professional disciplinary areas across campus as well as from the larger Austin community.


3. The conference presenters covered five thematic areas including history, literature, the Chicano movement, education, and media and cultural arts, followed by a public reading given by the poetic collective Canto Mundo. These individuals include the following: Valerie Martínez, UT Austin (History Chair); Gabriela Gonzalez, University of Texas at San Antonio, “Digging through the Past: What I Learned about Civil Rights Activism from the Benson Mexican American Collections”; Mónica Muñoz-Martínez, UT Austin, “Searching for Gendered Perspectives at the Benson: A Historical Appraisal of the Latin American Collection”; Elliott Young, Lewis & Clark College, “Catarino Garza’s Writings: A Late Nineteenth Century Texas Mexican Journalist, Intellectual and Revolutionary”; Irene Garza, UT Austin (Literature Chair); Norma E. Cantú, University of Missouri–Kansas City, “Finding Gloria: The Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Archive at the Benson Collection”; John Morán Gonzalez, UT Austin, “Of Archives and Borders: Reflections on Researching Mexican American Literature at the Benson Latin American Collection”; David Villarreal, UT Austin (Chicano Movement Roundtable Chair); Martha Cotera, Librarian, Austin, “Archive


5. Catarino Garza Manuscript, “La Lógica de los Hechos,” Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin (hereafter Benson Collection); Elliott Young, “Catarino Garza’s Writings: A Late Nineteenth Century Texas Mexican Journalist, Intellectual and Revolutionary” (paper presented at the Mexican American Archival Enterprise: An Historical Appraisal, Austin, Texas, April 18–19, 2013).


7. Elliott Young, “Catarino Garza’s Writings.”


11. Gloria Anzaldúa, Diary Entries, 1971, Box 1.8, Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Papers, Benson Collection.


Toward “Conciliation” in Guatemala:
Two Guatemalan Perspectives

by Giovanni Batz and Edwin Roman-Ramirez

During the spring semester of 2013, the authors of this piece took a course titled “Exploring the Archive: Guatemala History through the National Police Archives,” taught by Dr. Virginia Garrard-Burnett (UT Department of History). The course explored the modern history of Guatemala through the Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional (AHPN). This included a research project and final paper using the AHPN Digital Archive, which was launched in December 2011 as a collaborative project with LLILAS, the Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice, the Benson Latin American Collection, and the University of Texas Libraries. This course was unique in that it also included the participation of five students of Guatemalan nationality or descent. The authors of this piece represent two very different segments of Guatemalan society and diversity. Edwin Roman-Ramirez is a mestizo from the department of Chimaltenango. Giovanni Batz is the son of Guatemalan immigrants and paternal grandson of K'iche’ Maya born in Los Angeles with a Maya surname, and conducts research in the Ixil region.

The trip began with a visit to the AHPN, where we learned about the history of the archive, which included a guided tour of the facilities where we saw how the personnel cleaned, maintained, scanned, digitized, and preserved these documents. This is where we learned how the archives were discovered in 2005, the politics and difficulties in making the police archives public, and that the building where the archives were housed used to be an infamous torture chamber and prison during the conflict called La Isla. Albert Fuentes, one of the experts at the AHPN and guide to the facility, told us that academics could utilize the archives to examine topics and issues such as disappearances, the persecution of homosexuals by police, and security system structures, among other topics. There are approximately 80 million pages of documents, some dating as far back as 1882, 12 million of which are available online.

After two days of intense research on our respective projects for the course, we continued the trip with a visit to the Palacio de Justicia (Palace of Justice) where we witnessed the trial of former U.S.-backed dictator General Efraín Ríos Montt (1982–1983) and former intelligence chief José Rodriguez, who were being tried for genocide and crimes against humanity. This was the first time in history that a state was prosecuting a former head of state for genocide. The following day, we visited the laboratory of the Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation, FAFG), where they explained their work, focusing on the methods they utilized in exhumations. During our visit, we saw the remains from a recently exhumed site at a military base in Cobán, where 400 skeletons were unearthed, making this...
one of the largest discovered clandestine mass graves in Guatemala. While the majority of these bodies were men, there were also women and children. The FAFG uses various techniques such as DNA and testimonies from family members to try to identify the bodies. The last activity of our trip was a visit to the Asociación para el Avance de las Ciencias Sociales (AVANSCO), an institute dedicated to academic research focused on social justice, which was subjected to a break-in in January 2013, in which files, computers, and other equipment were taken. Many observers view the break-in as a political and intimidation tactic due to the work being produced by AVANSCO. It was a reminder of the difficulties of having a space for critical thinking in the face of repressive forces that want nothing more than to keep people silent, a theme that recurred throughout the trip. While this proved to be an extraordinarily interdisciplinary academic trip, our experiences went well beyond intellectual stimulation and left a powerful and emotional impact that is further explored below.

Reflections from a Chimalteco

The Guatemalan National Police Archives course was of much importance in my academic and personal growth. Despite being a Guatemalan who grew up in the most violent era of the armed conflict, my knowledge about Guatemala’s past was based on personal stories from friends and family members more than through books, particularly since information about certain eras of Guatemala’s history was scarce. During these times, speaking about the war was prohibited, so our parents taught us that the best strategy for survival was to see, listen, think, but never to express yourself in public. I grew up in a town that did not have a library, which made my perspective on history to be that of the “official” story. Yet, having academic friends and entering the university in 1996, the same year as the Peace Accords that ended the armed conflict, I was able to gain more information.

In this course, I was able to recover two important aspects of my understanding of Guatemala’s history. First, it allowed me to read more literature about Guatemala that I was unaware of, and it helped me expand my knowledge and apply a more critical analysis concerning the history of Guatemala. This course allowed me to conduct research on my own town, and, in this way, to discover the importance that this type of study has in recovering local histories, which stay in the shadows of national history. In my research, I particularly focused on examining the history of indigenous leaders of Chimaltenango who were part of the Frente de Integración Nacional (National Integration Front, FIN), which was formed in 1976. The FIN worked to build a better Guatemala, but one by one the leadership’s voices were eliminated in approximately eight months since they were viewed as subversives, despite the fact that they did not belong to any guerrilla organization. The second aspect was personal. The duration of the course became an emotional rollercoaster that made me reflect about the past and try to understand what had occurred in Guatemala’s recent history. This class became a time machine that transported me to

Archive photos of men investigated by the police, including a small boy known only as Mainor Lemus Conde.
the darkest era in the history of Guatemala, but with the eyes of an adult seeing through the eyes of my parents, who demonstrated the difficulties civilians had to survive; helped me to understand now why my parents did not want us to speak about our ideas; and in this way caused me to admire their ability to survive and understand the complexity of our history.

Reflections from a “Gringo Guatemalteco”

Growing up in Los Angeles, I was unaware of my Maya/Guatemalan history for a multitude of reasons beyond the scope of this article. This course was part of my own ongoing process of recovering and learning more about Guatemalan history. It was not until I was an undergraduate that I learned that Guatemala had endured a thirty-six-year civil war where 200,000 people died, the vast majority Maya; and it was as a graduate student that I would learn that even in times of “peace,” the violence, repression, and impunity continue. I now work in Cotzal, El Quiché, located in the Ixil region, one of the most heavily hit areas during the armed conflict, where I am examining a resistance movement against a hydroelectric dam that has been met with state repression.

While at the AHPN, I was able to find information for my class research project that examined the politics of kidnappings in the 1960s. It was also there that I found a document detailing the deportation of my dad from Los Angeles in 1975 at the age of twenty-one during his first migration there. I also found another document detailing the attempts of family members to locate a missing Ixil community leader in Cotzal who was disappeared in the 1970s, and whose nephew is now a community leader in Cotzal. At the genocide trial, it was an intense experience to see the prosecution of Ríos Montt, who needed to ask permission to use the restroom, and who was face-to-face with the Ixils who suffered genocide during his dictatorship. A few feet away from me sat an emotionless ex-dictator who appeared to be calm despite being accused of creating the worst forms of violence since the Spanish Colonization.

Yet, despite this gain within the justice system, Guatemala still has a president who was the army officer in charge of the Ixil region under Ríos Montt and who is also accused of genocide. The kidnappings, imprisonment, torture, and murders of community leaders and social justice activists continue, such as Daniel Pedro Mateo, a Q’anjob’al leader, who was missing at the time of our visit and found dead with signs of torture days after. I will never forget the eerie silence of horror produced by the bones at the FAFG; the apparent silence is not enough to quiet their demands for justice.

The trip ended with an opportunity to spend time with my dad (who was visiting) and my ninety-one-year-old abuelita who lives half of the year in Guatemala City and the rest in Los Angeles. She told me how life was growing up in the 1920s and working in the fields; the era of General Jorge Ubico; how she migrated from Xela to Guatemala City in the 1940s, and then to La Limonada (a district of Guatemala City) in the 1950s; the 1976 earthquake; and how she migrated to the U.S. as a “mojada” at the age of sixty and was forced to take off her traje (Maya dress) for the first time, among other stories. These were the memories and oral narratives of racism, sexism, migration, and resistance that cannot be found in archives and books, but are extremely valuable in the historical memory of Guatemala’s past.

The trip was a powerful, interdisciplinary academic, and emotionally charged trip, and I left Guatemala with mixed feelings of hope and pessimism.

May 20, 2013: Guatemala’s Constitutional Court overturns Ríos Montt’s genocide conviction. At the time of this writing, the matter has not been resolved.
Toward the end of our tour at the AHPN, Fuentes showed us a statue that sits in front of the building. It was two large concrete walls broken in half that read, “Memoria y Esperanza: Dignificar a todas las victimas, Unificar un pais fracturado.” He explained: How can we talk about “reconciliation” if there has never been “conciliation” in Guatemala in the first place? The Past is and informs our Future. We are the Present and we are committed to a better, more just and inclusive Guatemala.

Giovanni Batz is a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology, and Edwin Roman-Ramirez is a PhD candidate in LLILAS. Both authors are graduates of the LLILAS master’s program.

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Notes
1. The other participants in the course were: Brenda Xum Palacios (MA student, LLILAS); Cristina Metz (PhD student, Department of History); Anelise Coelho (PhD student, Department of History); Regina Mills (PhD student, Department of English); Edward Shore (PhD student, Department of History); Derek Otto (PhD student, Department of Anthropology); and Eyal Weinberg (PhD student, Department of History). Special thanks to Dr. Virginia Garrard-Burnett for her wisdom, guidance, and warmth inside and outside of the classroom. Thanks to Kent Norsworthy and Christian Kelleher for providing technical and research assistance in navigating the AHPN Digital Archive.
2. The government and police denied the existence of the National Police archives until they were found in 2005. To access the AHPN and for more information on its history, visit: http://ahpn.lib.utexas.edu
3. For more information on the work of the FAFG, visit: http://www.fafg.org/
4. For more information on AVANCED, visit: http://www.avanced.org.gt
5. For more on this topic, see Giovanni Batz, “Maya Cultural Resistance in Los Angeles: Recovering Identity and Culture among Maya Youth,” Latin American Perspectives, forthcoming.
6. Pedro was missing for twelve days and found dead on April 16, 2013. He was an activist fighting against mining and hydroelectric dams in Huehuetenango, his home department. For more information on the case, see: http://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/breaking-news-community-leader-daniel-pedro-mateo-kidnapped-and-murdered-guatemala

AHPN workers scan photos for archive.
Samba Rock Culture
in São Paulo:
Beyond the Dance

by Krista Kateneva

THE DAYS leading up to November 8, 2012, were seemingly quiet yet busy in the corridors of Sid Richardson Hall on the UT Austin campus. Over the course of several afternoons, a small staff-and-student team was lining up foam boards, measuring out space, cutting tape, and hanging a collection of thirty-two large photographs on the walls outside the third floor seminar room. The exhibit portrayed the samba rock culture of São Paulo, Brazil—a multifaceted dance and music tradition of global roots and a vibrant local scene in and around São Paulo’s metropolitan area.

The exhibit, which ran November 8–December 7, was, in fact, the culmination of a larger event organized by a group of UT graduate students to honor the month of November, celebrated in Brazil as Black Consciousness Month. On November 8, a scholarly symposium was held titled Spaces of Black Performativity in São Paulo. The audience of approximately fifty students, staff, and faculty members attended a session of four research presentations by UT scholars working in the region. Both the exhibit and the symposium were sponsored by the Brazil Center of LILAS.

Through its choice of topic, the symposium aimed to bring some scholarly focus back on São Paulo. In the case of Brazilian area studies, scholars often consider São Paulo when investigating policy and economic issues, but frequently prioritize the Rio-Bahia axis when tracing artistic and cultural practices. As a result, many have come to believe mistakenly that Brazilian regions outside this axis have relatively little to offer in terms of their cultural riches. Furthermore, as the state of Bahia is home to the largest African descent population in Brazil, it is often treated as the representative case study for the entire Afro-Brazilian culturescape, displacing the experience of black populations in other regions.

During the symposium, the four scholars challenged these tendencies as they presented their own research on cultural practices and Afro-Brazilian performativities (the capacity of speech and gestures to perform an identity) in São Paulo. UT graduate student and PhD candidate in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Eliseo Jacob explored the poetry and worldview of Sacolinha, a poet and writer from São Paulo’s peripheral literary movement. Silvia Lorenzo, also a PhD candidate in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, focused on the work of Cooperifa—a literary cooperative on the southern edge of São Paulo. Jaime Alves, a recent PhD from the Department of Anthropology, provided the audience with a broader backdrop on racial violence and spaces for black political practice.
in São Paulo. And last, the author, a PhD candidate at the Butler School of Music, introduced the exhibition itself, providing a historical background to the development of samba rock culture in Brazil. The symposium was then followed by a small reception and official opening of the photo exhibit.

What Is Samba Rock?
For a better understanding of the symposium and the exhibit, an explanation of samba rock is helpful. Most participants in the scene identify the informal dance parties on the black periferia, or urban outskirts, of São Paulo as the birthplace of samba rock. In the 1960s, when North American rock and roll had become very popular in Brazil, many youth incorporated this young and exciting genre into their own dance and music practices, combining the steps with some local dances, and producing a new dance known as soltinho. At many parties, the rock-and-roll records were played alongside Brazil’s own samba, and the soltinho step, rhythmically compatible with both, borrowed from the names of each in order to grow eventually into a new local genre of samba rock. On weekends, families living on the urban periphery would push their living room furniture into the corners, bring out the record player, and invite all their friends over, many carrying a record or two to be played during the night. The mixture of local and global sounds at these parties became the space in which samba rock refined its style and physical aesthetics.

Although initially just a dance step, the accompanying combination of sounds catalyzed the emergence of a generation of local musicians who also borrowed from each of the contributing genres to produce the new musical repertoire of samba rock. In its audio version, the territory of samba rock extends far beyond the simplistic formula of samba + rock, borrowing traits and elements from rhythm and blues, soul, funk, jazz, and many other genres that contain the right groove or emotional charge for the mix. A more traditional soundtrack for a samba rock dance might, for example, include recordings by Bebeto, Jorgen Ben, Erasmo Carlos, Trio Mocotó, and Os Originais do Samba, but also by Ray Charles, Trini Lopez, Jimmy Smith, and George Benson. Currently, more recent groups like Clube do Balanço, Sandália de Prata, Farufyno, and Os Opalas cultivate a new composite style under the genre label of samba rock.

For many decades, samba rock led a rather informal life, occupying the marginalized territories of black urban outskirts, in homes and at neighborhood dance parties. The mainstream media and broader public consciousness did not formally recognize the scene’s existence. Yet, its fundamental role in local black experience becomes apparent when one realizes that almost any individual born and raised on São Paulo’s urban outskirts (dramatically different from North American suburbs) has a personal relationship and experience with the samba rock culture. While the occasional official chronicles brush it off as a temporary expression of youthful fascination with “Americanization,” personal archives and documents of the scene’s participants reveal the existence of dance parties with attendance in excess of 16,000 participants.

Many of today’s black youth in São Paulo grew up with their parents, aunts, and uncles dancing samba rock and passing the skill on to their children. Although seen by some as the tradition
of the older generation, the scene has been reinvigorated since 2000, with new musicians, dance schools, and venues emerging both on the peripheries and in the center of the city. Much more than a dance, today’s samba rock is a lifestyle and a worldview that combines the daily experiences of São Paulo’s black periferia with the most modern and diverse elements from the global circuits.

The Photo Exhibit
The exhibit photos traveled to Austin directly from São Paulo. The creators of the images are a group of young photographers from a cultural collective called Samba Rock na Veia (SRNV). The SRNV emerged in 2007 as a simple blog published by a group of friends in an underprivileged area of São Paulo. In the first posts on the blog, the participants explored the significance of samba rock to their own identities and announced relevant events and venues around the city. By 2009, their following as well as SRNV’s own team had grown enough to sustain a full-blown website and a broadened scope of activities, ranging from maintaining an active calendar of samba rock–related events and a constantly updated directory of musicians, venues, and dance lessons to gathering historical documents, holding interviews with representative figures, and producing audiovisual materials about the history, development, and cultural significance of samba rock.

In addition to these activities, the team also began to provide journalistic coverage of a broad variety of samba rock events around the city. With grants from the city government, they were able to invest in the necessary equipment and training, producing complete photographic and journalistic coverage of three to six events per week. This intense coverage of events had an invigorating effect on the samba rock scene. Scattered across a metropolitan area of more than 20 million people, many practitioners had lost touch with the broader community, coming to believe that the scene had lost popularity and perhaps even disappeared. The broadcasting effort of SRNV has helped the population to perceive samba rock once again as a living, vibrant, and, most important, young culture.

Since 2010, the collective also has been passing on their skills and knowledge to other youth on the peripheries. By 2012, sixty-eight young apprentices had received hands-on training in techniques of photography, journalism, and video production, facilitating their entry into the professional job market in related areas. Currently, SRNV continues to develop the infrastructure of their website, while also exploring additional directions in São Paulo’s cultural economy.

The photos included in the exhibition were a selection of thirty-two representative images taken by the SRNV photographers at a broad variety of samba rock events between 2009 and 2011. While blending journalistic coverage with artistic expression, the photographers Júnior Calixto, Greice Gonçalves, Camila Reis, Clóvis Pereira, Semayat Oliveira, Claudia Souza, and Roberto Moreira sought to produce images that would portray first and foremost the diversity of the samba rock scene. Although sometimes considered only a style of dance and music, to those involved samba rock also entails elements of
material aesthetics, technology, fashion and beauty, literature and spoken word, political discourse, and at times an entire lifestyle. The images included in the exhibit portray musicians, both pioneers and current artists, competitive dance groups in performance, amateur couples with their arms interlocked in the middle of a spin, typical venues that welcome this population, the encounter of old and new technologies of sound reproduction, the finest clothing and visual aesthetic that characterizes the practice, and the inclusion of participants from all walks of life, all levels of physical ability, and multiple forms of contributing to the scene.

Before arriving in Austin, the images already had been exhibited at Feira Preta, a fair showcasing Afro-Brazilian cultural economies that is held annually in São Paulo, and at various community centers around the city. After the event at UT, SRNV donated the exhibit to the Benson Latin American Collection, where the images are now preserved and available for future consultation and research. The Benson also houses a small collection of audio recordings and a video documentary on the music that accompanies the samba rock scene in São Paulo today.

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Refashioning Blackness, Refashioning Our Histories

by Omaris Zamora

WHAT DOES IT MEAN to remodel or refashion how we think about blackness? What does it look like to talk about the African diaspora, but without focusing the discussion on Africa? The 2013 Lozano Long Conference, *Refashioning Blackness: Contesting Racism in the Afro-Americas*, brought together scholars, activists, educators, and policymakers to revisit how we think about blackness in the Americas, but more specifically, to think about the experience of Afro-descendants in Latin America, the Caribbean, and those who have migrated to the United States. Understanding the African diaspora in the Americas is to convey how blackness as a racial experience can vary depending on the location.

As Black Studies scholar Brent Hayes Edwards suggests, diaspora has its moments with which people identify, or not, and recognize similarities as well as differences. When we understand that the African diaspora is composed of similarities and differences, we are also acknowledging that blackness is fluid.

With this acknowledgment, we challenge the traditional conceptions of blackness to recognize other Afro-descendants whose history traces back to the middle passage, such as Afro-Latinos. “Afro-Latinos” as discussed in *The Afro-Latin@ Reader* (p. 1) “are people of African descent in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and by extension those of African descent in the United States whose origins are in Latin America and the Caribbean.” In other words, it recognizes racial differences found within Latinidad and acknowledges the African presence here too. This year’s conference created a space to understand “how the Americas experience us and how we experience the Americas” as stated by Afro-Latina scholar Miriam Jiménez Román. Moreover, Afro-Latinos’ identity can be fluid as they experience moving between geographical spaces and the connections between gender, sexuality, and race. However, because they are people who have been constantly displaced, some of the (his)stories remain untold or unwritten.

Afro-Latino Studies takes on the task of revisiting blackness in different contexts of the Americas and recovering a history that had erased and made invisible the contributions and experiences of Afro-Latinos. Afro–Puerto Rican bibliophile Arturo Alfonso Schomburg is one of the first Afro-Latinos in the United States to recover that history. His contribution to this recovery helped to form the current Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture located in New York City. These recovered histories are in direct confrontation with racism and discourses that erase black bodies. As an emerging scholarly field, Afro-Latino Studies has taken on a transnational and transdisciplinary approach since the stories are revealed through different means, moments, places, and people.
The early sixteenth century marks the beginning of African peoples being brought to the Americas. The story begins in the Caribbean with the rise of sugarcane plantations as a place of major importance for labor, but also the first formations of Afro-diasporic communities. The displacement and conditions of slavery developed a diasporic identity throughout much of the Antilles. However, the traditional history of Afro-descendants in Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico has limited itself to slavery, abolition, and the influences of African foods and rhythms in the now national cultural traditions.

Anthropology graduate student Barbara Abadía-Rexach highlighted in her presentation how blackness becomes limited to folklore during Puerto Rican holidays, but once the holidays are over, so is the homage to African ancestry. The holiday music celebrates the African heritage of the past, but Abadía-Rexach pushes her research further to examine how the music also informs processes of racialization in people’s everyday lives when they engage not only with the historical past of bomba, but also with its present. Although the music is received as “folkloric,” by exploring African-based rhythms such as bomba, the people come to know a different history that is not always present in grade school textbooks.

To follow the past as well as the present of Afro-descendants in the Caribbean is to create an alternative history in which Afro-Latinos recognize themselves.

The recovered Afro-Caribbean history can be a moving or fluid bridge across which we can view the Americas. The way that blackness has been treated in Latin America has varied from Colombia to the Southern Cone. While the Afro-Caribbean presence on the northern coasts of Latin America can be easily recognized, it is kept at a geographical periphery. Afro-Latin Americans in places like Argentina, Chile, and Ecuador struggle for recognition from the state, but the media only continue to represent them as the antithesis of civilization. As seen in many Latin American telenovelas, Afro-Latin American representations in the narrative are almost always in the roles of slave, maid, waiter, prostitute, or some other black stereotype. As Jasmine Mitchell pointed out in her presentation about a mulatta telenovela actress, these characters never really form part of a national identity that speaks of their own experiences as black actors.

While race in Latin America is an ongoing debate, these dialogues have informed some changes. Black social movements have been constantly fighting against racism in Brazil and Colombia in a way that has just recently influenced state politics. Among the ever-present violence that still afflicts black communities in Latin America, opportunities like affirmative action are becoming available to young people that were previously unavailable.

While changes are happening in Latin America, Afro-Latinos in the United States are also creating change and continue to recover their own history—not that history is limited to documents such as archives, but that it also acknowledges people as the tellers and writers of their own personal stories. The Afro-Latino Forum organized by Juan Flores and Miriam Jiménez Román has produced The Afro-Latino Reader, an anthology that greatly contributes to the study of Afro-Latinos in the United States. This developing scholarly work that includes emerging intellectuals and urban working-class communities is allowing voices to be heard that can push back against invisibility, yet reveal the fluidity of Afro-Latino identities.

Although race is to some degree taking center stage in some countries of Latin America, it seems that a “post-racial” concept has begun to prevail in the United States, so much so that for the 2020 U.S. Census it has been proposed that “Hispanic” be listed as a race. The problem here lies in the likelihood that the category Hispanic or Latino would erase differences within Latinidad, not taking into account black, indigenous, and Asian self-identifying peoples. The Afro-Latino Forum is trying to combat this new “post-racial” notion and the effort to exclude race from Hispanic/Latino identity by creating public service announcements and opening dialogue through another forthcoming anthology and series of videos.

Ultimately, the work of Afro-Latino scholars and community members has focused on revisiting blackness and refashioning the archive that tells our stories in order to recognize our presence and contributions. There is still more work to be done and stories yet to be told. For generations to come our responsibility as a people is to share the knowledge as a way of paying respect to those who came before us, and empowering those who will come after us. In this way we will make a place for ourselves in the world as we resist the attempts to silence us.

Omaris Zamora is completing an MA in the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies and is a third-year PhD student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at The University of Texas at Austin.
On October 4, 2012, the Benson Latin American Collection sponsored “El Tejano Enamorado: An Evening of Music and Art with Oscar Martinez” to celebrate and showcase the many talents of the Corpus Christi legend. Musician Larry Lange, who also played with his band Larry Lange and His Lonely Knights that evening, writes below about Oscar’s lifetime contributions to Tejano and Texas music.

ON ONE O’CLOCK ON A beautiful spring afternoon in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Oscar Martinez takes to the airwaves for his weekly radio show on KMIQ. The intro song “Voy pa’ Corpus Christi, voy a ver a mi gran amor” jumps to Oscar’s hit and theme song “El Tejano Enamorado.” Con gusto, he voices-over, “Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, siete, ocho, aaaaaaay Mambo! Muy buenos tardes, amigos, desde Corpus Christi, Tejas, The Sparkling City by the Sea. Les saluda Oscar Martinez, El Tejano Enamorado. Es un domingo tremendo con la música de las orquestas de Tejas y no los dejan solos, darle shine on Majic 104.9. And give me a big one, honey. Hit it! Hit it! Vamos a tocar ‘Makes No Difference’ con Larry Lange and His Lonely Knights desde Austin, Texas. Esta selección muy bonita … Vamonos! Let’s go! Hit me, baby! Atta boy, Larry!”

When I recorded “Makes No Difference” in ’08, I had no idea that Oscar had had a regional hit with it in the early ’60s on his own record label, Impala. I also did not realize that Oscar had translated that song into English from a previous hit, “Que Me Puede Ya Importar,” which was big in South Texas by Balde Gonzalez. See, even though you travel the world, some of the greatest discoveries are just around the corner. At one of my band’s shows a few years ago, a young man came up and said, “You know, that’s an Oscar Martinez song. You want to meet him?” I said, “You betcha. Is he still around?” In a matter of weeks, we arranged to meet in Corpus Christi at the Galvan music store. I entered the store in a flashy outfit and he came in wearing his flashy outfit and said, “Look at this crazy bolillo! Man, you’ve got to be crazy to be doing my songs.”

I’ve been a bandleader for a number of years from the Austin area, and have chosen a repertoire of music from a specific region—that is to say, from San Antonio to New Orleans along the old U.S. Highway 90, around the Louisiana and Texas Gulf Coast down to the Rio Grande Valley. This area is exceedingly rich in a variety of purely American music genres, many of which overlap one another. The Western and Country music of the white working class, Blues and Rhythm and Blues from the back streets of Houston and New Orleans, the Cajun Zydeco sounds from southwest Louisiana, the “Swamp Pop” stylings from southern Louisiana and southeast Texas, the rancheras from the Rio Grande Valley, and then, eventually, the Orquesta music of South Texas, all come from the various ethnic groups who migrated to the area. While these genres had their roots

**“Hit Me, Baby!”**

Oscar Martinez, The Godfather of Tejano Music

by Larry Lange
in the nineteenth century, it wasn’t until well into the twentieth century that they coalesced. With the rise of technology—radio, recording devices, television, etc.—these musical forms became cemented in the American psyche. And then, of course, rock and roll came along and naturally tapped into all these forms.

I grew up in Victoria, Texas, a small town about 90 miles north of Corpus Christi. This music was as thick as the humidity on a June day on those lower coastal plains. Surrounded by Czech, German, and Mexican Americans, we heard music constantly on car or home radios; some folks had record players. And then, of course, there
were the honky-tonks, like the famous Westerner Club off Moody Street, which, by the way, is still there and still in the hands of the Villafranca family. The Westerner hosted all kinds of musical ensembles, from Oscar Martinez and Isidro Lopez, to Johnny Horton, Beto Villa, Kitty Wells, The Flying Dutchmen, and Adolph Hofner and His Pearl Wranglers.

Oscar began playing nightclubs like the Westerner and Schroeder Hall, outside Goliad, and the Galvan Ballroom in Corpus Christi, and many others throughout the region—Karnes City, Beeville, Bishop, Houston, and Harlingen in the 1950s. He developed a keen sense of what his audiences wanted. They wanted what they heard on the regional radio stations, which played a mix of Anglo and Mexican music—rancheras, polkas, boleros, and rock and roll. The audiences at the higher paying jobs wanted more than that—they wanted orquesta music. The blending of these styles would lead to the birth of Tejano music.

As Mexican Americans left Texas for the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific, they were exposed to the Big Band sounds of Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, and others played by the soldiers drafted into the military. They returned home to the traditional rancheras and corridos but craved the Big Band arrangements. The audiences at these higher paying jobs wanted more than that—they wanted orquesta music. The blending of these styles would lead to the birth of Tejano music.

In 1952, Isidro Lopez would become a rising star with compositions such as “El Nuevo Contrato,” “Emoción Pasajera,” and many others. Oscar would join his band in 1954 and together they would define the new Tejano sound. One of Oscar’s compositions recorded by Lopez’s band at that time, “Tu Sabes Que Te Quiero,” would enjoy much airplay in South Texas. Oscar left Lopez’s band in 1958 to start his own group, but they would maintain a working relationship throughout the years.

In Oscar’s self-published book, *Tejano Music Talk*, he describes this transition period. “Thereupon my band hit the road with bookings. There was a very popular announcer on radio station KCCT in Corpus Christi; his name was Mr. Jose Torres Gonzales, ‘El Eco de México.’ His one-hour show would stretch into four hours. He would ad-lib his spots and commercials, and he especially assisted in promoting my band. Our band played consistently and then, in 1965, I came up with my most noted recording, ‘El Tejano Enamorado’ with the supervision of my former music teacher, Mr. Johnny Herrera, who had his own band. Mr. Herrera used his grand piano to assist me and in the process disciplined me in every way possible. He taught me how to make meticulous changes to refine this song. Isidro Lopez and his band needed a song to be included on the B-side of their record. Why not? Isidro Lopez was my amigo and a renowned artist and could pull more than me at the moment. Why did I entitle my song ‘El Tejano Enamorado?’ Because I am from this beautiful State of Texas and I was focused on the trend for a special identity. This song went on to be recorded by many prominent Tejano artists, such as Rudy and the Reno-Bops, Little Joe Hernandez, Jimmy Edwards, Latin Breed, David Lee Garza y Los Musicales, Joe Bravo, Jay Perez, Ram Herrera, Gilbert Rodriguez and the Blue Notes, Ramon Ayala y Los Bravos Del Norte and several dozen others.”

For the next couple of decades, Oscar continued to travel and entertain audiences at dances all over the region. Always creative, he would come up with new projects besides being a bandleader: starting a couple of record labels; his own line of hair grooming products for men; and the aforementioned book written with his daughter, Iris Martinez-Simmons. Oscar wrote *Tejano Music Talk* because he was concerned that the compositions by other Tejano artists would be lost in time, as most of the musicians did not have the training to put their arrangements into sheet music form. He hand-produced arrangements and put these songs into sheet music so that these compositions by others will live on.

His daughter, Iris, always encouraged him to pursue his artistic talents. Several years ago, she noticed that her father had started drawing caricatures of local musicians and people he met in daily life. Paintings would be scattered haphazardly around his house. She would gather them up and take them home with her. Iris decided to reproduce them on quality paper and sell them at shows. Many people responded enthusiastically saying, “This is
real folk art,” and commissioned paintings for themselves. Oscar will paint on anything: a lovely lady on Grady Pinkerton’s guitar case, scenes of Corpus Christi on Iris’s skirt, and a self-portrait on his suitcase when he accompanied my band for some California shows. Oscar has had several exhibits recently, including one at the Benson Latin American Collection and another at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (both in Austin). A new documentary has been produced, Oscar Martinez, The Man and His Music. Oscar continues to paint and perform in the region.

In 1960, at the Pleasure Island swimming pool next to the Club Westener in Victoria, I would hang on the chain-link fence watching as three Chevrolet station wagons arrived at the club. The men would get out, stretch, gather their instrument cases, and turn to look at me and wave. I would wave back. And somehow, I know one of those men was Oscar Martinez.

Larry Lange is a longtime Austin musician, bandleader, and fan of Oscar Martinez.
Climate Change, Vulnerability, and Social Conflicts in the Andes

by Teófilo Altamirano

The Problem

THE ANDES, PARTICULARLY PERU, have been ranked the third most vulnerable region to climate change in the world (Trigoso 2008); moreover, in spite of the economic growth of the last twelve years, more than one-third of the population lives in poverty, enhancing its vulnerability to such diverse impacts of climate change as glacier retreat, loss of biological diversity, health, agricultural production, and water scarcity. At the present, 65 percent of social conflicts are related to environmental issues, according to various studies.

Over the last several decades, Peru as a tropical country has experienced significant changes in precipitation and temperature levels, leading to increased glacier retreat and flooding (Foresight Report 2011). The increase of environmental risks and hazards, while global, will have more local impact, particularly in the coastal desert and Andean peasant communities (Blaikie and Cannon 2003).

Of the water in coastal and arid zones, 80 percent comes from the glacier, lakes, and Andean rivers. During the last ten years on the coast, irrigated agriculture has increased, since most of this production is for export. This production includes fruits, flowers, asparagus, and so on, demanding more water than livestock production. Lately, there have been reports on water scarcity and consequent social conflicts between large, medium, and small producers. It is predicted that water will become even more scarce in the next ten years, and conflicts will increase accordingly. Global warning is also affecting small water sources at less than 5,000 meters above sea level. These springs are crucial for domestic animals, as well as for human consumption since 90 percent of rural populations do not have domestic drinking water connections.

It has been recorded that adaptive mechanisms as well as resilience are some of the main responses of Andean rural populations to climate change as it happens in other areas (Birkmann 2010). However, populations living below the poverty line (less than US$2 per day) are more vulnerable and therefore more likely to migrate involuntarily to either the coast or the rainforest (Trigoso 2008).

The Andean region has lost between 22 and 35 percent of its glacier since 1970 (Becker 2007). The glacier regulates stream flow and seasonal variations during the dry season from June to November.

The Case

My own study (Altamirano 2013) in the central sierra in the Huaytapallana glacier and region has demonstrated that 35 percent of the glacier has been lost in the last forty years. It also has been reported by the UNDP study (PRAA, Adaptation to Climate Change) that in the coming fifty years all of the glacier will melt. Forty years ago in summer and winter the mountain of Huaytapallana was completely covered by glacier ice. I personally witnessed the beauty of the mountain when I became part of a British research team in the area.

As with the reserve of Huaytapallana, there are others having the same social conflicts as a result of water scarcity and stress. In addition to glacier retreat, mining companies located more than 4,000 meters above sea level, where most glaciers are, are contaminating the water with the mercury that is widely used to separate gold and other minerals from rocks and solid soil. This is the case of Huaytapallana reserve, where at least three companies are exploiting minerals and the rest have concessions from the central government to explore and later exploit.

Of approximately 265 social conflicts, 60 percent are related to the environment, with mineral, gas, and oil exploration the most numerous. Two years ago a conflict between the native population and police resulted in twenty-seven deaths—five natives and twenty-two police.
Global warming not only affects sea-level rise, health, biodiversity, and agriculture—resulting in more destructive hurricanes, tornados, and rain—but also increases glacier retreat. This in turn affects the availability of water, essential for human subsistence in tropical zones. It is predicted that in the next ten years, glaciers less than 5,000 meters above sea level will disappear. Most of our indigenous communities live between 3,000 and 4,500 meters above sea level.

As global warming is unstoppable, so is glacier retreat, according to projections made by the National Authority of Water, Arnao Morales (2010), and the National Geographic Society. These studies predict that in approximately eighty years all Peruvian glaciers will be melted. Consequently, water stress will become even more acute.

It has been said that in the year 2050, the economic cost of climate change will reach 20 percent of the Peruvian GNP, since the government will have to invest in projects to protect food security, and agriculture will be affected negatively (Banco Central de Reserva del Peru 2008). Consequently, water stress will become even more acute.

Table 1. Interactions between Local and Regional Groups in the Huaytapallana Reserve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Positions on the Reserve</th>
<th>Source of Power</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Means for Change</th>
<th>Social Conflicts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local residents</td>
<td>Active ecological participation</td>
<td>Community and municipal organization</td>
<td>Reserve preservation and water safety</td>
<td>Local meetings and media</td>
<td>With the city and regional government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Huancayo</td>
<td>Less active ecological participation</td>
<td>Provincal, municipality, social media, economic support from the wealthy</td>
<td>More water provision for new residents</td>
<td>More infrastructure as drinkable water and sewage services</td>
<td>With rural communities and NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional government</td>
<td>Ambivalent</td>
<td>Connection with central government and financial facilities</td>
<td>Reduce social conflicts and bureaucratic help</td>
<td>Political, no interest in change</td>
<td>With city of Huancayo rural communities and political parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National government</td>
<td>Weak but support to mining companies located in the reserve</td>
<td>Political legitimacy, top and final decisions</td>
<td>Maintain equilibrium between local and regional governments</td>
<td>Law decrees, NGO supervisions, political maneuverability</td>
<td>With regional and local organizations, with mining companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy organizations</td>
<td>Active, ecologist, environmentalist</td>
<td>International financial support</td>
<td>Maintain water availability for rural communities</td>
<td>Very limited, too theoretical and academic</td>
<td>With national, regional, and local organizations, and between themselves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Global warming and in tropical and poor countries:

(1) Global warming reduction and control. As it stands, this alternative is almost a utopian dream since rich and emerging countries will not comply, as it may harm their economic growth and competitiveness (see Altamirano 2013, chap. 3). International agreements and summits with participation of the U.S., Canada, Japan, Australia, and the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) have consistently responded negatively to the request that tropical and poor countries reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

(2) Adaptation to conditions resulting from global warming. Most poor and tropical countries are implementing or are about to implement this response. However, it has proven to be expensive and requires international aid from wealthier countries. African sub-Saharan countries are among the most affected and are the poorest in the world.

(3) Resilience. The impacts of climate change for many inhabitants of poor countries are another challenge; therefore, resilience is part of their everyday lives. These situations create individual, family, and group resistance to adverse situations. Resilience includes internal organization and hierarchy to support external hazards. This historical capacity partially explains why these populations tend to remain in their own communities.

(4) Mitigation. This means the rational use of scarce local resources including traditional practices known by the people even before climate change became evident. Early warning and the utilization of social and cultural knowledge passed on by generations through oral traditions, the use of social media, and the role of school in fostering environmental awareness are significant tools to enhance capacities at the individual and societal levels.

(5) Involuntary displacement. This response, organized by affected populations, can be divided into two types: (a) planned and (b) unplanned. Displacement should be considered as an undesirable alternative, since populations by nature are reluctant to abandon their properties, culture, and local identity formed over centuries and even thousands of years. In the case of planned evacuation, this can be organized by the local, regional, or national government and sometimes with international aid, either governmental or nongovernmental. In the case of unplanned displacement, as happens more often, affected populations make their own decisions in the absence of external aid; if the evacuation is organized by their own people, the challenges can be more risky and might entail the use of financial resources that are often scarce. If organized by individuals or families, it can be even riskier and with even fewer available resources. Involuntary displacement entails additional challenges, such as when, where, and how to evacuate. In most cases, there are two likely destinations: (a) refugee camps, and (b)
cities or safer neighboring locales. These kinds of displacements entail family separations, uproot cultures, and are unpredictable in their outcomes since the displaced become so vulnerable and dependent upon the will of the people at these destinations, whether local or international.

The effectiveness of the five types of responses will depend on many other factors beyond the dominion of the displaced, such as the level of organization, international law governing the internally displaced and refugees, and international dispositions and treaties. According to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2012), more than 50 million people are internally and internationally displaced in the world. This number surpasses the nonclimate-driven involuntary migrants in the world, who number about 40 million according to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities—25 million internally displaced and 15 million refugees.

In sum, there is an intricate link between global warming, climate change, vulnerability, and social conflicts. Involuntary environmental migration is becoming the most likely consequence of climate change. It seems likely that in the future environmental human displacement will reshape the patterns of involuntary migration mainly in tropical and poor countries. Social vulnerability also has been linked to involuntary migration, as Anthony Oliver-Smith (2010) has concluded in several studies, including the Callejon de Huaylas in the Peruvian northern sierra and later in the southern Peruvian highlands.

The great lesson of Hurricane Sandy in the U.S. northeast is to anticipate how climate change also will affect wealthier countries in the coastal areas where most of the population lives as a result of nonclimate-driven migration—in response to better occupational opportunities and family ties.

Teófilo Altamirano, Professor of Social Science at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru, is a world-renowned expert on climate change and migration. He was Tinker Visiting Professor at LLILAS during fall 2012.

Note
1. Report of Defensoria del Pueblo, an independent advocate for the rights of people, similar to an ombudsman.

References


THE SUMMER OF 2012 I had the opportunity to study abroad in Antigua, Guatemala, through a UT faculty-led program at Casa Herrera with Dr. Luis Urrieta, a professor in the College of Education and Center for Mexican American Studies. Antigua, located forty-five minutes from the capital of Guatemala City, has a population of roughly 36,000 people, made up mainly of Ladinos and indigenous Maya, with a noticeable presence of foreign-born also within the local population. The city’s economy thrives on tourism, Spanish-language-learning tourism, and coffee. Each day consisted of early morning walks to school on cobblestone streets with volcanoes visible in the background, vibrantly colored Spanish colonial architecture, and street vendors along the way. Antigua’s center is filled with the sounds of local musicians, people both young and old, Spanish Kaqchikel, and other languages ranging from English to Mandarin Chinese.

While abroad, I noticed a significant correlation between economic inequalities, ethnicity, and the high level of malnutrition among poor children. This correlation led me to focus my field project for Dr. Urrieta’s class on malnutrition within Guatemala, its effects on poor rural communities, and the means by which governmental and nongovernmental (NGO) entities are trying to combat the issue at hand.

Although I spent the majority of my time in the heart of Antigua, I was able to volunteer through a class project at an NGO called
Casa Jackson, located on the outskirts of Antigua toward Jocotenango. Casa Jackson focuses on nursing malnourished children back to health and is the only organization of its kind in the country. It provides the medical attention that many malnourished children need but that their families cannot afford. The organization comes under two umbrella NGOs, Nuestros Ahijados (in Guatemala) and the GOD’s Child Project (in the U.S.). Casa Jackson is the GOD’s Child Project emergency recovery and public education center for malnourished Guatemalan infants and children under the age of 11. Casa Jackson for Malnourished Infants was established in 2007 in response to the growing number of ill and near-death infants that Patrick Atkinson (founder of GOD’s Child Project) found abandoned on the doorstep of the project’s Guatemalan program office. Casa Jackson opened in October 2008 thanks to a donation from Gene and Sue Jackson of North Dakota and runs on roughly US$30,000 a year. The Jacksons continue to provide 40 percent of the operating costs, while staff and volunteers raise the remaining 60 percent. Casa Jackson has room for twenty patients, suffering from mild to severe malnutrition. Fifty percent of Casa Jackson patients come from Antigua’s close surrounding areas, while the other 50 percent come from Escuintla, the second most violent and one of the poorest regions in Guatemala. Many of the patients at Casa Jackson are indigenous Maya and were admitted to the home through hospital recommendations or on a voluntary basis.

As a volunteer, I worked eight to twelve hours a week with other volunteers and the nursing staff. My job consisted of cleaning the children’s cribs and play areas, disinfecting toys, folding laundry, feeding the children, changing diapers, and most important, giving the children as much tender loving care as possible. The severity of malnutrition varied from child to child, and some of the Casa Jackson residents came with other needs, such as blindness, broken limbs, and Down syndrome. The time, volunteers, and resources needed to run Casa Jackson required more than was available. For instance, a typical dinner shift meant that a nurse and one volunteer had an hour and a half to feed twenty children, only three of whom could feed themselves.

Guatemala has the highest rate of malnutrition in Latin America and the third highest rate of malnutrition in the world. Almost every child in rural Guatemala is currently suffering or will suffer from malnutrition in their lifetime, and 49.8 percent of Guatemalan children under the age of 15 are malnourished. Malnutrition in Guatemala is often due to a parent or family’s inability to provide adequately nutritious food because of cost. Many parents cannot afford to give their children milk or formula and can provide only a standard diet of tortillas, beans, and coffee. Young children are commonly given bottles that are a mixture of half coffee and half milk, or water as a replacement for milk. Coffee makes a body feel full, promoting malnutrition by causing the child not to feel hungry enough to eat later in the day. Severe malnutrition commonly results in stunted growth, juvenile diabetes, heart problems, loss of teeth/hair, cerebral defects and/or delayed physical and mental development, and premature mortality. Due to the stunted growth, many children who are malnourished do not look it. They tend to appear small for their age, but often they do not look “sickly.”

Despite the economic disparities in Guatemala and the setbacks that some communities face, the children I met consistently had an air of resilience to them. Casa Jackson never made the children feel pitied, only loved, well fed, and cared for, regardless of resources. Saúl, Alberto, Humberto, Madai, Katerin, Dana, and the other children at Casa Jackson showed me strength, above all—the strength that comes with having access to adequate medical treatment, along with constant love and care. These children have endured despite medical hardships rarely seen in U.S. daily life, and they will continue to endure the obstacles ahead in order to live another day. It was a rare sight to see the children fall asleep with anything other than a smile on their faces. Staff and patients alike regarded each day as an opportunity for the children to get better and eventually to leave Casa Jackson and return to their families or those able to care for them.

Maria E. Ponce is in the undergraduate program in Latin American Studies at UT Austin.
The Struggle to End Violence against Women in Nicaragua

by Pamela Neumann

THE ENGINE of the old yellow school bus was already rumbling as I approached the crowd of teenagers and middle-aged women milling about and chatting animatedly. It was a humid June morning, and feminist organizations from across Managua were headed to Nicaragua’s Supreme Court of Justice to demonstrate in favor of a new law concerning violence against women. Popularly known as Law 779, it officially went into effect on June 22, 2012.

Law 779 is the most comprehensive piece of legislation about gender-based violence ever passed in Nicaragua, the fruit of years of struggle by the country’s women’s movement. The law criminalizes femicide (the murder of women on the basis of their gender), expands the definition of violence toward women to include the destruction of women’s property, and establishes penalties for negligent actions by state officials. It also establishes new preventive measures to better protect women who file complaints, and creates special courts where women can have their cases heard by specially trained judges.

We boarded the bus, armed with dozens of bright lavender flags with “Movimento Feminista de Nicaragua” printed on them, as well as a few tables and chairs. When we arrived at the courthouse about ten minutes later, there was already a large group of women standing at the entrance. One held a poster-sized newspaper article about her daughter who was killed two years earlier, yet the case is still unresolved. Others chanted in call-and-response fashion. Soon reporters with cameras and tape recorders surrounded Luz Marina, a spokeswoman for the Women’s Network against Violence (La Red de Mujeres contra la Violencia), as she began to read the organization’s official statement about Law 779. The statement emphasized the importance of the law for women, and demanded that it be applied vigorously and promptly.

Violence against women is pervasive in Latin America, and Nicaragua is no exception. Research indicates that one of every two women in Nicaragua has experienced sexual violence during...
her lifetime. According to local newspaper reports, in the first half of 2012 alone, 144,749 complaints were filed by women who experienced sexual violence, a 42 percent increase from the same period in 2011.

Last summer I went back to Nicaragua seeking to better understand this violence, and women’s different responses to it. One of these women is someone I call Elena.

“Bajo sol, bajo lluvia, vamos.” Rain or shine, we go. Elena repeated those words many times as she and I walked the dusty paths of “Barrio La Luz,” inviting women to participate in a demonstration about Law 779. A single mother of three teenagers and a skilled seamstress, Elena has walked these streets for years mobilizing women to participate in different kinds of demonstrations—sometimes, she told me, putting her body in harm’s way. “At a protest over abortion in Leon last year,” she recalled, “they threw rocks at me.” As we talked, men on tricycle taxis rode past us uttering “cochona” (lesbian), but Elena remained undeterred. “I do it for love,” she told me. “For the women, so they don’t experience violence like I did.”

Elena is one of dozens of promotoras affiliated with a grassroots feminist collective in Managua called Ocho de Marzo. Since its formation in the early 1990s, el colectivo has provided a variety of support services (legal advice, counseling, shelter) to women experiencing sexual violence. It also trains neighborhood promotoras like Elena through a series of workshops on violence, sexual and reproductive health, human rights, and political participation. Participating women later replicate these workshops, providing information, resources, and accompaniment to other women in their communities. The collective works in seven neighborhoods in the northeastern section of Managua, an area characterized by high levels of industrial development, informal economic activity, fragile infrastructure, and environmental contamination.

“When we first started,” one member of the collective told me, “we saw 25–30 women every day. The line was out the door. We had to say to them, we’re sorry, could you let us take a break to eat?” This was in the early 1990s, when the country was still reeling from the aftermath of the U.S.-supported Contra war and the ongoing economic crisis that was exacerbated by the rollback of public health services under a series of neoliberal governments. Since Sandinista President Daniel Ortega returned to power in 2006, some new poverty-reduction programs have been implemented, but women’s rights are still very much under attack. As vocal advocates for radical changes in Nicaraguan society, feminist organizations in particular have borne the brunt of recent government antagonism.

Most recently, this antagonism has manifested itself in the increasing opposition to Law 779 by members of Nicaragua’s constitutional court. Although the law at the time of this writing is not even a year old, some judges have publicly announced that they are considering overturning the law or eliminating the provision that prohibits mediation as an acceptable option for resolving women’s complaints. “This is why we have to be organized,” various women at a workshop organized by Ocho de Marzo last July told me.

It is the experiences of these women—the activists who protest on the street and those whose lives are shaped in myriad ways by the violence in their communities—that I seek to understand through my current research as a graduate student in sociology at The University of Texas at Austin. My interest in these issues began in 2006 when I moved to Nicaragua to work for a nongovernmental organization. One of the first people I met was a young woman with a twinkle in her eye named Darling. Darling suffered years of abuse by her husband before eventually leaving him and completing a law degree while also caring for two young children.

When I came back to the United States and began the master’s program in LLILAS several years later, it was Darling’s story that I often reflected on. As my intellectual journey has progressed, I have become increasingly convinced of the importance of scholarship that is actively engaged with the concrete concerns of communities. My current research is inspired by Nicaraguan women like Darling and Elena. As long as their struggle for equality continues, so will mine.

Pamela Neumann is a graduate of the LLILAS master’s program and a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at The University of Texas at Austin.
Photos courtesy of the author.

Top left: Pamela Neumann (right) with Griselda, a member of the Ocho de Marzo collective. Top right and bottom: Demonstrators for Law 779.
Comparative Studies of the “Japanese Program Terminations in El Salvador and Colombia”

Kumiko Kawachi, who graduated with a PhD from LLILAS in 2013, received the award for Best LLILAS Student Paper at the ILASSA Conference in February. Her paper is reprinted here in an abridged version. The full-text version with complete references is available in the LANIC Etext Collection/LLILAS Archive at http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/LLILAS/ILASSA/2013.

Introduction

Since the 1960s, sending young volunteers to developing countries has become a prominent trend among the developed countries, whose leaders were influenced by the idea of “universalism,” which also manifested in such advancements as the establishment of the United Nations. The Peace Corps, founded in the United States in 1961, was a key player in the design of this international trend, which the Japanese government followed. In 1965, the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), the “Japanese Peace Corps,” was founded, and the first JOCV program in Latin America began in 1968.

The Peace Corps and the JOCV have operated under similar systems; for example, they both train and place ordinary citizens as volunteers who serve for two years in foreign countries, particularly “underdeveloped” countries. This paper compares the JOCV and Peace Corps in terms of program terminations. In the case of the Peace Corps in Latin America, twelve countries stopped receiving volunteers during the 1970s and the early 1980s. An analysis of Peace Corps official documents and scholarly writings reveals four major factors relevant to the Peace Corps’ withdrawal: (1) increased development, (2) political unrest in the host country, (3) expulsion from the host country, and (4) U.S. budget cuts.

The JOCV program in Latin America experienced significantly fewer terminations of its operations than did the Peace Corps. An analysis of JOCV’s official documents, mainly Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) annual reports, and scholarly writings reveal that there is one principal factor affecting JOCV’s withdrawal in Latin America: political unrest in the host country. This situation is the primary cause behind these program terminations for both JOCV and the Peace Corps. JOCV programs in both Colombia and El Salvador were terminated due to this; the Peace Corps also terminated programs in both countries. So I focus on exploring the JOCV terminations in the El Salvadoran and Colombian cases in comparison to those of the Peace Corps.

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV)

The JOCV was founded as a government program in 1965. Unlike the stereotypical images of the United States and young Americans in the 1960s—which included brilliant, white Peace Corps volunteers with bachelor degrees from Ivy League schools—Japan in the 1960s was still struggling with the scars from World War II. Given this background, Japanese participation in international development projects was significant because it signaled the country’s return to the fold of the international community in the postwar period.

Since the establishment of the JOCV, the program emphasized “technology transfer,” so they were recruiting specialized, skilled volunteers. The first generation of JOCV volunteers were young male engineers and agriculturalists. Many of them had skills and plenty of working experience, but not necessarily college degrees. Actually, some of the first generation of JOCV volunteers didn’t
even go to college. This trend has been changing recently, and JOCV volunteers today include a large number of female volunteers as well as young volunteers with BA degrees but without job experience.

The JOCV has steadily added host countries in Latin America. Throughout the years, JOCV has dispatched approximately 20 percent of its volunteers to the Latin American region. Compared to the Peace Corps, the JOCV has sent fewer volunteers in terms of the total number; however, the JOCV has sent volunteers to Latin American countries where there is no Peace Corps presence today, such as Bolivia and Venezuela.

Withdrawal of Programs: El Salvador and Colombia

Political unrest in the host country was the most common and clearest factor in contributing to terminations of both JOCV and Peace Corps programs in Latin America. As a first example, this was the case with the JOCV program in El Salvador, which was officially closed down on March 31, 1979. El Salvador was the first country to become a foreign market for Japanese private companies after World War II. In 1978, the total number of Japanese residents in El Salvador reached 365 persons, and of those, 312 residents were Japanese business people from banks, manufacturers, and trading companies. However, in the late 1970s the political situation in El Salvador became unstable and the number of violent incidents increased. In May 1978, the Japanese President of INSINCA S.A., Fujio Matsumoto, was kidnapped and assassinated by the guerrilla group Fuerzas Armadas de la Resistencia Nacional (FARN). After this incident, kidnappings targeting foreign business personnel occurred frequently in El Salvador. According to an article by Takakazu Suzuki, who was kidnapped by FARN and returned home after 114 days, the kidnapping of foreign businessmen started with Matsumoto. Suzuki said that between May and December 1978, the branch chief of Ericsson, the branch chief and vice branch chief of British BOLSA, and Director Takakazu Suzuki, again from INSINCA S.A., were kidnapped by FARN. These serial kidnappings came as a terrible shock to the other Japanese businessmen in El Salvador; consequently, after Suzuki was kidnapped, most Japanese businessmen left El Salvador. Also, Takashi Tanaka mentioned that Japanese companies reduced their business activities in El Salvador after these incidents. Moreover, even after the peace agreement in El Salvador in 1992, Japan was relatively slow to reenter the El Salvadoran market.

The termination of the JOCV program also was a response to the increased violence in El Salvador. According to the FY 1979 Annual Report, the JOCV said that guerrilla activities increased social unrest and made the continuation of the program in El Salvador extremely difficult. In the report, the JOCV decided on “temporary termination” not only to secure volunteers’ lives, but also because “carrying out effective cooperation for people in the host country was impossible under this situation.” The JOCV terminated its program in El Salvador in 1979 and agreed to reopen it there after eleven years of hiatus.

According to the Peace Corps annual reports, the major reason for the termination of its programs in El Salvador was political unrest. In the book Voice of Experience in Central America: Former Peace Corps Volunteers’ Insights into a Troubled Region, former volunteers who served in El Salvador recount dangerous political situations in the decade of the 1970s. In a survey of volunteers in El Salvador, all thirty-nine respondents had been affected or had known of incidents of violence, disappearances, and forced emigration during their service, and the number of Peace Corps volunteers’ accounts regarding violent experiences increased greatly in the mid-1970s. A volunteer who served as a university instructor of teacher education from 1977–1978 said, “Many of my students disappeared and never returned to class. The rector of the University was assassinated in front of the building.” Accounts by returned volunteers about
violence in El Salvador could run eight pages long. This showed that some Peace Corps volunteers there were working in very unsafe situations. The Peace Corps terminated its program in El Salvador in 1980 and did not resume it until 1993.

In the case of the program termination in Colombia, the Peace Corps had started by first pointing out the existence of a security problem for volunteers there in the late 1970s. In March of 1981, the Peace Corps made the decision to terminate programs there due to the presence of guerrilla activities and drug trafficking. However, except for the Peace Corps Annual Report in FY 1982, the agency made no mention of the serious safety issues that volunteers had faced in the country. In 1977, a group known as Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) had kidnapped Peace Corps volunteer Richard Starr. Members of the Latin American press, such as El Tiempo, then reported that Starr might be a CIA agent or a member of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, even though there was no such evidence. Starr’s eventual release was facilitated by neither the U.S. government nor the Peace Corps. Instead, internationally known journalist Jack Anderson negotiated with FARC and arranged a ransom using his private connections. After 1981, the Peace Corps did not return to Colombia for thirty years, finally resuming its program there in September 2011.

The case of Colombia shows stark differences between the Peace Corps and JOCV programs. The JOCV did not even start sending volunteers to Colombia until 1985, four years after the Peace Corps terminated its programs there. In the early years of JOCV/Colombia, the volunteers were able to work actively. However, according to JICA annual reports, in 1989 the JOCV moved its volunteers working in the Medellín area to Bogotá due to the increase of violence in Medellín. Then, in 1991, an employer from a Japanese company was kidnapped, so the JOCV ordered all volunteers in the country to stay in Bogotá for two months. After this, they were sent back to their worksites; however, murders and kidnappings targeting Japanese individuals occurred. Responding to unstable conditions in the country, the JOCV changed one-third of its volunteers’ host communities/institutions in Colombia in 1991, and the agency stopped sending volunteers there in March 1992. In 1993, the number of JOCV volunteers in Colombia dropped to zero. However, the JOCV program came back after a one-year hiatus, unlike the Peace Corps, which, as previously noted, did not return for thirty years. The situation in Colombia remained unstable after JOCV’s return, so JOCV/Colombia needed to operate under a special security policy.

Under this policy, five restrictions were placed on JOCV volunteers’ activities in Colombia. First, JOCV/Colombia restricted the areas to which volunteers were sent, limiting these to Bogotá or other big cities where they were relatively safe compared to rural areas. Second, JOCV/Colombia prohibited the publicizing of activities in the country because it feared that volunteers would become targets of violence. Third, JOCV volunteers were prohibited from taking intercity buses and instead were required to take airplanes. Fourth, the JOCV ceased sending volunteers to impoverished regions/towns. Fifth, the JOCV prohibited volunteers from traveling to rural areas to provide their services because of the risk of guerrilla attacks. JOCV/Colombia thus set up these extra rules to protect the lives of its volunteers. Because of these policies, JOCV/Colombia’s per-volunteer costs for its activities increased. In addition, since JOCV’s sphere of activity in Colombia was limited by placing rural areas and impoverished regions off limits, it is an open question as to how much the JOCV was able to meet local people’s needs during the time of political unrest in Colombia.

**Conclusion**

Even though the JOCV and the Peace Corps were similarly established and operated under comparable systems, the two organizations timed their withdrawals from host countries differently, especially in the case of Colombia. Although political unrest in the host country is the primary cause behind these program terminations, the JOCV and the Peace Corps responded to the political unrest in very different ways. In the case of Colombia, the JOCV continued sending volunteers after just a one-year hiatus, whereas the Peace Corps did not return to Colombia for three decades. Political unrest in the host country is definitely one of the causes behind these program terminations for the JOCV. However, neither the program closings nor their timing is consistent between the JOCV and the Peace Corps.

**Notes**

2. Unlike the Peace Corps’ independent status, the JOCV program is subordinated under JICA, which is the U.S. equivalent of USAID.
Focus on Our Faculty:
Teaching Students to View Latin America Broadly

LLILAS students have the advantage of studying Latin America through the wide lens provided by our broadly interdisciplinary faculty, exemplified by the four scholars profiled here.

Lina del Castillo

Lina del Castillo is Assistant Professor of History and Latin American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. She first came to UT Austin from Iowa State University in 2009 through the Big XII Faculty Fellowship, which allowed her to conduct research at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection and participate in the Department of History’s Institute for Historical Studies. A visiting scholar at LLILAS from 2011–2012, she subsequently began her joint appointment between LLILAS and the History Department in fall of 2012.

Prior to coming to UT, Professor Del Castillo taught at Iowa State from 2007–2010. A PhD of the University of Miami, she won their Barrett Prize for the best dissertation on a Latin American topic. In the spring of 2010, she was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the Universidad Nacional in Bogotá and, later that year, was the Jeannette D. Black Memorial Fellow for the History of Cartography at the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

Dr. Del Castillo’s research focuses on the intersections between cartography, contested claims to land and resources, and the transnational dimensions of the formation of the Colombian nation-state. She is working on a manuscript provisionally titled Assembling Colombia: Transnational Visions and Regional Designs in the Making of a Republic, which addresses a somewhat deceptive, and deceptively simple, question: Why, despite ample efforts to imagine a Gran Colombia national community (that at the time included what we now recognize as Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, and Venezuela), did this nation-state not cohere? The case of Gran Colombia is especially interesting because, among all the Spanish American states vying for independence, Colombia was the first to be imagined and depicted cartographically. Assembling Colombia demonstrates the importance of place, contingency, and geopolitics for the acquisition, assembly, production, negotiation, and diffusion of geographic knowledge in and about that early republic.

Dr. Del Castillo's research interests directly inform the courses she teaches. Her graduate seminar on Territorial Nation-State Formation in Latin America is designed to help students develop a firm historiographical grounding in key studies that help us better understand the spatial dimensions of state formation in the region. Along with the introductory undergraduate history survey on Modern Latin America, Dr. Del Castillo also teaches two upper-division
undergraduate courses: Mapping Latin America and Beyond Aid and Intervention. The first examines the ways in which cartography and related spatial practices, from the colonial period into the present day, have contributed to shaping ideas about the meaning of Latin American spaces and places. The second examines the historical, cultural, political, economic, and, of course, spatial linkages between the United States and Latin America.

Regarding her time at UT, Professor Del Castillo says, “I am continually energized by the enthusiasm of UT students, inspired by the intellectual accomplishments and support of my colleagues in History and Latin American Studies, and thankful for the extensive resources the university has to offer.”

Patience Epps
Patience (“Pattie”) Epps is Associate Professor in the Department of Linguistics. She is also a codirector of the Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America (AILLA) at UT Austin and a faculty affiliate of LLILAS and the Center for Indigenous Languages of Latin America (CILLA). Dr. Epps came to UT in 2006. She is a PhD of the University of Virginia, and held a predoctoral fellowship at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig from 2003–2005.

At UT Dr. Epps most recently has taught the courses Linguistic Typology, Language Change and Language Variation, Languages and Cultures of Amazonia, Language Contact, Complexity in Language, and Historical Linguistics. In addition to the 2007 Panini Award from the Association for Linguistic Typology (for her dissertation), she has been the recipient of numerous grants and fellowships for linguistic research from the Mellon Foundation, National Science Foundation, and the Endangered Languages Documentation Project, to name just a few.

Among her students, Dr. Epps has a reputation for dedication and availability. PhD candidate Gabriela García Salido says, “Working with Dr. Epps has been the best thing that happened to me as a student of The University of Texas at Austin. She is the best combination of how to be yourself, succeed in academia, and be a great human being. Her attitude about working with students is ‘let’s do it’ rather than ‘you do it.’”

Colleagues are equally laudatory. AILLA manager Susan Kung comments, “I couldn’t ask for a better colleague than Pattie. She always makes herself available to me and to AILLA, and her advice is not only helpful, but specific and relevant. She seems to enjoy new challenges, and she faces them with a positive and encouraging attitude.”


Regarding her work, Dr. Epps says, “Amazonian languages have a lot to tell us—about language in general, and about the lives and histories of South American peoples. I appreciate the wonderful resources at LLILAS and UT that help me to pursue this research, and encourage students to explore and carry it further.”
Edgardo Latrubesse

Rivers have engaged Edgardo Latrubesse for most of his professional career. Professor in the Department of Geography and the Environment, through his research program Large Rivers: Long Term Basin Evolution, Morphodynamics, and Global Change he studies the hydrogeomorphology of large rivers, the impacts of human activities on large fluvial systems and tropical biomes, and the paleogeography, paleohydrology, and paleoecology of tropical South America. He has worked extensively on some of the largest rivers of the continent, including the Amazon, Negro, Madeira, Purús, Juruá, Araguaia, Paraná, and São Francisco, and has conducted fieldwork in the Amazon basin, the Pampean region, the Bolivian Altiplano, the Brazilian savannas (Cerrado), the Chaco, and the Llanos del Orinoco.

A PhD of the Universidad Nacional de San Luis, Argentina, Dr. Latrubesse came to UT Austin in 2009. Prior to that he was a professor at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata (Argentina) and the Federal University of Goias (Brazil), where he also was head and founder of the Laboratory of Geology and Physical Geography. During 2008–2009 Dr. Latrubesse was Thomas W. Rivers Distinguished Visiting Professor in International Affairs in the Department of Geological Sciences at East Carolina University in Greenville.

Dr. Latrubesse is leader of the working group Tropical Rivers of the International Association of Geomorphologists, leader of the IGCP 582 UNESCO project Tropical Rivers, and chair of the GLO-COPH working group on Large Rivers, all of which allowed him to organize field conferences in several of the largest fluvial basins of the world. He also has been a member of the Executive Committee of the International Association of Geomorphologists-IAG. Dr. Latrubesse is a member of the editorial board of Geomorphology and Paleoecology of Africa, among others, and has been a guest editor of several special issues of international journals and books.

Sergio Romero

Sergio Romero, a specialist in the languages of Mesoamerica, is both a sociolinguist and an anthropologist. Assistant Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, he holds a joint appointment with LLILAS and is director of the institute’s Indigenous Languages Initiative. Before coming to UT in 2012, Dr. Romero was on the faculty of Vanderbilt University, and also taught at the University of Chicago as well as a Tulane University summer field course in Guatemala. He earned a PhD in linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania.

A native of Guatemala, he says, “My fluency in highland Maya languages has allowed me to help Maya migrant communities in the USA with legal translation services … My research explores the mutual determination between social and linguistic change in indigenous languages of the Americas, especially of the Mayan and Uto-Aztecan families. I am particularly interested in dialectal variation, social deixis, new dialect formation, the genealogy of pastoral language, and language contact.” He speaks fluent K’iche’, Kaqchikel, and Q’eqchi’ (all Mayan languages), as well as Nahuatl.

Professor Romero was one of the keynote speakers at the SALSA XXI conference (Symposium About Language and Society) at UT this past April. He is currently finishing up a book project that explores the social meaning of dialectal variation in K’iche’ and Q’eqchi’, two Mayan languages spoken in the highlands of Guatemala. He also is working on the uses of variation in honorific marking in Pipil and Central Nahuatl in texts produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Guatemala.

Dr. Romero heads the new indigenous language instruction program, which will offer a class in K’iche’ Maya this fall for the first time in the history of UT.
Visiting Professors for 2012–2013 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 have been brought to UT to teach courses or set of classes, sharing their expertise and facilitating the exchange of ideas. 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. LLILAS was able to host two Tinker Visiting Professors during 2012–2013. Teófilo Altamirano from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú visited us during fall 2012. A PhD of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos in Lima, he focuses his research on climate change and migration, providing a framework for understanding the consequences of climate change in the most vulnerable rural and urban areas of Latin America. See his article on p. 30. Jorge Mario Sánchez Egozcue, our spring 2013 Tinker Visiting Professor, holds a PhD in international economics from the Universidad de La Habana, Cuba, where he has been a professor and researcher since 1990. Throughout his career, Dr. Sánchez has carried out research on the political and economic aspects of international relations between Latin America and the United States, Canada, and Europe, as well as research on the macroeconomic policies, commerce, and development of the Cuban economy.

The Matías 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. 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.

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 2012–2013 academic year, LLILAS welcomed the following Visiting Resource Professors.

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Cristian Alarcón

Cristian Alarcón is a Chilean journalist and editor at the Universidad Nacional de General San Martín (UNSAM) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He is a fellow of the Foundation of New Latin American Journalism, based in Cartagena, Colombia, and is currently the academic director of a program on “The Drugs Trade, the City, and Violence in Latin America,” set up for journalists by the Foundation and the Open Society Institute. For ten years he wrote about urban violence and conflict in Sociedad y Cultura, and published in TXT Magazine, Gatapardo, Rolling Stone, and the newspaper Crítica de la Argentina. He is also author of the widely celebrated Si me querés queréme transa (Norma, 2010). While at UT, he was affiliated with the Department of Sociology and the School of Law.

David Altman

David Altman has taught at the Instituto de Ciencia Política at the Universidad Católica in Santiago after earning his PhD at the University of Notre Dame. He recently published Direct Democracy Worldwide with Cambridge University Press. He has two current research projects, one focusing on political parties in Latin America, especially the Chilean and Uruguayan party systems, and the other focusing on the analysis of the Chilean transition to democracy during the 1980s. Dr. Altman was affiliated with the Department of Government during his time at UT.

Regina Horta Duarte

Regina Horta Duarte is Professor of History at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG) in Brazil. She was a Directive Board member of the Sociedade Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Historia Ambiental (SOLCHA). She is currently editor in chief of the Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña (HALAC). Professor Duarte is also a Consecutive Board member of both Clio (Recife) and História, Ciencias, Saúde-Manguinhos.

Miguel Sarre

Miguel Sarre has been Professor of Law at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) in Mexico City since 1997 and is director of the Center for Public Law at ITAM. He is currently a member of the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. His research focuses on human rights and intersections of international human rights law with public security and criminal justice issues. His current project involves management analysis of the National Commission of Human Rights. Professor Sarre is a representative for the academic sector on the Secretaría del Consejo de Coordinación para la Implementación del Sistema de Justicia Penal (SETEC), which oversees the Mexican criminal justice reforms that were passed in 2008. During his time at UT, he was affiliated with the School of Law and the Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice.