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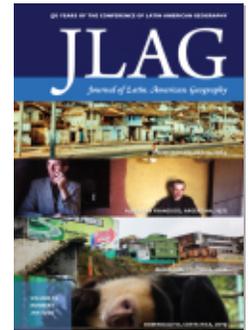
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Fifty Years of Latin American(ist) Geography

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2020 MARKS THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY of the Conference of Latin American Geography (formerly the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers, or CLAG). Since its emergence in 1970, CLAG has pursued a mission of fostering a better understanding of Latin America's environments and peoples. From the start, CLAG has published a wide range of studies on Latin America in its *Publication Series*, *Proceedings*, *Yearbook*, and, since 2002, in the *Journal of Latin American Geography* (JLAG). This special issue of JLAG commemorates CLAG's half century of engagement in the region by exploring the history of, and contemporary themes in, Latin American geography, and outlining future trajectories for Latin American research. With this special issue, JLAG's editorial team has sought to gather a wide variety of voices that collectively demonstrate the wide diversity of geographical perspectives of research in the region. We invited contributors to consider several specific questions exploring the history, importance, and future trajectories of CLAG, and of Latin American geography more generally: How have CLAG publications shaped scholarship, teaching, or geographical imaginations? How has CLAG's intellectual focus shifted over time? What scholarly strands have endured, and what

strands are being lost? What has been missed, and what new strands are being/should be built? What is the legacy of CLAG, and where will CLAG be fifty years from now? And what will be the most important terrains of Latin American geographical scholarship in the coming decades?

In this special issue we present a curated set of twenty essays that seek not only to answer these questions, but also to bring up and formulate new problems and matters that reflect the depth and breadth of Latin American geography, past, present, and future. As an organizational mechanism, we have grouped the essays into three clusters—Histories, Critical Engagements, and Research Agendas—recognizing that any individual essay likely cuts across two or even all three of these groupings. There are also several themes that are present in all three clusters, especially territory, gender and feminism, and the Sauerian tradition in Latin American(ist) geography. We use the term “Latin American(ist)” with the parenthetical suffix purposefully to express the ideas of pluralism in research in, of, and on the region.

In addition to these twenty essays, we also present an ad hoc section—“Photographs from the Field: Fifty Years of Fieldwork in Latin America” (see pp. 115–131 in

this issue)—which features over two dozen photographs from fieldwork ranging from the 1960s to the present day.

With this celebratory fiftieth anniversary issue we also introduce a new section that will become a regular fixture in the journal: *JLAG em Tradução / JLAG en Traducción*. The purpose of this new section is to feature translations—either from Spanish or Portuguese to English, or from English to Spanish or Portuguese—that will be published in the same issue of *JLAG* as the original article, and that have the potential to make broad and long-lasting contributions to theoretical, methodological, and topical debates in Latin American geography, but which may not otherwise achieve the readership they deserve. As is discussed in greater detail later in this issue (see pp. 246–257), this is part of a broader effort of the journal’s editorial team to decolonize *JLAG*’s role in processes of knowledge production.

This collection of essays is of course not exhaustive—that would be a nearly impossible task—but we hope that this issue can offer an insightful and meaningful look back, celebrating the diversity of Latin American geography over the last fifty years, while identifying some of its deficits and blind spots. At the same time, this special edition is also forward looking, critically engaging with some of the most pressing contemporary topics in Latin American geography and outlining future research agendas.

HISTORIES

The first nine essays in this special issue explore the multi-dimensional and intersecting histories of Latin American geog-

raphy broadly, and of *CLAG* members, publications, and research trajectories more specifically, making absolutely clear that *CLAG*’s engagement in the geography of Latin America has been a pluralistic endeavor. The section opens with Tom Martinson’s personal reminiscences of the early years of *CLAG*. Martinson organized the first *CLAG* conference in Muncie, Indiana from April 30 to May 3, 1970. To some, Martinson’s account may read like a sequence of amusing anecdotes from behind the scenes and from the field, but, from a historical point of view, it is an insightful reflection on how Latin American geography grew into a consolidated field of research. In fact, *CLAG* needs more (hi)stories of this kind to understand and document its own past. Syracuse University hosts thirteen boxes (12.5 linear feet) of documents (correspondence, conference materials, meeting minutes, and administrative files) from 1958 to 2014 that still await further exploration.

Next, Shawn Mitchell links her personal trajectory to the involvement and participation of women in *CLAG*. She affirms that despite the growing presence of women geographers in *CLAG*—and taking into account that the first meeting in Muncie, Indiana in 1970 took place without a single-female presenter—women are still underrepresented in university departments and on the job market, frequently exposed to “good ole boys” mentality, and have to cope with a continuous work/life imbalance as geographers and human beings.

Andrew Sluyter and Brett Spencer report on the results of a content analysis of *CLAG*

publications with regard to time periods investigated in studies on Latin America. They draw the conclusion that, unlike dominant trends in other corpora of academic publications, Latin American geography does not exclusively emphasize the present and the recent past, but maintains its tradition of studying precolonial and early colonial geographies.

Gregory Knapp presents insights in the trajectory of CLAG publications by discussing the significance of so-called benchmark volumes from the early 1970s to the early 2000s. He argues that these special publications were important vehicles of communication and exchange among scholars of Latin American geography that served as inventories and assessment of research before the creation of the *Journal of Latin American Geography* in 2002.

The fifth “history” in this section addresses the subfield of tourism geography. Klaus Meyer-Arendt analyzes articles published in two academic outlets, the *Journal of Latin American Geography* and *Tourism Geographies*, tracing both continuity and change in tourism research since the 1970s.

The trajectories of geographical studies in Ecuador and Bolivia are at the center of Andrea Carrión and María López Sandoval’s contribution. Based on a literature review and journal bibliometrics, these authors demonstrate the importance of research networks such as CLAG and *Encuentro de Geógrafos de América Latina* (EGAL), and journals such as JLAG, for creating cross-hemispheric dialogue between Latin American(ist) and Latin American scholars.

Melissa Moreano and Diana Vela-

Almeida take a closer look at more than one hundred CLAG publications between 1971 and 2018 that addressed topics and methodologies related to political ecology, which only recently has become a consolidated research field in Latin America. The authors identify territory and scale as key concepts and emphasize the importance of critical geographical approaches and the connections and collaborations between academics and social movements in research.

The final two essays of this section deal with Carl Sauer’s Berkeley School of Cultural Geography. Kent Mathewson and his collaborators have traced Sauer’s genealogical tree with branches and twigs of six generations of academic research listing a network of more than 350 Latin American/Latin American(ist) geographers. Pedro Urquijo Torres, Paola Segundo, and Gerardo Bocco, for their part, present an overview of Ph.D. dissertations by Berkeley geographers in Mexico since the 1930s and point out the importance of Sauerian concepts such as cultural landscape and themes such as land use change and environmental history for the shaping of Latin American(ist) geography.

CRITICAL ENGAGEMENTS

The second cluster presents six essays offering critical engagements with topics, themes, and theoretical approaches within Latin American(ist) geography. The section opens with three essays on territory. First, Joel Correia offers a thought-provoking reflection on the U.S.-Mexico border, encouraging us to think beyond the drawing of lines and building of walls to question one of the most taken-for-granted ideas in Latin American geography:

the very notion of Latin America itself as a region. Correia argues that such territorializations of Latin America reify racial and social differences through an orientalist logic, and that scholars of Latin America should critically evaluate how these processes and categorizations are the result of racialized logics with very real material effects. Next, Rogério Haesbaert questions the Eurocentric *monologue* on territory, making a plea for a Latin American perspective of the idea as a category of practice and contested space of identities rather than a normative category or mechanism of analysis that much too often (re)produces Northern Hemisphere conceptions of the other and of colonial connotations. Pablo Paolasso's essay focuses on inequality, territorial fragmentation, and broadening socio-spatial gaps (*desigualdad, fragmentación territorial y brecha*), arguing that deep and long-running inequality in Latin America has led to a materialization of fragmentation in the territory itself, or what Paolasso refers to as the multi-dimensional sharpening of socio-spatial gaps.

Joseli Maria Silva and Marcio Jose Ornat present an insightful and timely bibliographic overview of feminist geographies and gender and sexuality studies conducted by Latin American researchers since the 1980s. They highlight the difficulties and challenges of doing gender-related scholarship in and of the region and stress the necessity of a decolonized epistemology for these studies.

Critical engagement with Latin America is not restricted to the surface, as Matthew Himley and Andrea Marston affirm in their essay on geographical studies of under-

ground spaces. They contend that "the ground beneath our feet remains underexplored terrain for geographers of Latin America" (pp. 173, this issue) and propose a research agenda on mining, extraction, and petro-geographies with a stronger emphasis on sociopolitical dimensions.

In the final contribution of this section, Karl Offen narrates the case of green sea turtles in the colonial Caribbean to remind Latin American(ist) geographers of the importance of historical dimensions in the study of human-environment relations. He makes a call for reading (or re-reading) past or forgotten accounts that could contribute to the understanding of colonial economies, settlement histories, the slave trade, and intra-imperial conflicts in the region.

RESEARCH AGENDAS

Moving on from critical engagements, the five essays compiled in this section propose specific agendas for the future of Latin American(ist) geography. To begin, Nikolai Alvarado argues that there has been a long-standing rural bias in geographical studies of Latin America, taking into account that its population is overwhelmingly urbanized. Tracing this to the ongoing legacy of Sauerian cultural geography, Alvarado argues that the over-representation of rural Latin America in the discipline perpetuates a colonial and orientalist view of the region. He outlines a research agenda that would not, paraphrasing Jan Monk, exclude much more than half of the Latin Americans in Latin American(ist) geography.

Further exploring urban topics in and on Latin America, Nicolás Vergara-Ar-

ribas argues that research on real estate in the production of urban space constitutes a pervasive debt within Latin American(ist) geography. Given Latin America's highly urbanized population and growing relevance of real estate in the production of physical and social spaces across the region, Vergara-Arribas argues for a much more robust engagement with research on "real estate agents, logic, mechanisms, and discourses in the production of the space of Latin American cities" (p. 205).

In her contribution, Anne-Marie Hanson begins with a pair of questions: "At what moment do scholars say 'never again' to relying on colonial, masculinist, and patriarchal theories and methods to frame the discipline? At what moment do we write against these tendencies... and decide to embody the changes we want to see in the discipline?" (p. 215). From there, Hanson outlines a research agenda for decolonial, communitarian, and feminist scholarship in and of Latin America that recognizes that these questions are not purely epistemological (though they are that), but also, in her words, "toxic and deadly," given that Latin America is consistently ranked as one of the most dangerous places in the world for women and environmental activists.

Next, Edgar Espinoza-Cisneros and Isabel Avendaño-Flores argue that the discipline's unique character as a science that is simultaneously systematic, specialist, and synthetic—and that it is at the same time integrative, holistic, multidisciplinary, and field based—have given geography enormous relevance amongst the social sciences and offers still more promise in the future of

socio-environmental research.

Diego Andrés Lugo-Vivas concludes this section arguing that while Latin American(ist) geography has long focused on land, land tenure, and other land-related issues, and even though inequality has been central to much of this literature, particular forms of land dispossessions have been systematically overlooked. Research on land issues in Latin America, according to Lugo-Vivas, has only very recently begun to take seriously questions of race in land dispossession, and still, most land-related studies operate "within a heteronormative and masculinist worldview" (p. 235). He concludes by offering a research agenda for a more inclusive regional geography of land and land-related issues.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Though certainly not a comprehensive cross-section of everything that CLAG has had to offer in a half century of studies in and of Latin America, it is our hope that the essays and photographs compiled here demonstrate the pluralism and possibilities of Latin American(ist) research in the past, present, and future. We look forward to this journal—the *Journal of Latin American Geography*—continuing to be a central vehicle for the dissemination of this diverse body of scholarship.