ON THE PROFESSION

On Bridges and Tightropes: The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at Indiana University

by Bradley A.U. Levinson | Indiana University | brlevins@indiana.edu
and Jeffrey Gould | Indiana University | gouldj@indiana.edu

For at least the past two decades, the collective mission of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) at Indiana University (IU) has been to build bridges across different constituencies, disciplines, and regions. Yet, rather than bridges, often we have laid nothing more than tightropes suspended by (potentially) creative tensions. Here we will briefly describe our experience with several of these creative tensions, most of which are already well known in the field.

Area Studies and the Disciplines

CLACS faculty and staff have sought to bridge the divide between the "hard" social sciences and the humanities, and, in particular, to foster scholarly dialogue within the framework of area studies. Despite the bitterness of the debates on the national level that often pitted rational choice theorists against others, locally we have managed to develop some, albeit limited, venues for scholarly interchange, notably in environmental and "sustainable development" studies. Yet the sharp methodological and theoretical division continues to limit the curricular and intellectual development of CLACS.

Like most area studies centers, ours is located in a college of arts and sciences. Other than our administrative staff and graduate assistants, we control no teaching lines other than our three language instructors, for Quechua, Yucatec Maya, and Haitian Creole. Indeed, we have enjoyed far-sighted support from the college for teaching these languages, especially when we lacked federal funding. Yet beyond CLACS, our college honors a long tradition of departmental autonomy and strong faculty governance. This means that departments are free to petition authorization for new hires according to their own perceived teaching needs, which invariably arise out of disciplinary prerogatives. There is little administrative counterweight from outside departments to ensure a regular or even distribution of area studies expertise—and the same seems largely true in the professional schools.

In such an environment, one of the perennial jobs of CLACS is to appeal to departments and schools to consider Latin American expertise in both their hiring decisions and their teaching assignments. We have done well enough in this regard at Indiana, since faculty strength in our geographic area has consistently grown in recent years—though constant vigilance is still required to guard against the erosion of gains. And such growth has not been even across departments and schools. As in other institutions, the departments of history, anthropology, Spanish and Portuguese, and folklore at IU have perennial faculty strengths in the region, in large part because knowledge of Latin America as a region is deemed central to such disciplinary identities. On the contrary, due to the aforementioned theoretical and methodological divide, our departments of sociology, political science, and economics have spotty regional expertise at best. And course scheduling suffers from some of the same challenges as faculty hiring. Because we have no formal input or control, in order to ensure a strong and varied offering of courses to undergraduate minors, master's degree students, and doctoral minors in CLACS, we often are left making moral appeals to colleagues and curriculum coordinators to take our needs into consideration.

Latin American and Latino Studies

The divide between Latin American and Latino studies is far less daunting. At IU, we enjoy cordial relationships and close programming agendas with both Latino Studies (the academic program, which offers a minor at the undergraduate and doctoral level) and the Latino Cultural Center (the student program, which offers services and non-academic programming about Latino culture). Indeed, several years ago this triumvirate proudly announced its mutual collaboration as an expression of "Latinidades" around the campus.

Yet the programs do remain distinct, and there is good reason for this. CLACS enjoys federal Title VI funding as a National Resource Center, and such funding of international studies accounts for a major portion of its overall budget. The national security logic that originally motivated the creation of Title VI produces a geopolitical map of tightly compartmentalized nation states, thereby creating a sharp division between the "domestic" (e.g., U.S. Latinos) and the "international" (Latin Americans). Yet most current humanities and social science scholarship reveals a vibrant world of transnational flows, connections, and identities that challenge the containerized world of national security imagination. We address this by sponsoring speakers and events on, for example, the origins and diffusion of "Huapango" music across "Greater Mexico," or on the migratory circuits of Brazilians in New York, insisting that such "domesticated" phenomena remain vibrantly connected to their cultures and regions of origin.

Not unrelated, we also navigate a perennial tension between scholars and students who are most interested in the Iberian heritage in Latin America, and a smaller constituency of Caribbeanists. At IU, we have been helped by a vibrant community of transnational and Atlantic historians and literary critics whose work, especially on race, illuminates the connections and influences stretching

from the former Iberian colonial world across the British and French colonial Caribbean.

Academic Knowledge Production and Outreach

Like many of our counterparts, we state our mission to be one of "teaching, research, and outreach." In reality, though, it may be easier to conceptualize our mission as a commitment to two arenas that we traverse on a tightrope. On one side we have the production of scholarly knowledge, located mainly in the disciplines but also in area studies discourse and debate. We would place much graduate, and some undergraduate teaching on this side, since it is primarily oriented to training either the next generation of researchers, or a cadre of applied scientists and activists who draw on area studies knowledge to achieve their professional missions. To catalyze and energize research, we organize working groups, fund conference and research travel, and sponsor workshops and symposia. Most of our affiliated faculty are avid supporters of such activities.

On the other side is "outreach," broadly conceived as the diffusion of knowledge to varied constituencies, some of whom may have little initial interest in, or knowledge about, the region. Although we maintain healthy enrollments in our undergraduate minor, many other undergraduate students are exposed to knowledge about Latin America through our aggressive campus-based outreach program: speakers, film festivals, art exhibits, language expos, and so forth. Beyond campus, we pursue outreach through a number of channels. Many of these outreach efforts are developed in conjunction with other area studies centers on campus, as well as our Center for the Study of Global Change. They include programming for K-12 teachers, business, the media, and community colleges. Perhaps our most innovative and influential outreach program is the Indiana Project on Latin American Cultural Competency (IPLACC). Located in the School of Education, IPLACC draws on extensive professional contacts to conduct programs and workshops with both pre-service and in-service teachers, as well as administrators, throughout the state. IPLACC has been developing a professional development model that looks to create commitment and reflection in communities of practitioners. Once these small communities have engaged in study of various aspects of Latin American culture and society, and applied the results of such study to make changes in both curriculum and teaching method, they look to draw peers into the process. Despite our modest successes in outreach, though, we continue to walk a tightrope between research and outreach because tenure and promotion procedures invariably militate against robust faculty participation in outreach programs.

Knowledge for Security and Knowledge for Solidarity

Federal funding for area studies comes attached to the pursuit of the "national interest." In an earlier age, Title VI funding was clearly part of a Cold War strategy for containing Communism; nowadays it is more likely to be a strategic part of the global war on terror, or the drive for global economic competitiveness. Among other things, federal funding of area studies seeks to ensure a continual flow of linguistically and culturally competent professional cadres that will enable the United States to maintain national security and assert its power effectively with global reach.

Yet there is another impetus for federal funding of area studies, one that is more consonant with the humanistic mission of a college of arts and sciences: the creation of an educated workforce and citizenry that understands and appreciates cultural diversity on a global scale. Such an impetus dovetails more closely with the ethos of most of our Latin Americanist faculty, who might take it one step further: the creation of a citizenry that questions its global privilege and seeks to engage with global cultural diversity in a spirit of respectful mutuality. This is what we might call "knowledge for solidarity," and it centrally informs some of our most important programs and projects. Our goal is to negotiate this creative tension while recognizing that knowledge for solidarity remains inextricably bound to the funding impetus to create knowledge for security and global competitiveness.

Our Minority Languages and Culture Program (MLCP) is an example of a program that fits within the framework of national security concerns, in that it promotes the teaching of indigenous languages and Haitian Creole, but at the same time produces scholarship, teaching, and outreach sympathetic to the contemporary and historical plight of the indigenous and Afro-descended peoples of Latin America. CLACS and the MLCP also work closely with two related federally funded programs: the Central American and Mexican Video Archive (CAMVA) and the Cultural and Linguistic Archive of Mesoamerica (CLAMA). Both projects aim to create digital archives of video, audio interviews, photographs, and other digital sources stored at physical archives in Mexico, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, with the explicit goal of preserving and disseminating sources related to minority languages and cultures and the contemporary social history of the region. These projects depend entirely on our partnership with regional institutions: the

DEBATES

LEVINSON *and* GOULD *continued*...

Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (El Salvador); the Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y de Centroamérica (Nicaragua); and the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores de Antropología Social (México). Video archives are now available for scholars and students at <archivomesoamericano.org>.

In summary, CLACS seeks to promote scholarship and outreach on issues of importance to a broad array of constituencies, both on campus and beyond. Budgetary constraints and guidelines, as well as disciplinary boundaries and the very definition of scholarship (e.g., tenure and promotion guidelines), can create divides that make this task quite difficult. In the midst of considerable success, we still must walk a long tightrope toward becoming a national resource center that produces and disseminates knowledge—for security and solidarity—that effectively reaches and edifies all of its potential constituencies. ■

The Revolution is Dead Viva la Revolución

by ALAN KNIGHT | Oxford University | alan.knight@lac.ox.ac.uk

When the Mexican Revolution turned fifty, in 1960, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) still ruled in all its pomp, and the economic "miracle" was still going strong. The official commemorative volumes, *México: cincuenta años de revolución*, were upbeat and celebratory. They dwelt on the onward and upward progress of the revolutionary regime, the regime of what Howard Cline[1] called the "preferred" (that is, the stable, civilian, pro-business, industrializing) revolution, and said surprisingly little about the bloodshed and destruction that had preceded it.

Fifty years on, as we commemorate (but, perhaps, do not celebrate) the centenary of the Revolution, we do so in a different context: the PRI has lost national power, and, at least for two more years, the presidency is in the hands of a member of the National Action Party (PAN), a party born, in 1939, as a reaction to and a repudiation of the Mexican Revolution. For the PAN, the coincidental bicentenary of independence strikes a happier and more consensual note; it was, after all, initiated by a patriot-priest (whose bones President Calderón will not leave to rest in peace) and, except for a few reactionary *enragés*, emancipation from Spain and the forging of a new nation was, in the terminology of Sellar and Yeatman, a decidedly Good Thing. The Revolution is another matter. It may be a hundred years old but, like other revolutions (recall France in 1989), it can still stir partisan feelings.

Among historians, however, the partisanship is less pronounced than it was fifty years ago. There are still major disagreements but they are less clear-cut, and there are certain areas of general consensus. The most obvious point of consensus is that the Revolution had many facets. "Many Mexicos"—to quote again Lesley Byrd Simpson's much-cited phrase—produced "many revolutions." The official 1960 view of the Revolution as a mighty monolith, a solid bloc of popular, progressive, patriotic collective action, has given way to an intricate mosaic, above all, a geographical mosaic, which reflects the stark spatial complexity of Mexico in 1910: macro-regions (such as "the north"), states, micro-regions (La Laguna, Las Huastecas), municipalities, pueblos, even barrios.

Of the numerous relevant monographs, articles, and symposia one, in particular, deserves mention: Luis González's *Pueblo en vilo*, the pioneering *microhistoria* that many have sought to emulate but few, if any, have equalled.[2] Thus, regional and local historians have, over the last fifty years, made the biggest contribution to our better understanding of the Revolution (and, being a national historian with no historiographical *patria chica* of my own, I can make that claim with some degree of objectivity). Even thematic studies, e.g., of workers, women and peasants, or biographies of major, and minor, caudillos often necessarily adopt a regional or local stance: first, because the individual or collective actors were rooted in their regions and localities (Villa in Chihuahua/Durango, Cedillo in San Luis, Zapata in Morelos, Gabriel Barrios in the Sierra Norte de Puebla; labor insurgents in the textile factories of Atlixco or Orizaba; the stevedores, tenants and prostitutes who rallied behind Herón Proal in the port of Veracruz); and, second, because the kind of detailed research that the revolutionary mosaic demands can often be done best at the local or regional level. Older studies usually viewed workers and peasants as a kind of undifferentiated mass (so do a few recent ones, unfortunately); but the thrust of research in recent decades has involved greater discrimination, granting "subalterns" a diversity of motives, and striving, where possible, to delineate the "faces in the