

Preface

The Globalization Project and the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Chicago are collaborating on a major, three year project, Regional Worlds, intended to explore and implement the conceptual, strategic and practical means for a new approach to area studies. Building on the results of a Ford Foundation-funded pilot year (1996) which considered new approaches to the study of South Asia, the Regional Worlds initiative focused on Latin America during the 1997-98 academic year. The subsequent two years of the project will concentrate on East Asia (1998-99) as an “anchor region” and culminate with a consideration of “Diasporas, Minorities and Counter-Geographies” (1999-2000).

This publication represents some of the substantive results of the first year of the project which analyzed issues linked to cultural environments, population flows and economic development in Latin America from the perspective of both the *longue durée*, and most especially the cultural, socio-political and economic contexts of contemporary Latin America. Specific issues that were emphasized during the course of the year included: (1) shifting patterns of political economy and territorialization; (2) the political, social and economic impacts of changing intellectual property regimes; and (3) concepts, practice and cultural significance of “ethno-development” among indigenous and traditional peoples of Latin America.

Principal activities supported by the Ford Foundation and by complementary funding from the United States Department of Education through its Title VI/NRC grant to the Center for Latin American Studies and from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation included: (1) three two day colloquia and curriculum development workshops; (2) a major, three day conference; (3) individual scholarly lectures; and (4) intensive bibliographic and curriculum research culminating in the set of resource essays, annotated bibliographies and recommendations for curricular innovations presented here.

I would like to acknowledge the following individuals and institutions who contributed materially to the Regional Worlds project during the 1997-1998 academic year. First, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Arjun Appadurai (Director) and Jacqueline Bhabha (Executive Director) of the University of Chicago’s Globalization Project who invited me to participate in and organize the first year of the larger Regional Worlds project in my capacity as Director of the Center for Latin American Studies. In accepting the responsibilities of organizing this year of extraordinarily intense and productive intellectual engagements, I was fortunate to have the active and enthusiastic collaboration of the staff of the Center for Latin American Studies. My appreciation to Kelly Gallagher, Jenny Pilling and Jeff Stvan for their invaluable (and sometimes crucially timely) editorial assistance and to Lisa Guare who was involved in the early planning and programming stages of this project. I particularly wish to acknowledge the critical intellectual and organizational contributions of Beatriz Riefkohl, the Center’s Associate Director.

University of Chicago graduate students Emiliano Corral, Jr. (Department of History) and Jessica Scott Jerome (Department of Anthropology) were awarded the Regional Worlds Graduate Fellowships, and Karin Taylor Berardo (School of Public Policy) and Jennifer L. Johnson (Department of Sociology) conducted essential bibliographic research. Through their collective research activities and active participation in Regional Worlds events, reflected directly in this

publication, these young scholars contributed substantively to the intellectual excitement and success of the project. Graduate students Cass Kostakos and Miguel Salcedo from the Department of Anthropology also contributed important insights to this project.

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