

# Development, Underdevelopment, and National Spatial Organization

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## **ABSTRACT**

Development issues and national spatial organization are key subject areas for geographic research on Latin America. They appeared to be "taking off" during the quantitative revolution in geography and the large-scale expansion of international development studies which occurred between 1960 and 1975, but then they lost momentum. As a result, they have not yet achieved mainstream status in North American Latin Americanist geography. Their weakness results from a wide range of factors, including the continuing pre-eminence of Sauerian cultural geography and Jamesian country-by-country texts, the disorientation caused by paradigm shifts and the desertion of key intellectual leaders, and the demanding character of interdisciplinary, applied research and policy analysis.

Recent publications set the stage for a 1990s resurgence of Latin Americanist geographical research on national spatial organization and patterns of regional development. A whole new generation of researchers and research topics has emerged, some of them geographical, others from cognate disciplines. The key concentrations are in the areas of migration, urbanization, regionalism, decentralization, geopolitics, the geography of public finance, and the ecological and socio-economic consequences of Amazonian development. This new wave of scholarship can only gather momentum, however, if Latin American, North American and European Latin Americanist geographers can inter-relate more effectively with one another, can strengthen their links with cognate disciplines and development practice, and can prepare new textbooks to orient the next generation of scholars.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Between 1965 and 1978 Anglo-American human geography underwent a quantitative revolution focused on the description, modeling and explanation of four overlapping subject areas: location, spatial organization, spatial interaction and spatial inequality. It analyzed patterns of human activity at all scales from local to global, depending heavily on theories of development, underdevelopment, modernization, innovation diffusion, urbanization and demographic transition. Many of its concepts and theories were absorbed from other social sciences but its applications addressed the most central of all geographical questions: why is human activity distributed the way it is, and how can public policy affect that distribution?

Much of the research in the quantitative revolution was "data driven" and the nation-state became a prime focus of analysis because of the easy availability of statistics from censuses and national accounts. Some important and innovative geographical research on spatial organization in Latin America was conducted during the late 1960s and 1970s focusing on international development issues, migration, innovation diffusion, regional inequalities and the structure of urban systems. A new generation of Latin Americanist geographers came to the fore and vital interdisciplinary links were forged, most notably with regional science, development economics, urban and regional planning, and with groups of anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists and economists interested in spatial analysis.

This review analyzes the status of development, underdevelopment and national spatial

organization in contemporary Latin Americanist geography. It seeks to place the 1980s writings of North America's Latin Americanist geographers in a broader context, emphasizing global intellectual trends, public policy issues and book-length scholarship in the aftermath of geography's quantitative revolution. The broad pattern that emerges is typical of "revolutions:" spreading insurgency, apparent victory, the installation of a new order, increasing self-doubt about fundamental principles, growing counter-revolution and the emergence of new concentrations of activity. What is ultimately at stake, however, has not changed in three decades: the ability of geographers to effectively analyze the distribution of human activity and the utilization of resources in Latin American countries and to make policy proposals to change those patterns so as to improve living conditions for the majority of the population. [end p. 249]

## **DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT: BASIC CONCEPTS**

The fundamental concepts in this review are the paired opposites "development" and "underdevelopment" as nouns and verbs and "developed" and "underdeveloped" as adjectives. These terms have been central to discourse about the wealth and poverty of nations and regions since the 1920s, largely replacing such earlier pairs of terms applied to nations and regions as "civilization" and "barbarism," "enlightened" and "primitive," "advanced" and "backward," and "imperial" and "native." Like other social science terms such as class and gender, "development" and "underdevelopment" gradually adjust in meaning and application, reflecting conceptual advances and changes in priorities and world realities.

Development is a process of change through time, sometimes merely implying events (as in "new developments in the Middle East crisis") but more often implying sustained, positive change that can be characterized as "progress" or "improvement." In reality, of course, no change affecting whole countries or regions is beneficial to, or wanted by, everyone in that territory and so "development" is variously treated as "what the ruling elites think is progress," "what international organizations define as progress," or "benefit to a majority outweighing possible negative consequences for a minority."

The development of nations and regions may be defined in four very different ways: as "growth," whereby the volume and variety of economic activity in the territory increases; as "modernization," whereby the people of the territory adopt technologies, designs and customs characteristic of countries considered to be more developed; as "improving quality of life" by satisfying basic needs for adequate nutrition, water, clothing, housing, health, education and cultural expression; or, as "achieving self-sufficiency." In turn, underdevelopment generally is seen as the opposite of development: the absence of economic growth, the prevalence of poverty, the absence of modernization, the lack of improvement in quality of life, the inability to satisfy even the most basic human needs, or a high level of "dependency" on outside technologies and vital goods (Bromley and Bromley 1988:6-19).

In mainstream conceptions of development and underdevelopment nations and regions are seen as gradually advancing from underdeveloped to developed status through some process of "enlightenment," "growth" or "modernization." The relationship between rich and poor

countries and regions is viewed positively, with increasing trade benefitting both rich and poor. Development is seen to diffuse from rich to poor countries and from more urbanized to less urbanized regions within those countries, with cities playing a crucial role as commercial and industrial nodes and as conduits for innovation diffusion. These "diffusionist" ideas are well expressed in the basic texts of the quantitative revolution in human geography (such as Haggett 1965; Berry 1967; Morrill 1970) and are most clearly articulated by John Friedmann (1966) in his classic book *Regional development policy: A case study of Venezuela*. Even in that book, however, Friedmann followed Myrdal (1957) and Hirschman (1958) in recognizing that some peripheral regions may be very slow in developing and that differences between core and periphery may grow for many years before they begin to narrow again as the benefits of development diffuse out to the periphery. Friedmann (1968, 1973a) subsequently refined his diffusionist ideas with a "strategy of deliberate urbanization" and a "theory of polarized development," both mainly based on research in Chile.

After the overthrow of Chile's democratically-elected government in 1973, Friedmann dramatically reversed his position and abandoned the "diffusionist" camp. Though events in Chile heightened the drama of his paradigm shift his reversal was also based on a growing interest in grass roots democracy (Friedmann 1973b) and on an increasing frustration with the failure of most countries and regions to develop. Like many other observers Friedmann became convinced that superpowers, multinationals and military elites ride roughshod over the aspirations of grass roots social movements and that the world capitalist system replicates and perpetuates poverty. As a result he abandoned "diffusionist" conceptions of development as unworkable, accepting instead the "anti-diffusionist" view that the plight of poor nations and regions is caused by exploitation by interests based in richer nations and regions. This exploitation may be through conquest, covert destabilization, monopoly of trade, unequal exchange or the control of technology and information, but in all cases the fundamental lesson is to break the exploitative links and to maximize self-reliance or seek new non-exploitative partners.

The "anti-diffusionist" view of development and underdevelopment leads logically to a core-periphery concept of the world economy, with dominant and dependent nations forming a single world system. This framework of ideas had been developed by a wide range of Latin American scholars, some of whose writings date back as far as the 1920s (cf. Kay 1989), but the first author to comprehensively articulate these ideas in English was Andre Gunder Frank (1969). Frank redefined "development" as national or regional self-sufficiency and made **[end p. 250]** a deliberate play on words by referring to "the development of underdevelopment," the gradual loss of self-sufficiency through colonial or neo-colonial domination. In this view, Asian, African and Latin American territories were relatively well-off and self-sufficient before the European colonial expansion, were actively underdeveloped (verb) by colonial and neo-colonial exploitation and can only develop again if they can break the bonds of dependency on the advanced capitalist nations. Frank went on to argue that just as rich capitalist nations exploit poor ones, more urbanized and industrialized regions within poor countries exploit more rural and agricultural regions. This led him to establish a hierarchical core-periphery model of the world system in which the dynamic of accumulation leads to the continuing impoverishment of poor countries by rich ones, of peripheral regions by core regions, of rural areas by urban areas

and of satellites by metropoli.

For diffusionists, the solution to national and regional underdevelopment is to increase interaction with more developed areas, to establish more favorable trade relations and to encourage and canalize growth through such instruments as river basin authorities, frontier integration programs, industrial growth poles, export processing zones, enterprise zones and territorial production complexes. Their ideas have been applied to some degree in most governments, international agencies and planning offices, though there are enormous differences of opinion about the role of the state in the economy, the most appropriate national economic development strategy and the alternative regional development policies that can accompany that strategy.

For anti-diffusionists, national and regional development depends on breaking the bonds of exploitation and creating a new order. Some anti-diffusionists (the *tercermondistes*) favor a negotiated new international order based on Third World solidarity whereby rich nations make concessions to poor nations and break the bonds of exploitation, either because they come to realize their past iniquities or because they are forced through some form of boycott, cartel or trade bloc aligning poor nations against the rich. A second group of anti-diffusionists, exemplified by Friedmann and Weaver (1979, 163-227) in their concept of "agropolitan development" take the neo-anarchist viewpoint that poor areas should have their own grass roots democracies and should seek high levels of self sufficiency using local resources and intermediate technologies to satisfy all their basic needs. A third group, now dramatically reduced by the collapse of COMECON, argues that only international trade and solidarity under the umbrella of a non-capitalist superpower can lead to meaningful development.

The range of different emphases that can be applied to the definitions of development and underdevelopment, combined with the dramatic contrast between "diffusionist" and "anti-diffusionist" perspectives, allows geographers of all ideological persuasions and political affiliations to play a role in research and policy making on development issues. Comprehensive reviews of ideas, schools and models have been prepared by such authors as Brookfield (1975), Mabogunje (1980), Forbes (1984), Corbridge (1986), and Hettne (1990), and the depth and diversity of their writings illustrates the academic and practical applications of this field.

## **NATIONAL SPATIAL ORGANIZATION**

Research on national spatial organization analyzes countries in terms of population distribution, migration flows, city size distribution, patterns of economic activity, transportation systems, communications systems, patterns of taxation, investment and service provision, seeking explanations for current distributions and comparing different countries. Topography, climate, resource endowments and the historical emergence of settlement patterns all provide some clues as to why countries differ, but some questions stubbornly defy answers. Why, for example, does Nicaragua have a primate city while Honduras does not, and why is Peru more urbanized than Ecuador? Even more serious problems arise when we shift from description to prescription, because meaningful policy recommendations require the justification of objectives and the comparison of costs and benefits. Many scholars and development practitioners have strong

opinions about the most appropriate patterns of spatial organization for individual countries, but very little has been done to prove that some patterns are intrinsically better than others.

The fundamental questions that concern scholars and policy-makers interested in national spatial organization are how to determine and guide the territorial impact of national development policies and how to determine what levels of concentration or dispersal are most appropriate. The available theories and models are surprisingly weak (cf. Gore 1984) and many crucial questions are extremely difficult to answer. Under what circumstances, for example, is a city size distribution corresponding to the rank-size rule superior to a distribution marked by the strong primacy of a national metropolis? Alternatively, if enterprise zones, industrial growth poles [end p. 251] or free ports are to be established in the peripheral regions of a country, what criteria should be used to determine the appropriate number and size of projects?

The weakness and controversial character of existing theories and models of national spatial organization is a reflection of the importance and complexity of the issues at stake and also of the shortage of high-quality research addressing major issues. In regional development studies in general and in the geography of national spatial organization in particular the researcher and policy-maker is continuously struck by how few specialists there really are and how widely their efforts are stretched. Hopefully, however, the response of Latin Americanist geographers will not be to abandon the field altogether but rather to redouble efforts, take new roles and build new alliances. In every country of the world national government policies and private sector investments are gradually reordering the national territory, altering the distribution of human activity and the patterns of spatial interaction. They are changing national geographies, and geographers should be using their professional expertise to study these changes and to recommend new policies or adjustments to existing policies.

In many senses national spatial organization is "Geography on the Grand Scale" and it is disheartening that professional geography is small and weak compared with such subjects as economics and political science and that relatively few professional geographers are involved in this arena. To some extent the relative weakness of Latin Americanist geography in the study of development issues and national spatial organization results from other strengths: the long tradition of Sauerian cultural geography and the dominance of Jamesian country-by-country texts in instruction. These strengths emphasize detail and the uniqueness of place rather than theory and generalizations and they downplay public policy and political economy in favor of historical, cultural and ecological scholarship. For a short period, between 1964 and 1975, there were many encouraging signs that a new "development geography" focusing on national spatial organization was emerging to counter the power of the Sauerian and Jamesian scholarship. By the mid-1970s, however, this new wave was losing momentum and many of the most important questions posed in the 1964-1975 period still remain unanswered.

## **FROM INSPIRATION TO FRUSTRATION: THE 1964-1975 WAVE**

The growth of Latin Americanist geographical interest in development issues and national spatial organization over the 1964-1975 period was a direct result of the quantitative revolution in human geography and the relative optimism in capitalist and socialist countries about the

prospects for economic development. These circumstances produced a coalition of regional economists, planners, geographers, regional scientists and others anxious to study national spatial organization and to develop new regional policies to accelerate economic growth, reduce inequalities and increase the coverage of public services. Substantial funding was available during this period for research and advisory work in Latin America, most notably through the Alliance for Progress, the United Nations system and such powerful non-governmental bodies as the Ford and Rockefeller foundations.

Two very talented scholars were particularly instrumental in assembling research teams during this period: John Friedmann, working in Venezuela under the auspices of MIT, then at CIDU in Chile with Ford Foundation backing, and finally at UCLA; and Peter Odell, based at the London School of Economics until 1968, and then at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. Friedmann's background is primarily in planning rather than in geography but he had studied geography and associated with geographers at the University of Chicago, and much of his work had a strong geographical content. Odell had professional experience as a petroleum economist and held a university chair in economic geography.

In Venezuela, using "diffusionist" principles, Friedmann (1966) elaborated an exceptionally lucid and comprehensive theory of regional development. Subsequently, in Chile, he was able to refine his theories and to play a major role in a broader research program involving many Latin American, European and North American planners, architects, economists and geographers interested in national spatial organization. The United Nations think tank, training and advisory system at CEPAL/ILPES provided a perfect outreach mechanism, supplemented by the emerging hemispheric professional association of SIAP and by strong links to the Netherlands' ISS. A broad wave of publications on regional development planning and national spatial organization emerged during this period (cf. Bedrack 1974; Boisier 1976; Friedmann 1970; Rofman 1974) and geographical research played a key role through the work of two European scholars based at CIDU, Walter Stöhr and Poul Ove Pedersen. They produced seminal analyses of innovation diffusion, urbanization and regional development strategies in Latin American countries (Stöhr 1971, 1974; Pedersen 1970; Stöhr and Pedersen 1969) and each of them finalized his work at CIDU with a major monograph in the Mouton book series on regional planning (Stöhr 1975; Pedersen 1975). All the books **[end p. 252]** in this series were commissioned by UNRISD under the general editorship of Polish geographer Antoni Kuklinski. Unfortunately, financial problems at Mouton delayed Stöhr and Pedersen's books and reduced their publicity and so they are relatively little known to North American geographers.

The emerging concentration of research and policy analysis in Santiago de Chile grew gradually during the Frei and Allende governments but was abruptly disrupted by the military coup in September, 1973. Many of the researchers decided to leave, funding was gradually removed, and Santiago ceased to play a pivotal role in Latin American scholarship. There were even serious discussions about moving CEPAL and ILPES out of Chile and the two organizations have never recovered the dynamic and prestige that they built up prior to 1973.

After leaving Chile, Friedmann, Stöhr and Pedersen all became absorbed in research in other continents and increasingly questioned "diffusionist" principles. Friedmann adopted a strident

anti-diffusionist perspective (cf. Friedmann and Weaver 1979:161-227) and Stöhr attempted to find a middle ground (cf. Stöhr and Taylor 1981). The research network that had functioned so effectively with CIDU, CEPAL and ILPES at its core in Santiago gradually broke down and no comparable network for Latin America has ever replaced it. Virtually all the institutions involved still exist but many are pale shadows of their former selves.

Odell's research at the London School of Economics and Erasmus University was far less grandiose than the MIT/Venezuela or CIDU/Ford programs but it led directly to the first Latin Americanist geography text focusing on national spatial organization (Odell and Preston 1973) and to the completion of three key doctoral dissertations on national spatial organization, all supervised by Odell: Alan Gilbert on Colombia, David Slater on Peru and Allen Lavell on Mexico. Gilbert, Slater and Lavell have strikingly different career trajectories and personal styles but each has played a key role in molding subsequent Latin Americanist geographical research. In 1974, Gilbert produced an excellent basic text on Latin America focusing on development issues and national spatial organization, and in 1975 Slater produced a pioneering review of regional development theory as applied to the Third World, using case studies from his work in Peru and Tanzania. For numerous personal and professional reasons, however, Odell's London-based team did not hold together. Odell moved to the Netherlands in 1968, and after the world oil price shock of 1973 he concentrated on global energy policy issues. Gilbert found a stable academic base in London but shifted his interests more towards urban geography. Slater moved to jobs in Tanzania and later to a permanent position at CEDLA in the Netherlands. Lavell moved to jobs in Mexico and then in Costa Rica. Slater gradually radicalized his position, abandoning diffusionist perspectives and emerging as one of the leading Marxist geographers; a dramatic contrast to Odell's growing role as an energy policy analyst for international capitalism.

Two traumatic events of 1973, the Yom Kippur War and the Pinochet Coup, sowed the seeds of dissolution for the schools of Latin Americanist research focused around Friedmann and Odell. Many brilliant scholars remain, but there is no longer the synergy and enthusiasm that once prevailed in Santiago and London. Since 1973 a much more dispersed and individualistic pattern of scholarship has emerged, with less direct impact on policy-making. Furthermore, Latin America's economic situation has deteriorated and the enthusiasm and funding needed for research and technical assistance have both diminished. The 1973 oil price shock inaugurated a global recession that carried most Latin American countries into economic stagnation or outright decline. Since the early 1980s the policy environment in most Latin American countries has been dominated by short term crisis management, high levels of economic instability and the seemingly hopeless task of servicing massive foreign debts so as to maintain creditworthiness. World economic and geopolitical attention is overwhelmingly focused on Europe, the Middle East, the United States and Japan, and "aid" to Latin America has been sharply reduced in real terms.

The grand regional strategies of the sixties and early seventies, such as Venezuela's Guayana Program and Brazil's "Assault on the Amazon," now seem over-ambitious and inappropriate. Nevertheless, national spatial organizations continue to change through migration, urbanization and economic restructuring and virtually all government policies have implicit or explicit regional impacts. Even though "development," defined as sustained economic growth and continuing

improvements in the quality of life, is an unfulfilled aspiration in most Latin American countries, ongoing changes in national spatial organization provide ample material for geographical research and policy proposals.

## **NEW RESEARCH ARENAS AND SOURCES OF INSPIRATION**

The setbacks of the mid-1970s represented only a temporary lapse to geographical interest in development issues and national spatial organization. Preston (1980, ed. 1987), Gilbert (1981, 1987), Morris (1987) and Bromley et al. (1989) have provided useful reviews of the long term development of scholarship, bridging this period and **[end p. 253]** extending beyond. More importantly, a series of major books and articles have come out in the 1980s, some by geographers and other by colleagues in cognate disciplines, providing case studies, models and guidelines for a new generation of research.

Richard Wilkie (1981, 1984) has produced a fascinating historical and contemporary analysis of population distribution, migration and urbanization in Latin America. He develops new cartographic methods and styles to illustrate his data, and his main monograph shows exceptional rigor and breadth of coverage. His work interlocks with the overviews of migration and urbanization research by such authors as Cardona (1975), Brown (1990), and Thomas and Hunter (1980), and there is clearly almost infinite scope for further geographical research as Latin American populations continue to grow and to change in distribution.

Robert Gwynne (1985, 1987) has prepared important surveys of Latin American industrialization and its impact on urbanization and economic development. His work is grounded in regional and national case studies, including his own work on Chile and such excellent overviews as Katzman (1977), Babarovic (1978) and Dickenson (1978) on Brazil, Cabieses et al. (1982) on Peru, Vellinga and Kruijt (1983) on Colombia, Tata (1981) on Puerto Rico, and Scott (1982) on Mexico.

Peter Ward's prolific writings on Mexico City (cf. 1987, 1990) provide us with excellent examples of how to study a Latin American metropolis in its national and international context. This work has fascinating potential interlinkages with contemporary research on national urban development strategies and the emergence of megacities (cf. Ternent 1976; Richardson 1981, 1987; Dogan and Kasarda 1988). Other exemplary studies include the pioneering *Atlas de la Ciudad de México* (Garza ed. 1987), and Herzog's (1986, 1990) books on the paired metropoli along the United States-Mexican border.

David Slater (1985, 1989) has provided a valuable introduction to the study of regional social movements and the concept of "regionalism" in Latin America and also a more detailed monograph on regional issues in Peru. He links Latin Americanist geography to the work of such world-renowned radical researchers as Manuel Castells (1983), Doreen Massey (1984) and Ann Markusen (1987). His work parallels key Latin American writings on regional social movements in Bolivia (cf. Calderón and Laserna 1985), on centralism and decentralization in Peru (cf. Althaus 1987; Caravedo 1987; Lizárraga 1985) and on the failure of central government's regional development policies in northeast Brazil (Oliveira 1977). It also links

across to the work of European historians, sociologists, anthropologists and geographers interested in the functioning of regional economies in Latin America and in the mechanisms by which predominantly rural regions articulate with major cities (Banck et al. 1981; Long and Roberts 1984; Miller 1987). Massey herself has ventured into the literature on Latin American geography with a monograph on regional issues in Nicaragua (Massey 1987), and hopefully she will be one of many prestigious scholars not previously associated with Latin America to undertake field research in the continent.

Susanna Hecht and Alexander Cockburn's (1989) book *The Fate of the Forest* is an outstanding policy-oriented geographical book on Amazonian development and deforestation, appealing to a broad readership. Also of great importance is Michael Eden's (1990) more technical and academic book, *Ecology and Land Management in Amazonia*. These two volumes are part of a recent wave of books on Amazonia (such as Moran 1981; Smith 1982; Bunker 1985; Hemming 1985; Eden 1990; Hall 1989) and on humid tropical land use (such as Altieri and Hecht 1990). All these works have a strong geographical flavor even though their authors come from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds. The enormous worldwide attention focused on the future of Amazonia and other areas of rainforest provides geographers with a marvelous opportunity "to claim the high ground" (Stoddart 1987) and to demonstrate the power of their discipline to a wider audience. A very broad range of historical, social and environmental research can be coordinated and there are numerous opportunities for international collaborative projects.

Given the massive resurgence of Anglo-American research on political geography over the last decade and also the long-standing association of Latin American political geography with military interests, Latin American theories of geopolitics and nation-building merit more intensive research. As Jack Child (1979, 1985, 1986) has shown, the translation and summary of the works of Latin American geopoliticians like Brazil's General Golbery, Argentina's General Villegas and Peru's General Mercado Jarrin is a major project of great scholarly and practical utility. Many territorial claims and disputes are still very much alive in Latin America and several Latin American governments have adopted ambitious policies to reorganize their national territories and to foster national unity. I have already referred to the literature on the Brazilian "Assault on the Amazon," which has attracted a great deal [end p. 254] of global attention and talented geographical scholarship. Less well known but also very important are the debates on whether Panama and Colombia should be linked by highway, on the role of Latin American countries in Antarctica, and on the significance of "free ports" and "export processing zones" to the development of frontier cities like Cúcuta (Colombia), seaports like Ilo (Peru) and Colón (Panama) and major Amazon cities like Manaus and Iquitos.

The best recent example of geopolitical debate in Latin Americanist geography has focused on the Argentine regional policies associated with the passing of a law (still valid, but not likely to be implemented in the short run) to move the seat of government from Buenos Aires to the twin towns of Viedma-Patagones on the Rio Negro. This project emanated from the democratically elected Alfonsín government and was in part, at least, a civilian alternative to the military geopolitics that had led Argentina into the disastrous Falklands War. The nation's leading geographers divided over this project, with some writing eloquent defenses and comprehensive strategies to reformulate the national spatial organization (cf. Roccatagliata 1986, 1988) and

others arguing that the project was untimely and ill-conceived (cf. Reboratti 1987).

My final example of a potential arena for future Latin Americanist geographical research focuses on a subject area that has received extremely little attention in the profession so far: the analysis of the geographical distribution of government revenues and expenditures, the geographical transfer of value and the fiscal transfers between different levels of government. Excellent pointers for such research can be found in Bennett (1980) and Forbes and Rimmer (1984) as well as in the pages of *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*. Until now, however, most such work on Latin America has emanated from economists (Bird et al. 1981; Daher 1991), planners (Wilson and Wise 1986) or public administrators. Stöhr (1975) devoted considerable attention to this field because the geography of public finance is a major factor influencing national spatial organization and patterns of regional inequality (cf. Gilbert and Goodman 1976). Hopefully Stöhr's book and pioneering lead will receive renewed attention in the 1990s and as a result we will achieve a much more comprehensive understanding of Latin American space economies.

## **CONCLUSION: DEVELOPING A NEW PROFESSIONALISM**

If scholars believe they have useful knowledge they have a responsibility to make sure that is used through publication, lobbying, advice or direct involvement in policy making. Because the selection and implementation of development policies at the global, national and regional levels has enormous significance for international relations, national sovereignty and human welfare, academic analysts cannot maintain strict neutrality in their work. Political views, preferred policies and analytical styles should be espoused and stated when necessary, and scholars are likely to show their colors both by what they choose to study and by whom they choose to work with. The keys to success are integrity and good judgment rather than neutrality and isolation. Involvement in government provides access to vital information and "hands-on" experience of policy selection and implementation, increasing awareness of constraints and opportunities. The impact of such hands-on awareness is clearly shown in Richard Rhoda's (1982) text, *Urban and regional analysis for development planning*, which includes case studies of regional development issues in Panama and Costa Rica. Rhoda has a University of Iowa doctorate in geography and by 1982 he had worked for extensive periods with AID and had gathered field experience in 28 countries.

The involvement of geographers in government, consultancy and technical assistance programs provides a crucial opportunity to strengthen the discipline's reputation, to achieve positive real-world changes and to gather data for research and publication. Nevertheless, every practitioner needs a personal code of ethics and some assignments must be refused because of the unprofessional behavior or incompetence of colleagues, the ideological perspectives of government, the repressive or manipulative policies of the regimes involved, or the inappropriate nature of the projects and policies being implemented. Development geographers should be scrupulous, committed and discriminating, willing to take a very active role in public policy but able to avoid and condemn bad policies and regimes.

The pressures of policy related work close to government create a wide range of tensions for the scholar-practitioner. Many of these tensions are intellectually productive but others lead simply

to frustration and burnout. Not surprisingly, therefore, many of the more creative scholars in the field are prone to dramatic paradigm shifts and reorientations in their scholarly interests. In addition, expertise can be utilized in many different countries and **end p. 255]** the mid-1970s shifts away from research on regional development processes in Latin America by Friedmann, Odell, Stöhr and Pedersen were all towards comparable research in other areas of the world.

The available sources of inspiration and expertise for studies of development issues and national spatial organization in Latin American countries are widely dispersed between nations, disciplines and organizations. North American scholars who fail to study European and Latin American work are likely, at best, to reinvent the wheel and at worst to simply repeat what is already known. Even if we do not agree with other schools of thought and styles of scholarship they provide vital benchmarks, "straw men" and guides to the history of ideas. European influences on many of our Latin American colleagues are particularly important, most notably through the French *aménagement du territoire* (territorial management) school, which provides a very comprehensive concept of national spatial organization and regional development strategy (cf. Grenier 1984). The work of this school is exemplified in the journal *Espaces et Sociétés*, in Bassols Batalla's (cf. 1979) monographs on Mexican spatial organization, in Deler's (1981; et al. 1983) monographs on Ecuadorian spatial organization and in Le Chau's (1987) text *La problemática regional en América Latina*.

At the outset, developing an interdisciplinary and international perspective on development issues and national spatial organization in Latin America seems virtually impossible because of the bewildering variety of nations, disciplines, languages, organizations and acronyms involved. Within a relatively short time, however, the playing field acquires limited dimensions as key institutions are contacted and interconnections become increasingly evident. International organizations play an important role as promoters, financiers and foci of interaction, most notably the United Nations system and its two key agencies in Santiago de Chile (CEPAL and ILPES), the Organization of American States (cf. OAS/DRD 1984), the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank. Bilateral governmental aid organizations are also important, most notably AID. Further research and publication is funded by bilateral private and voluntary organizations, most notably the German Friedrich Ebert and Konrad Adenauer foundations and the Canadian IDRC. Three key Latin American scholarly organizations also play a significant role, FLACSO, CLACSO and SIAP, organizing working groups, promoting the publication of books and working papers and, in SIAP's case, providing the mainstream periodical, *Revista Interamericana de Planificación*. Finally, every country has its own key research centers and foundations interested in national and regional development issues, the most eminent being Chile's CIDU with its flagship journal *EURE*. The Netherlands' ISS and CEDLA, with their respective journals (*Development and Change* and *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*) and monograph series, and the French IHEAL and IFEA with their respective journals (*Cahiers des Amériques Latines* and *Bulletin de L'IFEA*) and monograph series. The connectivity between these organizations is high, with many specialists having worked, taught, studied or published with several of them, so that the reaction "it's a small world!" soon comes to the fore. This leads on to the recognition of styles and schools of scholarship and policy recommendation and to a fuller appreciation of the influence of key scholars in inspiring major fields of study and national efforts: for example, Jorge Hardoy on the history of urbanization and

settlement functions, most notably in Argentina (cf. Hardoy and Schaedel 1975); Luis Unikel (cf. 1976, 1982) on migration patterns and national urban systems, most notably in Mexico; Sergio Boisier on the practice of regional planning (cf. 1976, 1981, et al. 1980); and Rexford Tugwell and Harvey Perloff on industrial development strategies, most notably in Puerto Rico (cf. Bromley et al. 1989: 356-357).

To bring this review to a close, I wish to emphasize two major constraints that many Latin Americanist geographers face in studying, teaching and researching on development issues and national spatial organization. First, they can easily be hamstrung by disciplinary boundaries sometimes set by colleagues and committees who deride publications in foreign languages and other disciplines, sometimes set by peers and professional organizations that fail to emphasize the importance of participating in such multidisciplinary environments as LASA and sometimes set by institutions that lack the will, resources or mechanisms to cover interdisciplinary subject areas like Latin American Studies, Urban Studies, and International Development Studies. Second, they are currently very limited by a shortage of appropriate textbooks. To capture students' imagination, to provide a broad panoramic view of Latin America and the Caribbean and to teach the basics of international development studies and regional development theory, good texts must be systematic/thematic in style, with a particular focus on contemporary political economy. For the North American market with its "Middle America" emphasis it is also crucial that they cover Latin America and the Caribbean and not just South America. Currently, there are few competitors in the field and most are British in origin. Morris (1981), for example, is aging and effectively out-of-print, Preston [end p. 256] (1987) is expensive on the United States market and somewhat uneven in coverage, Bromley and Bromley (1988) is elementary and limited to South America, and Gilbert (1990) is new and good but even more elementary. Geographical teaching focused on development issues and national spatial organization was in a much stronger position in the mid-1970s when Odell and Preston (1973) and Gilbert (1974) seemed to provide a firm foundation, but sadly those books have become out of date and gone out of print. Textbook writing is very demanding because of the breadth of information, recency of statistics and volume of illustrations required, but without new texts infused with a political economy perspective development issues and national spatial organization will gradually disappear from geographical curricula.

## **ACRONYMS USED**

AID Agency for International Development, State Department, Washington DC;  
CEDLA Center for Latin American Research and Documentation, Amsterdam;  
CEPAL United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, Santiago de Chile;  
CIDU Centro Interdisciplinario de Desarrollo Urbano y Regional, Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago;  
CLACSO Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales;  
FLACSO Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales;  
EURE Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios Urbanos y Regionales, Santiago de Chile;  
IDRC International Development Research Center, Ottawa;  
IFEA Institut Francais d'Etudes Andines, Lima and Paris;  
IHEAL Institut des Hautes Etudes de l'Amérique Latine, Paris;

ILPES Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning, Santiago de Chile;  
ISS Institute of Social Studies, The Hague;  
LASA Latin American Studies Association;  
OAS/DRD Organization of American States, Department of Regional Development,  
Washington DC;  
SIAP Sociedad Interamericana de Planificación;  
UNRISD United Nations, Research Institute for Social Development, Geneva.

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