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## EDITOR'S FOREWORD

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The research reported in *LARR* results from an extraordinarily diverse set of actors and institutions. Research on Latin America in the United States has been stimulated by rising public interest in hemispheric affairs, the popularity of Spanish as the most commonly taught foreign language at the undergraduate level, and the rapid growth of populations of Hispanic origin in the United States. As noted in the *New York Times* education supplement of 3 August 1986, enrollments are booming in Latin American courses nationwide. Student interest extends well beyond the policy sciences to include the arts and humanities. This interest reflects not merely the stimulus of political events in Central America but a growing appreciation of the extraordinary vitality of the arts and humanities in Latin America. In fields such as literature, history, film, architecture, music, dance, and the graphic arts, Latin America has been enjoying a renaissance comparable to that of Russia at the turn of the century.

At the same time, funding support for area studies in general (except for Soviet studies) and Latin American studies in particular is limited and fragile. Title VI of the Higher Education Act spreads a modest budget over a large number of institutions. Few foundations maintain a consistent interest in supporting Latin American studies. Only the Tinker Foundation has been constant in its support of Latin American studies, and Tinker does not support projects in the arts and humanities. As a result, some of the most exciting fields of scholarship on Latin America are receiving little external funding. Student enrollments are the primary source of support for research in these fields, even if the requirements of enrollment-driven teaching (for which funding usually lags behind demand) may not leave adequate space for research, reflection, and innovation.

The traditional argument for supporting research on Latin America and training future area specialists has been to provide expertise to meet national needs. The resulting emphasis has been on undergraduate and graduate education. This approach's major achievement was the passage of Title VI of the National Defense Education Act of 1956, which formed the basis for Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1978. Although Title VI had a significant impact, its role has been diminishing as funds have been reduced and the institutional base of area studies broadened.

Advocates of the "national needs" approach to supporting research have largely neglected outreach efforts in primary, secondary, and citizen education. Richard Lambert's *Beyond Growth: The Next Stage in Language and Area Studies* says little on the subject, and the recent legislative proposal of the Association of American Universities for a national foundation for foreign languages and international studies refers only to "demonstration projects" at the secondary school level.

Past achievements in developing Latin American studies at U.S. colleges and universities can no longer be taken for granted. Factors that once contributed to the rise of foreign area studies, such as rapidly growing student populations, a tight supply of faculty, rising salaries, and the high prestige associated with the academic profession, have been reversed. During the growth period, the leverage or multiplier effect of these variables was obvious. The reversal of the previous dynamic is creating an opposite and downward leverage on area studies in general and on Latin American studies in particular.

This trend implies that the amount and quality of research on Latin America and the Caribbean may be sharply reduced over the next two decades. Most published research on Latin America in the United States takes place at the ninety or so colleges and universities that belong to the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP), supplemented by contributions from specialists on other campuses. The largely confidential nature of the business-related or policy-related research that takes place in the private sector and in government agencies suggests that little contribution to broader intellectual discourse can be expected from these sources.

The fate of Latin American research in the United States therefore rests with higher education. Despite the competing demands of teaching and research, the survival of research on Latin America will increasingly depend on the success with which Latin Americanists attract students. Fortunately, enrollments are booming even if research support lags.

Given the decline of other forms of support for area studies, the importance of enrollment growth suggests that university-based Latin American programs should place a higher priority on outreach and citi-

zen education as a means of expanding the public that provides the demographic base for Latin American studies. This public also provides the constituency for an enlightened U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America. A broadened conception of Latin American studies will increase public awareness of peoples and events in the Western Hemisphere and in the long run will enrich the research reported in the pages of this journal.

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