

PH. D. DISSERTATIONS ON
SOCIAL CHANGE AND
DEVELOPMENT IN
CENTRAL AMERICA (1960–1974):
An Addendum to the Snarr-Brown List

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The title of D. Neil Snarr and E. Leonard Brown's "An Analysis of Ph.D. Dissertations on Central America: 1960–1974" (LARR 12, no. 2 [1977]) suggests a comprehensive compilation and analysis of dissertation research on Central America between 1960 and 1974. While one might have hoped for coverage of a broader period, particularly since the 1950s produced several significant doctoral dissertations on Central America, such a title promises at least a handy bibliographic reference tool for Central Americanists. A close reading of the article unfortunately makes it clear that it offers much less than that and in fact represents a distortion of the reality of doctoral research on Central America in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The authors of the article quickly limit its scope to dissertations on "social change and development in Central America." This limitation is not the basis for our criticism of the study, although we believe the title should have reflected its content more accurately. Admitting that "a precise definition of what is meant by [social change and development] is most elusive," Snarr and Brown claim to include dissertations that treat "topics related to the process of modernization, bureaucratization, migration, urbanization, population growth, etc. Aware of the complexity and interrelatedness of the 'social change' topic," they continue, "we tried to err by being inclusive rather than exclusive."¹

The 140 listed dissertations and the annotations published earlier² confirm the application of such broad criteria for inclusion. By their unqualified statement that "from 1960 to 1974 there were approximately 140 dissertations written on social change and development in Central America,"³ the authors appear to claim their list is comprehensive within the indicated topical definition.

We believe, however, that the list is far from comprehensive. Without conducting a thorough survey of our own, we note that Snarr and Brown fail to include any of the doctoral dissertations completed at Tulane University over the past two decades. It also seems clear that the authors have omitted a number of other significant dissertations. It is puzzling, for example, to find excluded Ever-

ett A. Wilson's "The Crisis of National Integration in El Salvador, 1919–1935" (Stanford, 1970), in spite of its more direct attention to the issue of social change and development than Robert Varney Elam's "Appeal to Arms, the Army and Politics in El Salvador: 1931–1964" (New Mexico, 1968). Also surprising is the absence from the list of Hazel Ingersoll's "The War of the Mountain, A Study of Reactionary Peasant Insurgency, 1837–1873" (George Washington, 1972), an important contribution to Guatemalan social history.

While it is not our intention to supply all the omissions of the Snarr-Brown list, we would like to enlarge it to the extent of including the dissertations completed at Tulane University. Tulane has been specializing in Central American studies for more than half a century. Its Middle American Research Institute and Latin American Library are internationally recognized and contain what is probably the finest collection of Central American research materials in the world. The Latin American Library has made a special effort to acquire dissertations written on Central America, in microfilm or xerographic form if unpublished, not only from the United States and Canada but also from Central American and European universities as well.

With *Dissertation Abstracts* and University Microfilms keyword retrieval alone, Snarr and Brown should have been able to compile a more complete list. Our own survey of Tulane graduate research in the period specified revealed nine doctoral dissertations that appear to fit easily into the suggested definition of social change and development. Significantly, all nine are in history, a discipline that appears inexplicably underrepresented in the Snarr-Brown compilation. The addition of these studies plus, randomly, the Wilson and Ingersoll items mentioned above would raise the number of history dissertations considered in Snarr and Brown's statistical tables from a mere five to a more respectable sixteen (and, consequently, from a quite distant seventh place among the disciplines to a much stronger fourth). More specifically, eight of the eleven additional dissertations deal primarily with Guatemala. Their inclusion, therefore, raises the number of historical studies counted for this important country from zero to eight. As to the fate of the research involved in these dissertations—a question addressed briefly in their introduction—at least four of the Tulane studies have been published in whole or in part.⁴

Snarr and Brown deserve commendation for their interest in providing bibliographic tools for researchers in Central American studies, although we would hope that in the future they would be more thorough in their search. Frankly, however, we do wonder whether there is really much need for bibliographies (annotated or otherwise) of Ph.D. dissertations done at U.S. universities since they are readily available in regularly published indices. Snarr and Brown might have utilized their time more constructively by compiling a list of the much more elusive master's theses on Central American topics. Our brief review of past production at Tulane revealed twenty-three such theses between 1960 and 1974 that could reasonably fit the definition of social change and development.⁵

As an addendum to the Snarr-Brown article, we list here the nine Tulane doctoral dissertations referred to above:

- Bell, John P. "The Costa Rican Revolution of 1948" (1968).
- Claxton, Robert. "Lorenzo Montúfar: Central American Liberal" (1970).
- Domínguez T., Mauricio. "The Development of the Technological and Scientific Coffee Industry in Guatemala, 1830–1930" (1970).
- Finney, Kenneth V. "Precious Metal Mining and the Modernization of Honduras: In Quest of El Dorado (1880–1900)" (1973).
- McCreery, David J., Jr. "Economic Development and National Policy: The *Ministerio de Fomento* of Guatemala, 1871–1885" (1973).
- Náñez Falcón, Guillermo. "Erwin Paul Dieseldorff, German Entrepreneur in the Alta Verapaz of Guatemala, 1889–1937" (1970).
- Schwemmer, Ora-Westley. "The Belgian Colonization Company, 1840–1858" (1966).
- Williford, Miriam. "The Reform Program of Dr. Mariano Gálvez, Chief of State of Guatemala, 1831–1838" (1963).
- Woodward, Ralph Lee, Jr. "The *Consulado de Comercio* of Guatemala, 1793–1871" (1962).

NOTES

1. D. Neil Snarr and E. Leonard Brown, "An Analysis of Ph.D. Dissertations on Central America: 1960–1974," *LARR* 12, no. 2 (1977):188.
2. E. Leonard Brown and D. Neil Snarr, "Dissertations Concerning Social Change and Development in Central America and Panama (1960–1974): An Annotated Bibliography," *Rural Sociology* 40 (Fall 1975):284–318.
3. Snarr and Brown, "An Analysis," p. 188.
4. John P. Bell, *Crisis in Costa Rica: The 1948 Revolution* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971); David J. McCreery, Jr., "Coffee and Class: The Structure of Development in Liberal Guatemala," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 56 (August 1976): 438–60, and "Financiando el desarrollo en la América Latina del siglo XIX: El caso de Guatemala, 1871–1885," *Revista del Pensamiento Centroamericano* 30, no. 147 (abril–junio 1975):1–8; Miriam Williford, "Las luces y la civilización: The Social Reforms of Mariano Gálvez," in Mario Rodríguez et al., *Applied Enlightenment: 19th Century Liberalism*, Middle American Research Institute Publication No. 23 (New Orleans: Tulane University, 1972); Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., *Class Privilege and Economic Development: The Consulado de Comercio of Guatemala, 1793–1871* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966).
5. A List of Tulane University doctoral dissertations and master's theses with Latin American emphases completed between 1885 and 1971 appeared in *Estudios Sociales Centroamericanos* (San José) 1, no. 1 (enero–abril 1972):165–89. The staff of the Latin American Library at Tulane is currently preparing for publication a more comprehensive, up-to-date list. The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Ms. Ruth Olivera in compiling the list of doctoral dissertations.

The Authors Respond

Woodward and Webre's concern over the omission of certain Ph.D. dissertations in our article is both understandable and justified. Rather than this omission being a result of faulty research, however, it is due to our focus on dissertations that deal with the period from 1950 to the present. The 1950 date was chosen

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early in our search for dissertations dealing with modernization and change, but was unfortunately omitted from our final drafts. The dissertations listed above are historical and deal with the period prior to 1950; thus, they were excluded from our list. Our apologies to Woodward and Webre, as well as to the editors of LARR.

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