

LATIN AMERICAN DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS OF THE 1960S

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The decade of the 1960s ushered in a “New Frontier” for scholarly interest in all aspects of Latin American life. This trend was reflected in the curricula of American and Canadian institutions of higher education as they embarked on expanded programs in Latin American studies. This intensified effort resulted in an unprecedented number of doctoral dissertations on Latin American topics being submitted at 152 U.S. and Canadian universities. This research will be analyzed by drawing primarily on two bibliographic works: Allen Bushong’s 1967 work, “Doctoral Dissertations on Pan American Topics Accepted by United States and Canadian Colleges and Universities 1961–1965” (*LARR* 2, No. 2 Supplement [Spring 1967]), and my *Doctoral Dissertations on Latin America and the Caribbean: An Analysis and Bibliography of Dissertations Accepted at American and Canadian Universities, 1966–1970* (Publication No. 10 of the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs, 1980).¹ A comparison of the decade will also be made with the period 1861–1960.

Data gathered from different sources will necessarily reflect the respective methodologies employed. The Bushong and González works are not methodologically identical. Bushong, for example, includes fifty geographical units ranging from “hemispheric dimensions to a few square miles of island environment” while my work uses fifty-two. This disparity reflects the geopolitical changes, particularly in the Caribbean area, as well as subjective classification differences. The groupings also diverge slightly because I adhered to the *Dissertation Abstracts International* classification. Meaningful comparative analysis is nonetheless possible because the two works are similar in both purpose and scope.

The 1960s saw 3,355 dissertations on Latin American topics submitted to U.S. and Canadian colleges and universities, as noted in table 1. Of these, 842 theses were accepted during the first half of the decade and 2,513 during the second. This unprecedented level of productivity is significant because only 2,253 dissertations had been submitted from the time of Yale University’s first acceptance of a doctoral dissertation on a Latin American topic in 1869 (E. T. Nelson’s *Molluscan Fauna of the Later Tertiary of Peru*) to the close of the 1959–60 academic year.² Thus, the

production of a single decade represented an increase of more than 150 percent over the number of dissertations submitted during the previous ninety years.³

During the 1960s, each year saw more dissertations accepted than the previous one. Table 1 shows this impressive upward trend starting with 117 dissertations submitted in 1961 and climbing to 689 recorded in 1970.

Geographical Distribution

Table 2 demonstrates that Mexico easily occupies the position of primacy as the area of concern of 780 dissertations (23 percent) during the period 1961–70. As Bushong notes, “the country’s rich and significant pre-Columbian past, its role as one of the major centers of Spanish colonial interest in the New World, the region’s lengthy and tumultuous quest for independence and political maturity, and its dynamic economic development in the twentieth century have attracted scholars from diverse disciplines.”⁴

The Mexican influence is augmented by the fact that dissertations dealing with Mexican-Americans account for a large part of the United States entries. In fact, for the five years I covered, “USA-Mexican Americans” entries resulted in a plurality of 329 of the 360 dissertations listed under the geographical category “United States.”⁵ Altogether, U.S. entries in table 2 account for 472 principal entries, approximately one sixth of the total for the decade. The large number of U.S. entries is explained by two factors: first, the significance of contemporary Latin American communities in the United States, and second, the historic importance of military, diplomatic, and commercial relations between the United States and areas in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The entries under Latin America and Brazil for the period 1965–70

TABLE 1 *Yearly Dissertation Output, 1961–1970*

1961	117
1962	129
1963	172
1964	198
1965	226
1966	360
1967	459
1968	475
1969	530
1970	689
TOTAL	3,355

TABLE 2 *Dissertations by Country and Geographical Area, 1861–1970*

	<i>Latin America and United States</i>		<i>Other Countries and Geographical Areas</i>	
	1861– 1960	1961– 1970	1861– 1960	1961– 1970
1. Argentina	110	175	36. Canada	0 4
2. Bahamas	12	10	37. France	28 5
3. Barbados	4	11	38. Great Britain	36 17
4. Belize	2	19	39. Portugal	5 4
5. Bermuda	1	7	40. Spain	75 24
6. Bolivia	28	52	41. Caribbean	28 35
7. Brazil	113	246	42. Central America	59 69
8. Chile	83	151	43. Latin America	173 250
9. Colombia	50	141	44. North America	19 8
10. Costa Rica	23	61	45. South America	51 55
11. Cuba	64	104	46. West Indies	47 30
12. Dominican Republic	9	29	47. Western Hemisphere	69 43
13. Ecuador	27	41	48. Africa (Sub-Saharan)	4 14
14. El Salvador	5	13	49. Australasia	1 4
15. French Overseas Department	4 1		50. Asia	11 15
16. Grenada	0 0		51. Europe	14 23
17. Guatemala	56 98		52. Middle East and North Africa	5 4
18. Guyana	8 9			
19. Haiti	17 10		TOTAL	2,710 3,737
20. Honduras	9 14			
21. Jamaica	25 55			
22. Mexico	584 780			
23. Netherlands Antilles	1 2			
24. Nicaragua	19 31			
25. Panama	36 48			
26. Paraguay	9 21			
27. Peru	92 184			
28. Puerto Rico	176 172			
29. Surinam	2 4			
30. Trinidad and Tobago	6 35			
31. U.K. American Dependencies	0 2			
32. United States of America	429 472			
33. Uruguay	22 26			
34. Venezuela	57 103			
35. Virgin Islands (U.S.)	2 6			

The total of 2,710 entries for 1861–1960 is 457 more than the total number of dissertations produced, because dissertations focusing on more than one country or area were counted for up to three countries and areas when such coverage was an important feature; the 3,737 entries for 1961–70 are larger than the 3,355 dissertations produced, for the same reason.

are a distant third and fourth, with 250 and 246 entries, respectively. The Latin America entries include theses with a wide regional scope, while the entries under Brazil reflect that country's status as the area's largest and most populous country as well as its emergence as a world economic and political power. Peru claims the fifth position, with dissertations heavily concentrated in the disciplines of anthropology and history, "reflecting Peru's position as the cradle of the Inca culture and its prominence as the center of the Spanish Viceroyalty of Peru."⁶ The only noteworthy change between the "rankings" produced by Bushong's and my studies concerns the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Dissertations treating Puerto Rican topics rank third in number (after Mexico and the United States) for the first half of the decade, but declined to ninth in the second half, averaging seventh for the decade.

How does this geographical distribution compare with years prior to 1960? According to the 1962 edition of *Theses on Pan American Topics*, 2,253 theses focusing on Latin America were written between 1861 and 1960.⁷ Table 2 shows the breakdown by country or geographical area for these theses. Mexico ranks highest with 584 theses, followed by the United States with 429. (It should be noted, however, that the designation "Pan American" permits inclusion of topics pertaining only to the United States, such as Indian tribes exclusive to the United States, and French and Spanish colonies that are now part of the United States. The actual number of theses concerned with Latin America is thus slightly lower than 429.)

Dissertations began to appear on the Spanish-speaking populations in the United States as early as 1931. A count of these studies from the 1861–1960 period identified twenty theses dealing with Latin Americans in the United States (the earliest being in 1931); fourteen with Puerto Rican-Americans (earliest in 1945); and twenty-one with Mexican-Americans (earliest in 1947).

In summary, the geographical distribution of the decade 1960–70 shows three salient features: first, the expected similarity in the results generated by Bushong and González; second, the position of Mexico as clearly the area's prime object of research interest; and third, the rapid growth in the number of dissertations treating U.S.–Latin American topics, particularly Hispanic communities in the United States, up to 1970, when such entries paralleled the total on Mexican topics.

Distribution by Discipline

The 3,355 dissertations submitted during the 1960s were distributed among disciplines listed in table 3. The largest number of dissertations were concentrated in the social sciences (1,804) and the fewest were in the sciences (550). As expected, history's 464 dissertations and language

and literature's 449 dissertations account for most of the work in the humanities. Ten disciplines (history, language and literature, economics, education, political science, anthropology, sociology, geography, geology, and zoology) account for 86 percent of all dissertations for the decade. Among these ten, three disciplines with more than 400 disserta-

TABLE 3 *Subject Distribution of Dissertations, 1961–1970*

<i>Humanities</i>		<i>Social Sciences</i>		<i>Sciences</i>	
1. History	464	1. Economics	450 ¹	1. Geology	143
2. Language and Literature	449	2. Education	372	2. Zoology	115
3. Religion	21	3. Political Science	304	3. Botany	55
4. Music	14	4. Anthropology	297	4. Agriculture	50
5. Journalism	12	5. Sociology	187	5. Entomology	31
6. Speech	11	6. Geography	90	6. Biology	29
7. Biography	10	7. Psychology	27	7. Health Sciences	24
8. Fine Arts	8	8. Business Administration	26	8. Oceanography	24
9. Theater	6	9. Social Psychology	26	9. Engineering	10
10. Speech-Theater	5	10. Law	7 ²	10. Marine Sciences	10
11. Philosophy	1	11. Social Work	6	11. Physics	8
TOTAL	1,001	12. Mass Communications	5	12. Agronomy	7
		13. Accounting	2	13. Home Economics	7
		14. Folklore	2	14. Geophysics	6
		15. Library Science	2	15. Chemistry	5
		16. Statistics	1	16. Bacteriology	3
		TOTAL	1,804	17. Ecology	3
				18. Microbiology	3
				19. Paleontology	3
				20. Physiology	3
				21. Hydrology	2
				22. Mathematics	2
				23. Speech Pathology	2
				24. Anatomy	1
				25. Astronomy	1
				26. Biostatistics	1
				27. Food Technology	1
				28. Mineralogy	1
				TOTAL	550

¹Includes six dissertations on Agricultural Economics.

²Includes two dissertations from Bushong's category International Law & Relations.

NOTE: This classification mainly follows the Encyclopedia Americana.

tions (history, language and literature, and economics) total 1,363 dissertations or 41 percent of the ten most-studied fields listed above. Of the total of 179,441 theses in all disciplines for the ten-year period reported in *Dissertations Abstracts International*,⁸ the number of Latin American dissertations (3,355) represents 2 percent of all dissertations reported in this important decade.

Institutional Distribution

It is interesting to see which colleges and universities produced most of the doctoral dissertations on Latin American topics during this period. Two consecutive five-year periods, such as those examined by Bushong's and my studies, would not be expected to yield very different results. The top fifteen institutions in my study are all included among Bushong's first twenty-three universities. The difference is found in absolute numbers; while during 1961–65 twenty-three institutions accepted twelve or more dissertations, the following five years saw fifty-nine institutions with doctoral programs. Although 152 institutions accepted doctoral dissertations on Latin American topics during the 1960s, most were produced at a few leading universities. In fact, the top fifteen institutions (the top 10 percent) together account for almost one-half of the Latin American theses.

Some noteworthy results can be derived from comparing the 1961–70 institutional distribution with the 1869–1960 data contained in Bushong and Kidder's *Theses on Pan American Topics*. As shown in table 4, only four institutions account for almost one-third of all dissertations submitted during those ninety years. Furthermore, the top ten schools (about 10 percent of the ninety-five institutions accepting theses during the period) were responsible for 53 percent of the output. Thus in comparison, the 1960s show a break with the tendency toward the concentration of output among a few institutions found in the 1869–1960 period. Also, during 1961–70, fifty-five institutions accepted a doctoral dissertation on a Latin American topic for the first time, an almost 60 percent increase over the number of institutions accepting theses during the previous nine decades.

In conclusion, the Latin American region has obviously aroused the intellectual curiosity of an unprecedented number of scholars during the 1960s, as has been documented herein. Moreover, the 3,355 dissertations on Latin American topics exceeded those concerning Africa (1,465), Asia (2,789), the Middle East (924), and Slavic and East European countries (1,182).⁹ Yet Latin American dissertations still accounted for only 2 percent of all doctoral dissertations submitted during the decade. The impetus of the 1960s continued into the 1970s and further study of that

TABLE 4 *Number of Dissertations by Institution*

1869–1960		1961–1970	
1. Columbia University	239	1. Columbia University	189
2. Univ. of California at Berkeley	209	2. The University of Texas	171
3. Harvard University	146	3. Univ. of California at Berkeley	145
4. University of Texas, Austin	142	4. University of Wisconsin	136
5. University of Michigan	99	5. Univ. of California at L.A.	133
6. University of Chicago	92	6. Harvard University	129
7. Yale University	70	7. New York University	94
8. University of Illinois	63	8. Cornell University	90
9. New York University	63	9. Michigan State University	90
10. Stanford University	56	10. Stanford University	84
11. University of Wisconsin	54	11. University of Florida	78
12. Northwestern University	51	12. University of Illinois	75
13. University of Pennsylvania	50	13. University of Southern California	73
14. University of Southern California	49	14. Yale University	69
15. Cornell University	48	15. University of Michigan	68
16. Univ. of California at L.A.	40	16. Indiana University	67
17. Catholic University of America	38	17. University of Arizona	59
18. Ohio State University	35	18. University of Chicago	58
19. Johns Hopkins University	34	19. University of New Mexico	56
20. University of Minnesota	30	20. University of Pennsylvania	54
21. Princeton University	30	21. Louisiana State University	50
22. Univ. of N. Carolina at Chapel Hill	30	22. University of Colorado	45
		23. University of Minnesota	42
		24. Princeton University	41
		25. University of Pittsburgh	39
Sub-total	1,668	26. Tulane University	39
Remaining 73 Institutions	585	27. University of Oregon	37
TOTAL	2,253	Sub-total	2,211
		Remaining 125 Institutions	1,144
		TOTAL	3,355

decade should provide needed information as to continuing and future trends in Latin American studies.

NOTES

1. Allen David Bushong, "Doctoral Dissertations on Pan American Topics Accepted by United States and Canadian Colleges and Universities 1961–1965," *Latin American Re-*

search Review 2, No. 2 supplement (Spring 1967):1–2. Nelly S. González, *Doctoral Dissertations on Latin America and the Caribbean*, Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs Publication No. 10, 1980, p. ix. This article concentrates on general regional trends. For detailed analyses of the distribution of dissertation research, see the above-cited works by Bushong and González.

2. González, pp. xiii–xiv.
3. For an overview of published bibliographies of dissertations from U.S. and Canadian universities, see González, pp. xiii–xiv.
4. Bushong, p. 2.
5. González, p. xix.
6. González, p. xxii.
7. Frederick Elwyn Kidder and Allen David Bushong, *Theses on Pan-American Topics Prepared by Candidates for Doctoral Degrees in Universities and Colleges in the United States and Canada*, 4th ed., Bibliographic Series No. 5 (Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union, 1962).
8. Appearing each year in *American Doctoral Dissertations* (ADD), ten-year statistical tables provide an annual breakdown by discipline and year of dissertations completed in that decade.
9. Statistics provided by University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan.