

## Editorial Foreword: Celebrating 50 Years of Publishing *ERLACS*

This special issue is more special than previous ones. With this issue we commemorate the continuous publication since 1965 of *ERLACS – European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* | *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe* and its previous title names. Half a century of publishing a wide range of peer-reviewed articles and Explorations as well as review essays and book reviews is an achievement that we are proud of. Here in issue 100, we celebrate these fifty years of *ERLACS*' publishing existence with special content. The first two contributions briefly present some of our journal's history, with its expanding length and readership, its widening body of international authors, and its presentation of innovative themes and approaches. Their overviews also show that the development of the journal reflects both the way in which Latin American and Caribbean Studies have become a mature field of study, and the immense processes of change that the region itself has gone through over the past five decades.

The Editorial Board also wishes to take this anniversary as an excellent occasion to look *forward*. To that purpose we have invited the members of our International Advisory Board to think about what Latin American and Caribbean Studies should encompass in coming years. What are the new trends in the region? Which developments require more or different empirical and theoretical scrutiny? And to which questions and debates should future academic endeavours be directed? This anniversary issue presents eight Exploration-style articles that cover a range of perspectives reflecting the disciplinary, thematic and geographical diversity of *ERLACS* and its authors and readers. Hopefully they will inspire discussion and new research initiatives, the results of which *ERLACS* will gladly consider for publication in the coming years.

The on-going changes in academic research and publishing on Latin American and the Caribbean require the *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* | *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe* to respond continuously to new developments. Many of these offer great

opportunities. The Internet and open access have allowed us to greatly expand our readership and attract more authors. Among them, there is a growing number of submissions from scholars based in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is also a result of more attention and funding for academic internationalization in these countries themselves. While the higher number and diversity of submissions offers the opportunity for more exchanges between national, disciplinary and thematic ‘borders’, this trend also poses some challenges. Although *ERLACS* has always featured articles in English and Spanish, there is a need to keep a balance between the two in order to remain attractive for those who do not (easily) read one of these languages. Other balances to keep the journal interesting to a diverse scholarly group include a mix of Latin American and Caribbean articles; small case studies in contrast to more national, regional and comparative studies; historical and contemporary research; and qualitative and quantitative methods. In addition, the journal has always had to deal with different styles of writing and more generally with the different academic cultures from which its authors as well as its reviewers originate. Furthermore, writing about a region that someone studies and regularly visits is probably not quite the same as writing about a region where someone lives or has grown up.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, all these differences among our authors, reviewers, editors and readers feed sometimes complicated but nevertheless interesting discussions about the priorities, balance and quality of *ERLACS*’ content.

The efforts of many people have enabled *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* | *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe* to publish its first 100 issues, and to grow into what it is now. But first of all we thank the Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA) for initiating our journal and for hosting and supporting it ever since. This solid institutional basis has been crucial. Another essential component to achieve its fiftieth anniversary has been the work done by the many persons who have served on the Editorial Board. They are too many to mention each here, but we do need to mention the subsequent managing editors that have guided the Editorial Board and spent many hours on each issue that came out: Harry Hoetink, Norman Long, and Michiel Baud. Although more distant, the support given by the members of the International Advisory Board has also been important. We thank its previous and current members for their expert input, commitment and critical eye, and we are pleased that seven of the current members and two editorial board members have also been willing to contribute eight excellent and thought-provoking Explorations to this anniversary issue. Furthermore we are most grateful to the hundreds of authors for their interesting contributions, but also to the many reviewers whose work is indispensable for the quality of articles we publish, yet who necessarily remain anonymous. For our journal’s professional open access website we would also like to thank Uopen Journals for their technical support. Finally, a very special word of thanks goes to our desk editor Kathleen Willingham, who over the

years has worked intensively and cheerfully on dozens of issues while also constantly modernizing the journal.

Fifty years could be considered a long period of time, yet for an open access academic journal such as ours, this is just the beginning of a new era. We, the Editorial Board, will do our best to make the journal thrive over the coming years.

Barbara Hogenboom, Managing Editor *ERLACS*  
December 2015

### Note

1. For an interesting comparison between Latin American scholars and others, see Enrique Mu & Milagros Pereyra-Rojas (2015) 'Impact on Society versus Impact on Knowledge: Why Latin American Scholars Do Not Participate in Latin American Studies', *Latin American Research Review* 50: 2, pp. 216-238. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/lar.2015.0021>

