



# VISIONS OF LATIN AMERICA

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## WELCOME TO VISIONS

An organization comprised of students and members of the Latin American community. *VISIONS* provides a forum for elaborating ideas, opinions, and concepts relevant to Latin America through a newsletter to be published every semester. The articles will be written on topics and themes related to the region. You are welcome to be part of *VISIONS*! We are seeking an array of articles concerned with politics, economics, human rights, security, culture, or any other interesting theme pertaining to the region for our next issue. If you would like to respond or find out more about a topic, you can contact the author at the email address listed at the top of each article. For more information on the newsletter, please contact: Jorge Enrique Delgado at [jdeldgado4501@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:jdeldgado4501@yahoo.com.ar) or Luz Amanda Villada at [lavst12@pitt.edu](mailto:lavst12@pitt.edu).

For articles' bibliographies [click here](#). Please send individual comments to writers!

## Entrevista al Señor Embajador de Bolivia, Mario Gustavo Guzmán Saldaña

By Martha Mantilla [martham@pitt.edu](mailto:martham@pitt.edu)



Adriana Guzmán, Embajador Guzmán, & Martha Mantilla

Llevada a cabo en el marco de la Conferencia: "Globalization, Diversity, and Inequality in Latin America: The Challenges, Opportunities, and Dangers." Universidad de Pittsburgh, March 23 - 24, 2007.

This is a short version of the interview. For the complete interview please check *VISIONS of Latin America* website: <http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/clas/publications.html#visions>

The audio of the complete interview can be found at: <http://revistaradial.googlepages.com/revistaradial>

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**Martha Mantilla**

¿Cuál es tu reacción a los comentarios que hemos estado escuchando en esta conferencia, en general sobre los países latinoamericanos, pero en particular sobre la situación por la cual está atravesando Bolivia en este momento?

### Señor Embajador

Bueno, solo hoy día lamentablemente pude escuchar una conferencia referida a Latinoamérica en general con muchas menciones a Bolivia. Lo primero que me llama la atención es una extraordinaria manera sistemática de conocimiento sobre nuestros países y sobre Bolivia. He observado que hay un conocimiento profundo, formal sin embargo, de lo que esta sucediendo en Bolivia. Cuando digo formal, quiero decir que hay una distancia, quizás la distancia que pone la academia para su riguroso y necesario análisis político, económico y social. Y esa es la distancia de esa academia que mira con una cierta lejanía. Hay una cierta frialdad respecto a lo que aquí he escuchado cuando se habla de nuestros países. En cambio, quienes no procedemos del mundo académico, yo por ejemplo soy periodista, tiendo a mirar las cosas con la pasión que creo que es con la que se hace la política y la vida en general en América Latina.

Me ha llamado la atención, para no ser solamente retórico, que mucho después de unas excelentes exposiciones sobre las formalidades de la democracia en América Latina sobre los mecanismos que organizan la democracia en Bolivia, sobre los comportamientos de los protagonistas de la política, me ha llamado la atención el detalle con que se conocen estos movimientos. Yo no creo, por ejemplo, que la democracia hoy

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conquistada por gran parte de los países de América Latina sea una democracia gratuita. Esa democracia le ha costado mucha sangre a nuestros pueblos. Esa democracia le ha costado muchos muertos y esos muertos sabemos quien los ha matado.

**Martha**

Y dentro de ese marco, ¿cómo ves el gobierno de Evo Morales y los retos que se le presenten a la administración de Evo Morales?

**Señor Embajador**

Tú lo has dicho, porque esa es la mejor manera de entender el proceso político boliviano encabezado por el presidente Morales. Son retos y desafíos. Y ciertamente muy complejos porque se trata de cambiar ordenes estructurales; se trata de cambiar substancias históricas construidas durante más de cien años. Y eso cuesta. Yo diría que el mismo grado de complejidad que tiene este proceso también tiene el otro lado. Creo que por primera vez en Bolivia estamos viviendo la sensación de ser un país mas completo. Creo que estamos aprendiendo, los no indígenas, a valorar lo indígena de nuestra patria. Creo que hasta aquí, el solo hecho de que un indio entre al palacio de gobierno le da a Bolivia la dignidad política, la dignidad económica y social que no tuvo durante más de 500 años.

**Martha**

¿Cuáles son los desafíos más inmediatos que el presidente Evo Morales está enfrentando a nivel del país o sea a nivel nacional, pero también a nivel internacional?

**Señor Embajador**

Yo creo que a nivel nacional el desafío principal se produce en una exitosa asamblea constituyente. Y creo que ahora el desafío central es que esta asamblea constituyente acompañe las transformaciones democráticas que se están llevando a cabo en Bolivia. Éste es el desafío central; ese diseño de país que construya la asamblea constituyente en la forma de una nueva carta magna. Ese es el desafío central en el plano interno. Y en el plano externo, por supuesto, la reafirmación de la soberanía y la dignidad en el mundo y frente a todos los países; por supuesto, en la lista como número uno figura Estados Unidos.

**Martha**

¿Cómo ves tu presencia en Washington? ¿Cómo ha sido la recepción que has tenido? ¿Qué expectativas tenías al llegar a Washington y cómo te sientes ahora que ya tienes un tiempo trabajando en la Embajada?

**Señor Embajador**

La idea de nuestra llegada a Estados Unidos era precisamente sembrar o plantar, un escenario abierto de comunicación política con el gobierno de Estados Unidos. El objetivo de instalar una Embajada Boliviana en Estados Unidos, tiene la idea inicial de decirle a Estados Unidos que nos interesa mantener las más cordiales relaciones a partir del principio del respeto mutuo de la soberanía y la dignidad. Y tenemos una agenda muy completa que por supuesto pasa por los temas ya conocidos por ejemplo la coca. Estado Unidos debe y está comenzando a entender que una cosa es hablar de coca y otra de cocaína, que es la propuesta del presidente Morales. Tenemos el desafío del tema comercial, el escenario de un acuerdo comercial de largo alcance, tal y como lo hemos planteado nosotros. Está el trabajo del nivel de cooperación de la cuenta del milenio que nos interesa también. Pero está básicamente la idea de comunicar a Estados Unidos que en Bolivia vivimos un proceso de profundas transformaciones democráticas.

**Martha**

Cuéntanos también un poco de la relación de Bolivia con sus países vecinos, que también es un tema interesante.

**Señor Embajador**

Yo creo que pocas veces en su historia Bolivia tiene una presencia tan importante en la región. Y creo que esta presencia procede de dos fuentes. Primero, la extraordinaria legitimidad política del presidente Morales, de la dignificación de la política con su presencia; del extraordinario hecho histórico, político y social que significa que las mayorías que nunca ingresaron al poder están hoy en el poder, administran el poder. Que los pobres son parte del poder. Este hecho, acabar con la exclusión social, o por lo menos comenzar a hacerlo, es la legitimidad que le ha dado el presidente Morales, y que le permite una presencia distinta en la región. Pero además creo que el gas, el gas natural, configura para nosotros los bolivianos esa fuerza material que nos permite decirle a la región que contamos con la región para garantizar un sistema de producción de energía propia. Por eso, nuestras relaciones son excelentes con el Brasil, con Argentina. Estimamos que muy pronto podremos inclusive negociar el tema del gas con Paraguay y con Uruguay. Y hasta las relaciones con Chile, por esta autenticidad y legitimidad del presidente Morales, han cambiado substancialmente. Y por supuesto, como no puede ser de otra manera, tenemos relaciones con los hermanos venezolanos y cubanos.

**Martha**

Muchas gracias por la entrevista. Creo que ésta es una contribución muy importante para toda la comunidad de la Universidad de Pittsburgh.

VISIONS would like to THANK the Ambassador of Bolivia to the United States, his wife Adriana Guzmán, the Hispanic Languages & Literature Department, the Center for Latin American Studies, Dr. Elizabeth Monasterios, Dr. Martha Mantilla and, last but not least, Dr. John Frechione for making this possible.



*Ambassador speaking with local teacher*

## Bolivia's Current Political Landscape

By Jaime C. Rubin-de-Celis [jcr26+@pitt.edu](mailto:jcr26+@pitt.edu)



President Evo Morales called on Bolivians to take part in the country's reforms. By <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4781340.stm>

January 22<sup>nd</sup> marked the first anniversary of Evo Morales' presidency in Bolivia. He came to power after a turbulent period of time in Bolivia that started with the election of Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada and his resignation due to social turmoil less than two years into his tenure. Morales is of indigenous (aymara) descent and he likes to be called Evo. He became a prominent figure in Bolivia's political landscape as the leader of the Coca Growers Association, one of the most important and powerful social groups that forced Sanchez de Lozada out of office in October 2003. His strong political presence was already evident in 2002; in that year, he lost the presidential race to Sanchez de Lozada by a slim margin. In 2005 the results were different. He won with 54% of the votes and widespread international praise.

Since Morales took office, his popularity has experienced ups and downs. In May 2006, he carried his highest approval rating (83%) when he declared the "nationalization of the gas industry". Even though this was not a "nationalization" in the strict sense, it clearly marked a 180° turning point in the political and economic tendencies of the last 24 years of Bolivian democracy. The signal was clear: the government wanted to be the main actor in Bolivia's economic, political, and social development. Since then, he has promoted a Constitutive Assembly in charge of writing a new constitution, and approving land reform initiatives and is now promoting a reform of Bolivia's education and judicial systems, all of which will represent "the death of the neo-liberal model in Bolivia and the amendment of 500 years of colonialism."

Even before the 2005 election, it was evident that Morales was pursuing a socialist state where the indigenous people and the "movimientos sociales" (social movements like industry workers, coca growers, etc.) were called upon to be the support base. Ever since, Morales' political discourse has been heavily influenced by



Left to Right: Hugo Chavez, Fidel Castro, and Evo Morales  
By <http://www.radioangulo.cu/diario/2006/abril/290406/presidiran.htm>

left wing intellectuals and by his political allies in Latin America: Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro. Thus it should be no surprise that, in his rhetoric, he usually calls the U.S. the "evil empire". This fact, his indigenous heritage, and the links between Movimiento al Socialismo or MAS (Morales' political party), the ETA (a terrorist group in Spain), and Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad – among other things – have made him a salient figure in the interna-

tional media. In other words, as Morales likes to state, "he has put Bolivia on the map", even if it is for the wrong reasons.

Currently, Morales' popularity has fallen to 59% after major conflicts in Huanuni, a mining district, and Cochabamba, Bolivia's fourth largest city, where two factions, one clearly pro-government and the other against it, clashed with each other. The incident left a death toll of 18 people. This last event has been attributed to his inability to reconcile the regional, political, and economic disputes between the West (representing the political power and indigenous majority) and the East (representing the economic power that longs for greater autonomy). His political opponents have harshly criticized him for "surrendering Bolivia's sovereignty to Venezuela and Cuba" and for attacking "Bolivia's fragile institutionalism in order to instantiate a pseudo-dictatorship" (he has ruled by decree, e.g. appointing allies to the independent Judicial Branch and meddling with the Constitutive Assembly).

In addition to this, there are also apparent contradictions that need to be resolved in order to advance towards a stronger and more equitable society: the economy shows good indicators (5.8% growth of GDP, 5.9% fiscal surplus, growing reserves) but there is deep social unrest; the government has high popularity and approval ratings, but Bolivia is experiencing its highest, and increasing, emigration rate ever.

*In other words, as Morales likes to state, "he has put Bolivia on the map", even if it is for the wrong reasons .*

Thus it would be a mistake to describe Bolivia's current political landscape as a romanticized version of the "liberation fight of poor and oppressed indigenous people against the merciless, oligarchic white-descent minority" as many would like to believe. Indeed, Bolivia's reality deserves a less simplistic depiction that recognizes that the country is going through a decisive phase of its history, a phase that is marked by rampant right-wing vs. left-wing, east vs. west, as well as indigenous vs. white, rich vs. poor confrontation that, some people say, could open the gate to a civil war.

In the eye of this hurricane, without a doubt, is Evo Morales. Thus the question is now: will he be able to tame the forces he unleashed with his appointment to the Presidential Office, or will he succumb to the polarization among Bolivians raised by his views and decisions? The answer: only time will tell. In any case, one thing is clear: Morales is the only one who holds the keys to Bolivia's future as either a unified and hopefully prosperous nation or as an irreversibly divided country. His high approval rating gives him the necessary legitimacy to open the first door, but his distrust towards the 'traditional political installment' and the neglect of legitimate regional demands for more autonomy could take Bolivia down the alternative road.



By <http://www.marketingbestpractices.com/images/bolivia-map.gif>

## Fraud or not Fraud? A Tale of a Presidential Election

Jose Manuel del Rio Zolezzi [jod23@pitt.edu](mailto:jod23@pitt.edu)



Mexicoflag-obradorcalderon-jpg. <http://theskyhorsepost.com/>

Last summer, Mexican voters elected a new president under historically unprecedented circumstances. Despite a political scenario of extreme competition and a proactive presidency, the electoral institutions that had proved effective in 2000 failed to produce certainty in the electoral process and its results. Thus a significant fraction of the electorate is convinced that fraud prevented the leftist candidate and former mayor of Mexico City, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO), from defeating Felipe Calderon Hinojosa (FCH), the candidate of the incumbent right wing PAN.

### *The facts*

The 2006 presidential election was extremely competitive. Campaigns were fierce and both leading candidates resorted to practices on the edge of legality. FCH benefited from President Fox's implicit and explicit support expressed through federal government propaganda. AMLO presumably maintained access to Mexico City's treasury and used it to reward his followers after formally leaving office. All aforementioned actions are considered illicit activities in Mexican electoral law. During most of the campaign AMLO was ahead of FCH, but as Election Day approached the difference vanished.

On the night of July 2, 2006, after all balloting stations closed, both FCH and AMLO proclaimed their electoral triumph. When the PREP (Program of Preliminary Electoral Results) administered by the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) began publishing output at 8:30 p.m., FCH was ahead 9%, but on subsequent updates the margin diminished. At around 4 in the morning the difference stabilized at around 240,000 votes, equivalent to 0.5% of total turnout. Due to the statistical margin of error in the sample designed for the PREP (+/- 1%), IFE officials announced that the winner could not be determined until all electoral acts had been counted. Reports of inconsistent acts began to flow in while IFE officials were unable to provide a convincing story. Pandora's Box had been opened.

By the time the first district results were published in July 5, the PRD argued that out of some 117,000 acts recorded by the PREP, nearly 58% presented arithmetic or counting inconsistencies. Mexi-

can electoral law allows a vote recount in such cases. The law does not state that errors have to be large. The average arithmetic inconsistency was 1.6% of votes per ballot station, while the average counting one was 1.3%, approximately the same figures as those from the 2000 presidential contest. Under such circumstances all electoral packages with inconsistent acts could have been opened and a vote recount should have proceeded. According to Jose Antonio Crespo, IFE officials only examined 2,864 out of 57,280 ballot urns; IFE's General Council asked local district counselors not to open packages as the action would compromise the election's validity and annulment was a possibility. (J.A. Crespo, *Las Actas del IFE*, Excelsior 01/29/07 [www.nuevoexcelsior.com.mx](http://www.nuevoexcelsior.com.mx)).

The Federal Electoral Tribunal (TRIFE), legally in charge of validating the election, could have asked for a full recount; however, the tribunal only granted a recount in 11,839 stations, mainly in districts where AMLO lost by a large margin and challenged IFE's final results ([www.trife.org.mx](http://www.trife.org.mx), 2006). The difference between first and second place was reduced by nearly 5,000 votes and amounted to only 233,831 suffrages as stated in IFE's website ([www.ife.org.mx](http://www.ife.org.mx), 2007). After the recount, TRIFE judges decided to uphold FCH victory, even though absolute certainty had not yet been achieved and many more questions loomed ahead.

### *Making sense of the result*

Faced with the possibility of a full recount—and a possible change in results—or declaring FCH victorious, TRIFE judges gauged the possibility of annulment of the presidential contest. TRIFE judges decided not to take any risks; a full recount could have produced a turnaround or generated further evidence of systematic inconsistencies, both unappealing results for the magistrates.

If indeed a turnaround were to occur, FCH would challenge the results in districts where AMLO won by a large margin. The ultimate consequence could be a complete national recount. If the same pattern emerged, with FCH adding votes in districts where he lost by a large margin, the judges could very well conclude that the results were not credible at all. If the election was annulled, the newly elected Congress would have to appoint someone as interim president. The interim then would convoke new elections; nonetheless, there are no clear rules that govern this procedure within the Mexican constitutional framework.

The TRIFE magistrates took a "comfortable" decision that assured the survival of the present electoral regime in Mexico, obviously including their own institutional survival. In the process they have effectively prevented electoral uncertainty from ever being dissipated. It is highly improbable that we will ever, beyond reasonable doubt, know who won the 2006 presidential election. It remains to be seen if the gamble is worth the risk, or if a new cycle of institutional instability will follow. Let's hope for the former, not the latter.

## The Migrant Worker Experience: A View from the Chiapas Countryside

By Dean H. Wheeler [dhw12@pitt.edu](mailto:dhw12@pitt.edu)

The amount of money Mexican migrant workers living in the U.S. send home to their families is staggering. According to the Bank of Mexico Web site<sup>1</sup>, more than 23 billion dollars in remittances flowed from the U.S. to Mexico in 2006. That amount is greater than any other source of revenue for Mexico except for the revenue generated by the government-owned oil industry! According to Mexico's National Council of Population Web site<sup>2</sup>, over 10 million Mexican-born citizens currently live in the U.S. With so many Mexicans living abroad, how are local communities being affected? Based on information obtained through informal interviews with men from a tiny rural community in Chiapas, Mexico, this article sheds some light on the migrant worker experience and the impact emigration has on the communities and families from which they originate.

In a rural community in Chiapas with a population of less than 3,000 emigration has had a surprisingly large impact. Most males ages 16 – 40 either have been to the U.S. to work, or plan to go within the next few years. In an agrarian community where human labor remains vitally important to the local economy the removal of these particularly productive workers has taken a toll. Women, children and the elderly have had to fill the labor vacuum created when a family member leaves for wage labor in the U.S. resulting in a reorganization of traditional domestic roles. But this change is widely considered a minor adjustment outweighed by the opportunity to make a relatively large amount of money in a short period of time.

*... work primarily in the agricultural sector and spend between one and three years in the U.S. before returning home.*

Most of the migrant workers from this community work primarily in the agricultural sector and spend between one and three years in the U.S. before returning home. One individual operated an excavator for a construction company. One family said that they have a son who works in a factory and plans to stay indefinitely. All said that they are provided with barrack-style lodging and meals during their stay. The typical work week consists of six, ten-hour days with Sundays off and the average pay is ten dollars per hour. Compared to ten dollars per day (considered fair payment for wage labor in the local municipality) the opportunity to make ten times that amount is worth the risk of making the long journey north. All say that it is difficult to be away from their families for so long, but the lure of high wages makes the decision to go easier.

Although this article is focused on male migrant workers, it is important to note that many women also emigrate to the U.S. in search of work. In fact, during my stay in Chiapas a local newspaper reported that a woman from a neighboring community died while attempting to cross the border into Arizona.

Although it is difficult to project what the future holds for Mexico's migrant workers, U.S. political initiatives such as the recently proposed expansion of the guest-worker program indicates that the two countries will remain intimately linked along labor lines for the foreseeable future. Perhaps efforts at crafting migrant worker policy will benefit by considering the perspective of those who provide the labor.

## Regional Integration in the Caribbean: Challenges and Possibilities

By Asha Williams [amw81@pitt.edu](mailto:amw81@pitt.edu)



As the 21<sup>st</sup> century moves forward, Caribbean countries are faced with difficult questions concerning their survival in an increasingly globalized world. The countries that comprise the Caribbean are a diverse group of small states that have struggled to face the challenges posed by globalization, natural disasters, HIV/AIDS, and political instability. Should these small countries with populations that rarely exceed one million go it alone or band together?

Adhering to the view that there is strength in numbers, the states that comprise the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) are currently embarking on creating the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). This regional integration model is characterized by free movement of goods, skilled labor, and capital, as well as the harmonization of economic policy, particularly in the areas of foreign exchange, interest rates, and tax regimes. The depth of integration is currently being debated across the region and the possibility of a common currency is also being considered.

With a total population of less than 16 million, the group of countries to be involved in the process represents a small but diverse group of Caribbean and Central and South American states. Populations range from 8.5 million in Haiti to 48,000 in St Kitts and Nevis.

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While most member states speak English, members also include Dutch-speaking Suriname and French-speaking Haiti. Haiti and Guyana are the group's poorest members with per capita incomes of \$450 and \$1010 (US\$ PPP), respectively. On the other hand, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago have per capita incomes exceeding \$10,000 (US\$ PPP). For these and several other reasons, it is an interesting period in the region's history.

A major concern has been the perceived notion that there will be mass migration from the region's less developed states to wealthier CARICOM states. This is perhaps one reason that the Bahamas, with a per capita income of \$15,380 (US\$ PPP) opted out of participating in the CSME. However, studies on migration within the Caribbean reveal that intra-regional migration has remained low in the past. The literature on this topic suggests that CARICOM nationals prefer to migrate to the United States, Canada, England, and other developed states rather than countries within the region. There is little to suggest that migration flows within the region will be substantial given the history of migration within the region and by the fact that low skilled workers are currently excluded from free movement.

Among the goals of the CSME is to improve living standards in the region. Another challenge the region faces is improving the quality of life in the less developed member states. With aims of full employment and competitive production, the region will need to alter the trend of low intra-regional trade that disproportionately benefits some member states. The less developed economies of CARICOM will need to see improvements in their competitive ability for the CSME to be a meaningful success.

Haiti also represents a key area to be addressed in this context. The country became a member of CARICOM in 1997; however, the exile of former President Jean Bertrand Aristide limited its ability to engage in the CSME. The country's involvement in the CSME was recently initiated by current President Rene Préal after the country's two-year hiatus from CARICOM. Haiti's political instability and poverty reveals a need for tangible results from the process. Recent initiatives by the Caribbean Development Bank to incorporate Haiti into the regional financing mechanism are a step in the right direction.

This is an exciting time for CARICOM policy makers and citizens. The region's leaders have embarked on a marketing campaign aimed at informing citizens of the benefits of integration and there is potential for improved competitiveness as well as increased bargaining power on the world stage. However, the region's leaders must ensure that the process does not only benefit the wealthier economies of CARICOM.

## Conflict in the Water: Why Construction and Foreign Investment in Uruguay have become so Controversial

By Andrew Rishel [adr22+@pitt.edu](mailto:adr22+@pitt.edu)

There is discord south of the border, and no, it is not about immigration, drug trafficking, coups, or rising tortilla prices, although those are all current issues affecting Latin America. This row is occurring along another border: between Argentina and Uruguay.

Groundwork for the dispute was laid in 2003, when the Spanish forestry and wood processing company ENCE was granted approval to build a pulp processing plant on the Uruguayan side of the Uruguay river, which forms the country's western border with Argentina. Construction was slow to begin, however, and it was not until a second company the Finnish firm Botnia received permission to build a similar factory in early 2005 that the deal became polemic. The issue might not be in the news today if it were not for the fact that the two projects were being developed less than five miles apart, in a tranquil area of the country. It does seem odd that the two firms would see it necessary to build the plants in such close proximity to each other in a region with less than adequate infrastructure, but this is not what stirred thousands of Argentine residents in the neighboring city of Gualaguaychú to initiate crippling protests.



Most Argentines, especially those living along the Uruguay River, believe that the two factories would contaminate the shared waterway. Citizens have staged blockades at Uruguayan border crossings on numerous occasions, shutting down the road during peak holiday and weekend tourist seasons, and causing an estimated \$400 million loss to the Uruguayan economy<sup>1</sup> (Uruguay is a popular holiday destination for Argentines). Botnia and ENCE's combined \$1.7 billion investment is a large sum by most standards, but especially for a small country with a GDP of only \$34 billion. Uruguayans 80 percent of whom support the construction of the mills are unified in their quest to develop an economy which can stand on its own, rather than relying on Argentina and Brazil to dictate its economic direction.<sup>2</sup>

The historically amicable relationship between Argentina and Uruguay is not unlike that shared between Canada and the United States. Both have similar culture (television programming and yerba mate consumption), music (tango and "rock en castellano"), and language (almost identical "rioplatense" accent). Nonetheless, Uruguay has always been overshadowed by Argentina, and many Uruguayans resent this. The pulp mill issue, although fairly minute in its own right, has served as a symbol for Uruguay's uphill battle for greater economic stability, growth, and independence.

By the fall of 2006, it seemed as if the environmentalist protestors, including international activist group Greenpeace, had won at least a partial battle. In September of that year, ENCE called off construction of its plant, which had barely begun. It promised to Uruguay's skeptical delight that it would relocate the factory further upstream. More often than not world opinion has backed Uruguay's stance. The matter was taken to the International Criminal Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague and brought before the World Bank for environmental review. The ICJ ruled in a 14-1 decision that the construction did not violate any international treaties, as Argentina had claimed, and the World Bank also declared the plants were meeting the highest environmental standards.

The Argentine government, led by president Nestor Kirchner, has done little to stop the protestor's blockades, which have temporarily ceased. Uruguay has been the larger victim of the conflict, as it has suffered greater losses in international investment. The dispute also reflects poorly on foreign investors' view of the region as a whole, which is unfortunate for an area that has lagged in foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows compared to booming Asian markets.<sup>3</sup> Some speculate that Uruguay might soon evolve to rival South America's economic gem, Chile, known as the *milagro Chileno* (Chilean miracle) for its impressive economic growth.<sup>4</sup> In another step towards greater independence, Uruguay signed a precursor to a free trade deal with the U.S. on January 25, a move that worried fellow Mercosur members.

It is good that Botnia and ENCE are committed to using the cleanest technology available. In a world that is being increasingly affected by global warming, any new construction should ensure minimal to zero environmental damage. If evidence existed that the pulp mills would lead to ecological harm, then their construction would be a reason for grave concern. It remains to be seen whether investment in the region will suffer as a result of the feud. But any time there is a row on the magnitude of the one that has unfolded, it brings unexpected international attention to the parties involved, for better or for worse.

## The "Morning After Pill" – The Chilean Controversy: When Equality Becomes an Emergency

By Paulina Pavez V. [papavez@uchile.cl](mailto:papavez@uchile.cl)

To read article in Spanish go to Page 10

This past January Michelle Bachelet, President of Chile, signed an executive order declaring support of the "National Policy of Fertility Regulation" after the Constitutional Court had previously declared the distribution of the "morning after pill" unconstitutional.

The decree allows the distribution of the pill by the Ministry of Health free of cost through public clinics to women over the age of 14 without the consent of their parents or legal guardians. In Chile, where abortion is illegal, the distribution of this pill as well as the new national policy on fertility have been highly controversial.

With this judicial action, the government is attempting to protect the new regulations guaranteeing women and men free access to information about their sexual and reproductive rights. At the same time, the public policy is a defense against conservative sectors of the country, supported by the highest orders of the Catholic Church, who argue the existence of one universal and true morality to be obeyed by everyone, regardless of personal religious beliefs. This conservative sector continues to construct blockades against any government attempt to implement sound public policy on reproductive rights.

In Chile, the debate over the morning after pill began in 2001 when public health officials first approved the prescription sale of the drug Postinor – 2. This act was without a doubt an important step in the acquisition of reproductive rights and was the result of on-going work by NGOs supporting women's health rights, academic circles, and other civil representatives.

With the approval of these new policies, including the free distribution of the prescription drug to young women and adolescents over the age of 14 after informative counsel from a social worker or public health professional, and without consent

from parents or legal guardians, a new legal precedent is being set which will surely resonate for many Latin American governments which have not already established public health policy on emergency contraception, reproductive rights, or family planning issues.

In effect, for many countries in the region, the "morning after pill" is simply regulated by the market, as the distribution and information regarding the use of the pill is restricted for the users of public health services, precisely the population that is most vulnerable to the risks of early unwanted pregnancies, illegal or unregulated abortions, and the associated mortality rates, etc.

These steps taken by President Bachelet respond precisely to the necessity of equality and freedom of reproductive rights within Chilean society, which annually faces close to 4,000 unwanted pregnancies. At the same time, it is a decision which takes into account basic human rights and access to advances in medicine, information, and technology. These actions are consistent with the recommendations of the World Health Organization, taking into account international standards adopted for over 20 years in many countries of the world, including fifteen Latin American nations.



[www.forociudadano.cl](http://www.forociudadano.cl)

## Beyond the Technology: The Free Software Movement in Latin America

By Carolina Gainza [cgainza@uchile.cl](mailto:cgainza@uchile.cl)

In accordance with Richard Stallman, who is called the father of the free software movement, free software is a matter of liberty. Thus free software means the liberty to copy, study, distribute, run, change, and improve the software. Nevertheless, behind these technical matters exists a hacker ethic, related to premises of solidarity, liberty, and contribution to the community. Even though this ethic has come out inside the cultural movement of hackerism, it has actually opened a way to the construction of a social movement that has crossed over the borders of the hacker culture.

The free software movement in Latin America has experienced strong growth in Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Chile. Moreover, in the case of Brazil, the government has implemented the use of free software in the public administration. In that country, the positive attitudes from the Executive Branch to the introduction of free software have allowed the development of several initiatives and projects. The experience of Rio Grande Do Sul is perhaps the most emblematic. Rio Grande Do Sul has become the most active user of free software in the country, and it is also the first experience of legislation on the adoption of free software in the public administration in the world.

The role played by the academic actors, hackers, and civil society in promoting free software and also generating a public debate around that topic was fundamental in creating a favorable political scenario to create new legislation on it. At the same time, free software brought the technologies into the popular culture, facilitating the process of social appropriation of technology. Additionally, the international free software forum has been taking place there since 2000. Other important initiatives that we can find in Brazil are Código Livre, Red Escolar Livre, Gnurias, and Univates.

In Mexico, the Gnome Project is perhaps the most well-known in the region. Developed by Miguel de Icaza, Gnome has been making Linux more accessible to the users through the development of friendlier graphics interfaces. Although there are several organizations and projects that have facilitated the spread of the use of free software, the Mexican government signed an agreement with Microsoft, which became the e-Mexico project, challenging the growth of free software in México.

In spite of this agreement, the free software movement has strengthened through several initiatives coming from the civil society, academic fields, and some of the business sector. They are promoting the incorporation of free software, creating organizations like the Red Nacional de Software Libre and the Asociación Mexicana Empresarial de Software Libre, and developing projects like the Red Escolar Libre.



In Argentina, we can find the most organized and strongest movement related to free software, which comes principally from the civil society. It is a very heterogeneous group including academics, researchers, social scientists, hackers, NGOs, and simple users. The Argentinean free software movement is having an important discussion around the legal, political, economical, and social aspects linked to the principles behind the technical issues. These aspects can provide incentive or restrain the development of free software. Thus it is important that these matters be discussed by social

actors in the civil society. Some experiences that are important to emphasize are the work that is being done by SoLar (Asociación Civil Software Libre Argentina), the Agrupación de Usuarios de Linux Argentina, and the Fundación Vía Libre, among others.

Although Chile has one of the better technological infrastructures in the region and has produced important work from some Chilean hackers on free software since the early nineties, most of the users and producers of free software have been within the limits of the academic-technological culture linked to universities. Therefore Chile does not represent an important case of social activism like Argentina, for example. However, since approximately 2000, we have observed many initiatives and actors that have encouraged the opening of free software and its principles into the civil society. Projects and organizations like tux.cl, Csol, Linux Chile, and Software Libre Chile, among others, are building networks of cooperation that are going beyond the technological problem.

As a product of these experiences, the free software social movement had become stronger during the last few years. The movement is present in most of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. We can not analyze all of them here due to space constraints; but the point that is important to highlight is that beyond technical matters, as in the freedom of access to the source code, we can find ethics principles in the movement of free software, like liberty, solidarity, and social responsibility, which are becoming a source of identification and conflict for various actors in society.



*Tux, the penguin, is the figure that represents the operating system Linux. Wearing these clothes, tux is representing the project to develop free software in the Quechua Language.*  
<http://www.runasimipi.org/>



## Current Initiatives in the Latino Legal Community in Pittsburgh

By Mauricio Achata [mauricio.achata@gmail.com](mailto:mauricio.achata@gmail.com)

Despite the census statistics depicting Pittsburgh as an unpopular destination for Latinos, the largest ethnic minority group in the U.S., a rapid increase by Hispanics in the Pittsburgh neighborhood of Beechview and an increasing Latino population in Allegheny County in general has generated more efforts targeted at Latinos from the legal community in Pittsburgh. Despite being generally the most under represented minority group among attorneys nationwide, as well as in Pittsburgh, some recent initiatives by Latino attorneys and law students are a good start on the long road to making Pittsburgh a more attractive and diverse destination for Latino and other minorities.

This past year, the new Hispanic Attorneys Committee of the Allegheny County Bar Association established a legal foundation for Latinos in the city. Therefore, after a rousing reception last fall to which all state and federal judges were invited, and including the deans of the Pitt and Duquesne Law Schools, local political leaders, the managing partners of the top 25 law firms in Pittsburgh, and in-house attorneys from the local companies, the objective thus far has been to spread the word and initiate important contacts.



<http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/esundwic/pitt>

The Committee's mission is to promote Latino attorneys, law students, and anybody in the legal profession Latino businesses. One of the issues with Latino immigrants has been the fear of immigration laws and the lack of support within the legal community. Another goal of the Committee is to incorporate Latinos into the American business frame of mind and teach them how to do business in America.

As a result, the Committee has been active in the community. At the October 8<sup>th</sup> "Al Servicio de la Comunidad" event at St. Hyacinth Church in Pittsburgh, it provided the Hispanic Community with more information of services available, as well as providing business opportunities to

Hispanics. The Committee has hosted monthly workshops at Saint Hyacinth's Church, including immigration law and banking services. As for attorney networking, more Latino attorneys have joined the committee since its inception in July 2006, which serves as a gathering place to discuss legal issues affecting the Hispanic community in Pittsburgh. Finally, it has begun a mentoring program to assist Latino law students in area schools.

Pittsburgh law students have also taken part in initiatives involving the local community. The Hispanic Law Students Association (HLSA) will begin a street law clinic to provide free legal advice to lower income Latino and minority residents as a community outreach service. Among other efforts, the HLSA is reaching out to Latino students at local high schools. The HLSA has been working with the Hispanic Bar Association and the Allegheny County Bar Association to organize a student visitation day at Pitt Law School. Hopefully, the event will foster an interest in the legal profession by showing young Latinos opportunities that are available to them and the channels of support that they can utilize to help them take advantage of those opportunities. The students will get the chance to attend a typical first year class and to speak with students and attorneys that are working to increase the latino presence in the Allegheny County legal community.

These new and upcoming programs in the Pittsburgh legal community should serve notice to other businesses and organizations in the city of the rising Latino community in Western Pennsylvania. Moreover, instead of companies and organizations simply promoting diversity in their websites, pamphlets, and agendas without performing actual services, simple efforts, as seen in the legal community, could potentially contribute in establishing Pittsburgh as a better attraction to Latinos and other minorities.

## Understanding the Influx of Latinos to the United States

By by Pedro Paulo Bretz and José Ignacio Iglesias [pbretz@pghhc.org](mailto:pbretz@pghhc.org)

The purpose of this article is to share with the readers our conclusions of how population growth and economic inequality in Latin America is augmenting the influx of Latinos to the United States. One needn't be an economist or run a study in sociology to understand the main reasons why Latinos are entering – and will continue to enter – this country searching for a better life.

Most of the countries in Latin America have been striving to keep inflation percentages at manageable levels, but overall their economies reflect slow growth. Fiscal and current account deficits persist and government spending policy insists on preferential treatment rather than following long-term policies and plans. As a result, the number of Latinos living below the poverty line increases significantly every year. The number is alarming. Currently, out of the 550 million people living in Latin America, more than 200 million Latinos live below the poverty line.

Cont'd. on next page

As the percentage of individuals living below the poverty line increases, governments find themselves obligated to invest in necessary social programs ( i.e. food stamps, unemployment benefits, etc.) instead of investing in infrastructure, highways, ports, or other variables much needed to sustain economic growth in developing countries. Without such infrastructure, local industries do not invest (and subsequently become obsolete) and foreign investments are non-existent.



Moreover, millions of people with no access to education, health systems, or housing, for example (1) are not receiving the basic services inherent to decent living, and (2) are being excluded from participating in the economy. The strength of any nation is its people; if they are excluded, the society as a whole loses. Result: the economy gets worse. The worse it gets, the more they will leave their countries in search of a better life, but only those with financial means to pay for the one-way trip.

But there is another question to be answered: why will Latinos keep coming to the United States? When we compute Latin America's population growth rates and project them forty-five years from now, the scenario gets more challenging. By year 2050, the Latin America population will double to 1 billion, and the projected number of people living below the poverty line will be 350 million. Result: more Latinos will come to the United States in search of "the American dream."

The good news is that the projected percentage of population growth and of people living below the poverty line in Latin America will decrease, but to compute these numbers out would require more statistics, analytical tools, and economic concepts. North, Central, and South American countries absolutely need to address this matter of utmost urgency. The economic growth of the United States and that of Latin America is mutually beneficial, and the authors can assure that it is a win-win situation.

## La polémica chilena en torno a la "Píldora del día después": cuando la equidad es una emergencia

By *Paulina Pavez V.* [papavez@uchile.cl](mailto:papavez@uchile.cl)

*English version on Page 7*

En el mes de enero del año en curso, la presidenta Michelle Bachelet firmó un Decreto Supremo para avalar las Normas Nacionales sobre Regulación de la Fertilidad, luego que el Tribunal Constitucional declarara como inconstitucional la disposición del Ministerio de Salud de entregar gratuitamente en los servicios públicos la "Píldora del día después" (anticoncepción de emergencia) a jóvenes mayores de 14 años, sin el consentimiento de los padres.

Con esta disposición de carácter judicial, el gobierno intenta proteger y resguardar las nuevas normativas que garantizan el respeto irrestricto de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos de mujeres y hombres, adultos y jóvenes, a decidir libre, conciente e informadamente sobre su sexualidad y su cuerpo. Y al mismo tiempo, hacer frente a los constantes ataques de los sectores conservadores del país, encabezado por las altas cúpulas de la Iglesia Católica que, con el argumento de la existencia de una moral única, universal y verdadera, han obstaculizado el ejercicio del gobierno en el diseño de políticas públicas sobre regulación de la fertilidad.

En Chile el debate público sobre la "Píldora del día después" puede rastrearse desde el año 2001, cuando las autoridades sanitarias aprobaron la venta del fármaco Postinor- 2 en farmacias con receta médica retenida. Este hecho, fue sin duda un importante paso en la conquista de los derechos de mujeres y hombres a decidir libremente sobre su reproducción, cuyo logro se debió principalmente al trabajo ONG's de mujeres, círculos académicos y otros representantes de la sociedad civil.

Ahora bien, con la aprobación de estas nuevas normativas, que incluye la entrega gratuita del fármaco a todas/os los/las mayores

de 14 años, previa consejería y sin el consentimiento de los padres, se instala un precedente que será de alta resonancia para muchos gobiernos latinoamericanos, que aún no incorporan la anticoncepción de emergencia (AE) en sus normativas públicas sobre planificación familiar y salud reproductiva.

Efectivamente, en muchos países de la región la comercialización de la "Píldora del día después" es regulada por el mercado, mientras que la distribución e información sobre la misma, es restringida para los usuarios de los servicios públicos, que en la mayoría de los casos representan al segmento más vulnerable a los riesgos asociados a la sexualidad: embarazos adolescentes no deseados, abortos, mortalidad asociada al aborto. Etc.

La medida tomada por Bachelet, responde a una necesidad y a una demanda de equidad de la sociedad chilena, que anualmente debe enfrentar cerca de 4000 embarazos no deseados. Asimismo, es una decisión que asume una total coherencia con los derechos humanos a libertad, seguridad, información y beneficio de los avances tecnológicos.

Articulándose coherentemente con las recomendaciones de la Organización Mundial de la Salud y toma en cuenta a la vez la normatividad internacional que se aplica desde hace 20 años en varios países del mundo, incluyendo 15 de América Latina.



[www.foroc Ciudadano.cl](http://www.foroc Ciudadano.cl)

## Editorial Comments by VISIONS' President Jorge E. Delgado

[jdelgado4501@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:jdelgado4501@yahoo.com.ar)

Dear readers and writers:

After almost a year since our last issue, we are pleased to present the new **VISIONS of Latin America**. "VISIONS" was born from the initiative of two students in the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, Lindsey Jones and Felipe Zuluaga.

In 2005, Lindsey and Felipe came to the Center for Latin American Studies seeking sponsorship for the idea of creating a publication supported by articles written mostly by students but open to everybody interested in writing about Latin America. Since then, the audience and people interested in contributing to "VISIONS" has increased. Lindsey and Felipe have already graduated, gotten married, and went to live to Washington DC. The remaining members, plus new ones who have joined us in this enterprise, continue working on this project.



Felipe and Lindsey!!!

In this issue of "VISIONS" we have papers on a variety of topics. The opening one is an interview that **Martha Mantilla** conducted with the Bolivian Ambassador Mario Gustavo Guzmán Saldaña to the United States. Martha Mantilla is the acting Librarian of the Latin American Collection at Hillman Library and conducts the radio program *Revista Radial Latinoamericana*, dial 88.3 WRCT. The interview is followed by an article written by Jaime C. Rubin-de-Celis about *Bolivia's current political landscape*.

Another section includes three articles about Latin American immigrants and/or people of Latin American descent. *Understanding the influx of Latinos to the United States* was written by **Pedro Paulo Bretz** and **José Ignacio Iglesias** from the Hispanic Center. It is very encouraging to receive contributions from the community in Pittsburgh, particularly from one of the nonprofit organizations that exist in the region. **Mauricio Achata**, student at the School of Law, wrote *Current initiatives of the Latino legal community in Pittsburgh*.

The Latino community is growing in southwestern Pennsylvania, as well as the organizations interested in working with them. Mauricio mentions some of those organizations that add to the efforts of others such as the Latin American Cultural Union, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Latino Round Table, the Welcome Center for Immigrants and Internationals, and some groups by countries. The third paper in this section is titled *The migrant worker experience: a view from the Chiapas countryside*. Its author, **Dean H. Wheeler**, analyzes the situation of immigrants from Mexico to the United States.

A third section of "VISIONS" consists of articles in a wider range of topics. **Carolina Gainza** authors *Beyond the technical thing: the free software movement in Latin America*. This is a movement in several parts of Latin America which involves governmental policies to provide the population with free access to software and technology.

**Asha Williams** contributes with a paper on the Caribbean. *Regional integration in the Caribbean: challenges and possibilities* focuses on the Caribbean Community initiative (CARICOM) to integrate this very diverse region into the continent. **José Manuel del Río Zolezzi** analyzes the recent conflict in Mexico after the last Presidential elections in *Fraud or no fraud? A tale of a presidential election*. One article is written from Chile: *The "Morning After Pill – The Chilean Controversy: when equality becomes an emergency*. Its author, the Chilean **Paulina Pavez V.**, examines the polemic surrounding public health and religious beliefs of the "morning after pill." Finally, **Andrew Rishel** contributes with *Conflict in the water – Why construction and foreign investment in Uruguay became so controversial*, a discord between Argentina and Uruguay due to the construction of two plants near the borders of the two countries. This is the first contribution that we have received from an undergraduate student, which raises our enthusiasm about reaching new fora.

As you will notice, this issue of "VISIONS" is made up of articles from a variety of authors, backgrounds and subjects. We hope you will enjoy it and join us in our goal to make "VISIONS" grow.

# VISIONS of Latin America

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