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The *LASA Forum* is published four times a year. It is the official vehicle for conveying news about the Latin American Studies Association to its members. Articles appearing in the *On the Profession* and *Debates* sections of the *Forum* are commissioned by the Editorial Committee and deal with selected themes. The Committee welcomes responses to any material published in the *Forum*.

Opinions expressed herein are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Latin American Studies Association or its officers.

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President's Report¹

by ERIC HERSHBERG | Simon Fraser University | eric_hershberg@sfu.ca

It is an enormous honor to have been selected to serve as LASA President, and I will devote myself as best I can to advancing the Association's work throughout my term in office. The Association, and the field of Latin American Studies, face important challenges, but I am fortunate to engage these at a moment of great intellectual dynamism among researchers engaged with Latin American affairs; of high esteem for LASA among broad segments of the scholarly community; of relative financial prosperity for the Association; and at a moment when capable and devoted staff at the Secretariat have modernized the operation of LASA far beyond what is immediately evident to participants in our Congresses. Stated differently: this is an opportune time to be called upon to serve as LASA President and I look forward to the experience.

Normally, my interventions in the *LASA Forum* will be brief. However, on this occasion I would like to discuss in greater depth the state of the Association and what I take to be the more significant institutional and intellectual issues before us. I will begin my remarks with observations about numerous institutional challenges facing LASA, and then move to issues that, while also imbued with institutional ramifications, are related fundamentally to LASA's intellectual role and to my own aspirations for the coming year and a half.

* * *

LASA is growing at unprecedented rates. Consider the following data: the 2003 Congress in Dallas included 2,950 participants, compared to 3,000 in 2004 in Las Vegas, 4,868 in San Juan for the 2006 Congress and 5,260 for the September 2007 meeting in Montreal. This good news presents immense challenges. These are administrative, in the first instance, and as

President, I will work closely with Executive Director Milagros Pereyra and her staff to ensure that they have the necessary resources to carry out the work of supporting an ever larger network of intellectuals from around the world.

Second, expansion in our numbers has significant implications for the way we organize LASA Congresses. Consider here the burden on program chairs, who have to craft an agenda based on twice as many panel and paper submissions as was the case just a couple of Congresses ago: we owe an immense debt of gratitude to Neil Harvey and Maria Socorro Tabuenca for their work in making the Montreal Congress such a success. I am already grateful to Evelyne Huber and to Cynthia Steele for agreeing to take on this role for the June 2009 Congress.²

But beyond this, there is the question of how to fit the contributions of all of these people into the Congress program. For San Juan in 2006 and Montreal in 2007 we expanded the Congress to four days, and we have increased—modestly—the rejection rates for both panel and paper proposals. The next meeting will be in Rio de Janeiro—our first ever in South America—and will be held not in hotels but at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC), which means among other things that we will no longer be limited by the number of available meeting rooms in corporate spaces. This will allow us to run more simultaneous sessions, and almost certainly will enable us to scale back from four days to three and a half. In addition, we envision a modest increase in selectivity. Whereas only two percent of submissions were rejected for the 2004 Congress in Las Vegas, for 2006 and 2007 the rejection rates held steady at approximately 18 percent for individual paper proposals and 13 percent for panels. Our expectation is that the rejection rate for all submissions will grow to between 20



percent and 25 percent for the 2009 Rio meeting. Of course, we cannot judge with any precision how many proposals will be submitted for our first ever Congress in South America. We will keep the membership informed as information becomes available, and will convey clearly the factors that enter into decisions concerning the duration of the meeting.

An aside, in this regard: the key mechanism through which we will keep you informed is the *LASA Forum*. Here I should acknowledge the efforts of LASA Past President Arturo Arias, who as Associate Editor for the past three years has improved the *Forum's* production quality, making it a source of debates concerning pressing issues involving specialists from across sub-fields of Latin American Studies. Working with the new Associate Editor, Antonio Sérgio Guimarães, a sociologist at the University of Sao Paulo, I hope that we can maintain the high production standards that Arturo Arias achieved while working with my predecessors Sonia Alvarez and Charlie Hale. As Professor Guimarães notes in his introduction to this first issue of the *Forum*, we intend to focus debates over the next six issues on questions related to "Rethinking Inequalities," the theme we have chosen for LASA 2009. We will also continue to include the "On the Profession" section, and the *Forum* will remain the principal vehicle for reporting on Association activities to both the membership and outside stakeholders.

Returning to the challenges raised by LASA's expansion, a third issue concerns travel grants for Latin American scholars, for

PRESIDENT'S REPORT continued...

which essentially all of the proceeds from the endowment are directed, and for non-Latin American students. Thanks to the generosity of several foundations—OSI, Tinker, IAF, MacArthur, and Ford—we have managed to increase the number of travel grants substantially in recent years. Whereas the Association devoted \$144,000 to travel grants as recently as 2004, spending for that purpose increased to \$234,000 for LASA 2006 and reached an all-time high of \$334,000 for LASA 2007. Yet, as successful as we have been in securing resources, the growth in demand far outpaces the increase in supply, which is unlikely to be sustained at the 2007 levels. For LASA 2004, the Secretariat received 253 eligible applications for travel support, of which 116 were approved and 137 rejected (46% approval rate); for LASA 2006 we received 537 eligible applications, of which 177 were approved and 366 rejected (32% approval rate); for LASA 2007, 1218 people applied of whom 778 (581 Latin Americans and 197 non-Latin American students) were eligible for funding. We awarded 219 grants, while 559 eligible applicants were rejected (28% approval rate).³ Interestingly, records show that 331 individuals (168 of whom were Latin America-based researchers) who were denied travel grants nonetheless attended the 2007 Congress.

What we are facing, then, is a situation in which the administrative burden of managing travel grant submissions is increasingly substantial, and in which growing numbers of applicants are going to the trouble of submitting materials with decreasing prospects of success. In this context, we need to evaluate how best to support travel to the Congresses within the constraints imposed by limited financial and administrative resources. Tough decisions need to be made, in an environment where a number of key variables are neither constant nor entirely predictable. Consider for

example the ways in which holding the meeting in Rio complicates matters further. What numbers should we expect for this Congress? Should Brazilian scholars still be eligible for travel funding? To the extent that we draw on unencumbered interest from the endowment, what should be the relative priority between non-Latin American students, on the one hand, and Latin American applicants, on the other? Looking toward future Congresses, which owing to continuing difficulties securing travel visas are likely to continue to take place outside the United States, what if anything can be done about junior faculty in North American or European institutions who cannot secure support for travel to international conferences? Could LASA raise a significant portion of travel funds for Latin Americans through funding agencies located in their home countries, and should we insist that Latin American applicants for travel funding make efforts to secure such support through local funding agencies? Should the Association offer more grants with lower stipends rather than fewer grants aimed at providing full funding for Congress participation?⁴

No solution to the travel funding challenges will be ideal, but decisions need to be taken by the Executive Council during the coming months. I pledge that in deciding how to proceed we are committed to a) using endowment funds strictly for the purposes for which they were granted; b) promoting equity; and c) maximizing the productivity of our investment in travel support.

Whatever solution we come up with will be more successful if we are able to draw on a greater pool of resources, and I want to assure members of the Association that efforts to secure greater funding for LASA will be a high priority during my Presidency. I hope to be as successful as my predecessors have been. At the same time, and without

compromising our commitment to expand the resources available to the Association, I intend to work closely with Treasurer Kevin Middlebrook and with members of our investment committee to move prudently but expeditiously toward shifting our portfolio into so-called “socially responsible” investments. This effort was begun by Charlie Hale, advanced by Kevin Middlebrook’s careful research, and endorsed by the Executive Council. I wholeheartedly support this policy and intend to continue moving in this direction.

* * *

Turning away now from strictly institutional matters, let me address several substantive questions, focusing on the internationalization of our Association and the relationship between Latin American studies and scholarly disciplines. Internationalization has been a central preoccupation of recent LASA Presidents, and has been articulated as a fundamental commitment of the organization. It is a concern that will shape my Presidency as well. That we are meeting in Brazil is symbolic of our determination to make LASA as international an organization as possible, albeit one that we should remember has its origins and administrative headquarters in the United States.

The growing number of Latin American participants in our Congresses is a tangible sign of progress: in Montreal, for the first time nearly a third of those presenting their research at the Congress were based outside of North America; two thirds of those participants make their home in Latin America and the Caribbean. And for LASA 2009 a considerably higher percentage of track chairs—those conducting the peer review that guides selection of panels and papers—will be Latin America-based. This reflects a conscious decision, some of the

reasons for which I hope to make clear momentarily.

At this juncture I would simply emphasize, first, that a significant and growing portion of the intellectual work of the Association—the peer review, the panels, the papers—is not being carried out by North Americans, and second, that this trend is likely to continue.

All of this elides the frequently-banded about question of what an intellectual agenda for an internationalized Latin American Studies ought to consist. My first answer is that there will be no single agenda, and that there should not be. Nor should the agenda for the Association or the field of Latin American Studies be defined by the LASA President: multiple agendas should filter up from below—from academic and non-academic circuits alike—and these diverse agendas should find in the Congress a space in which to encounter one another and to evolve in ways that reflect the full range of our members' substantive, theoretical, and methodological preferences. LASA affords intellectuals a big tent and we should celebrate that. I would note here in passing that while the theme for the 2009 Congress will be "Rethinking Inequalities," proposals for panels and papers on other topics will be welcomed with equally open arms.

Indeed, during my Presidency I will endeavor to convey—in rhetoric and in practice—a commitment to an inclusive Latin American Studies, one whose richness derives from the historically rooted fact that it encompasses multiple disciplinary traditions, methodologies and epistemological orientations, and the equally important fact that now more than ever before Latin American Studies transcends geographic zones that were once taken as the boundaries for *lo Latinoamericano*. As

emphasized by Canada's governor general in her comments inaugurating our 2007 Montreal Congress, and by the richness of contributions there by scholars in fields ranging from Latino Studies to analysts of the Asia-Pacific region, Latin American and Caribbean identities span territories throughout the Hemisphere, and, one must add, elsewhere around the globe as well.

Let me say something about what I think Latin American Studies is *not*. Here a bit of history—albeit terribly oversimplified in the interest of brevity. If we look back to the origins of the Association four decades ago, we see an institution comprised of North American scholars studying Latin American cultures, societies, economies, and politics. There was an enormously valuable enterprise, one that helped to develop world class university-based research and training centers devoted to scholarship and teaching about the region. This early phase of development of the Association had a lasting and positive impact on our capacity to understand the human condition.

Over time, Latin American scholars infused the work of North American area studies researchers with some of the most theoretically ambitious approaches that have ever characterized the field. A relatively small but not insignificant number of those intellectuals came to participate and influence the Association itself. Yet the area studies project as embodied institutionally in LASA and in North American institutions remained a largely North American-centric enterprise—indeed, for all of its wonderful attributes, it was ultimately a U.S.-centric undertaking.

The viability of this model disappeared with the 1980s and '90s crisis of area studies, the origins and nature of which are more complex and multi-faceted than I can discuss here, but that in part had to do precisely

with its U.S.-centric nature and its corresponding failure to grapple adequately with transnational phenomena that increasingly preoccupied scholars and practitioners in the Americas and beyond. Yet alongside the exhaustion of area studies as traditionally practiced came the hegemony of narrowly disciplinary approaches that purported to illuminate emerging processes but that failed to grasp complexities rooted in local specificities. This was a moment of triumph for epistemic communities with scant regard for the knowledge about Latin America that had been developed over decades, precisely by area studies scholars. The consequences for North American teaching about the region, and for policies undertaken by governments in those societies, were pernicious, and are enduring.

At the same time that the Association was being founded and Latin American Studies was becoming more dynamic in the North, important institutions devoted to galvanizing thinking and practice relating to the human condition in developing countries emerged in Latin America. CEPAL of course pre-dated LASA, but more comparable institutions, such as CLACSO, were founded during this period in order to develop and articulate a Latin American agenda, a project rooted in aspirations for regional integration and intellectual autonomy. For reasons that are again beyond the scope of this report, that Latin America-centric vision also fell on hard times during the 1980s and 1990s, as ideas originating in the North came to exert growing sway over policies—and important currents of intellectual life—across the region. The consequences were serious and enduring, as partial and distorted ways of understanding the world encountered little institutionalized intellectual opposition and, as they permeated the policy realm, effected significant damage on social welfare and cohesion.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT continued...

Today, LASA finds itself seeking to diversify the voices and perspectives that define what an area studies for the 21st century might look like. In doing so it has articulated in its past two Congress themes the importance of “de-centering” the field, and of moving “beyond the Washington Consensus to create a new Americas.” Simultaneously, and I think not by accident, we see a reinvigorated CLACSO seeking to advance “un pensamiento critico” capable of challenging the prevailing state of affairs in Latin America by elaborating alternative proposals for forging social welfare, autonomy, and cohesion. Both of these efforts are moving in parallel directions, yet in order to gain traction, and to have enduring impact, they need to better engage one another and to strive consciously to influence thinking in North and South alike, in both the academy and in other spaces where intellectual work is carried out. An internationalized LASA represents one, and only one, institutional space in which that encounter can take place, producing forms of understanding that cannot be anticipated in advance, but that offer greater possibilities than are now present for enriching human experience in Latin America and beyond. This, in part, is what internationalization must be about. The choice of “inequalities” as the theme for LASA 2009 reflects the conviction that this is a topic around which intellectual communities can both enrich one another and contribute to the generation of knowledge that matters.

* * *

An additional and related matter that I want to address concerns the relationship between Latin American Studies and conventional disciplines. Here I refer in particular to the social sciences, which I know best, but I think that much of what I am about to say is relevant to my colleagues in the humanities as well.

In my view LASA must create spaces *both* for the multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary approaches that are inherent to our field *and* for contributions from individual disciplines. Inter-disciplinary work requires insights from disciplines. If we lose the capacity to engage any particular discipline, our opportunities to conduct cross-disciplinary work are diminished, and our work within our own disciplines is arguably impoverished. For myself, as well as others, activity in the Association provides a rare and welcome opportunity to learn about the frontiers of research in disciplines other than our own. LASA fulfills its mission when an anthropologist comes to the meeting with the hope of learning what political scientists are doing, and when the latter look forward to our meetings as a way of gaining exposure to state of the art work in a field such as Latin Americanist literary theory.

The fact of the matter, in any event, is that the disciplines need us, intellectually at least, as much as we need them. Indeed, by infusing the disciplines with perspectives drawn from other areas of the social sciences and humanities regional specialists enrich those very disciplines and increase their capacity to shed light on issues that matter to Latin America. Moreover, it is precisely by internationalizing Latin American Studies that we can have the greatest impact on opening up the disciplines: For reasons that have to do with labor markets and professional reward systems, among other factors, disciplines evolve differently across regional and national contexts, all too frequently in isolation from counterparts elsewhere. This is to the detriment of both their intellectual vitality and their practical relevance. In my view, one fundamental rationale for our mission to internationalize the Association is to open the disciplines to challenges from those whose perspectives are rooted in distinct contexts and traditions.

That so much of the discipline-based work of North American scholars utterly fails to acknowledge theories and methods emerging from Latin America testifies to the importance of our efforts in this regard.

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to convey to the LASA membership my commitment to try to be responsive to your ideas and suggestions for ways of strengthening our work and the Association.

Endnotes

¹ The following text draws on a presentation delivered to the membership during the September, 2007 business meeting in Montreal.

² Guido Podesta had originally agreed to serve as co-chair, and participated with Evelyne Huber, Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, in defining tracks for the 2009 meeting. However, competing commitments at the University of Wisconsin-Madison led Prof. Podesta to resign as co-chair following the Montreal meeting. We are delighted that Professor Cynthia Steele, chair of the Comparative Literature Department at the University of Washington, has agreed to step in to serve as co-chair for the Rio de Janeiro Congress.

³ In recent years roughly one third of applications received by the Secretariat have been deemed ineligible (e.g. people who had received funding to previous Congresses, North Americans who are not students, individuals who did not have an accepted paper, etc.).

⁴ For 2007 the average grant for Latin Americans was \$1,541, up from \$1,243 in 2004 and \$1,369 in 2006. ■

Associate Editor's Report

by ANTONIO SÉRGIO A. GUIMARÃES | Universidade de São Paulo | aguimara@princeton.edu

Social inequalities have been a landmark of the Americas. European conquest and the subordination of Indigenous people to the new social order, as well as the traffic and enslavement of African peoples to plantation economies, have institutionalized inequality and violence as constitutive of the American nations from the eighteenth century onwards.

However, the northern, Anglo-Saxon societies of the continent accepted the color line as constitutive of their nationhood, and while their white, European portion pursued with vigor the equality ideal of republican citizenship, their black, African side was subjected to systematic oppression. Inequalities in the United States took on a clear-cut racial dynamic, while in Latin America miscegenation and racial tolerance were the moral glue of the new social formations imagined by egalitarian minds but ordered by oligarchic elites taking social inequalities as a matter-of-fact justified by class privileges and the curtailment of citizenship rights. In the North, racial injustice became the American Dilemma; in the South, class oppression the motor of Revolution. The pretense, the non-racialism or racial democracy of Latin America, is now completely discredited. But be it in the North or in the South, do all these inequalities spring from race? What about gender, class, and other forms of exploitation, unequal distribution, and appropriation?

The 2009 LASA Congress in Rio de Janeiro will be dedicated to the task of rethinking inequalities, and in the five issues prior to that Congress the LASA *Forum* will dedicate its *Debates* section to interrogating various aspects of that theme. In this issue we begin by discussing how race can be used as an effective tool in public policies designed to counteract racial inequalities. Is it a universal remedy, a universal poison imposed

by US cultural imperialism, or a more limited remedy that can only be applied appropriately to the northern zones of the Americas? While this issue of the *Forum* focuses on questions of race, subsequent issues will address inequalities in such domains as healthcare, education, and employment.

The *On the Profession* section of this issue presents a very careful, but unambiguous, report on threats to academic freedom during the recent political conflicts in Oaxaca, Mexico. We also announce the establishment of a LASA Commission on Academic Freedom. Throughout much of the Americas intellectual life remains subject to political constraints, and the Association must be diligent in its advocacy of unfettered debate and autonomy of scholars. Establishment of this Commission, chaired by the Vice President and reporting to the President, should better prepare us to do so.

Coming issues of this section of the *Forum* will address a variety of topics of interest to social scientific and humanistic work related to Latin America. Among other themes, we will consider innovative approaches to graduate student training in Latin American Studies. We are planning to maintain an extended discussion on teaching, mentoring, and supervising scholarly research by new generations of Latin Americanists. Consistent with our determination to ensure that LASA fosters conditions through which junior researchers can take part fruitfully in our activities and advance their careers as intellectuals, a focus on the methods, theories, political significance, and social and sociological problems associated with student mentoring seems more timely than ever. ■

Academic Freedoms under Assault in Oaxaca: The LASA Delegation Report

by MATTHEW GUTMANN | Brown University | gutmann@brown.edu

As they had every year for more than two decades, 70,000 teachers in Oaxaca, Mexico, occupied the *Zócalo* in the city center in May 2006. They declared that their sit-in would persist until demands for better pay and working conditions were met by the state government. The *plantón* had become a regular part of negotiations each year between the teachers' union, Sección 22, and the governor. That year, however, it was different. In the middle of the night on the 14th of June 2006, state police were ordered by the governor to dismantle the sit-in and clear the teachers out of the downtown.

What ensued in the next five months was a massive social conflict unprecedented in the history of Oaxaca. As was evident in a series of *megamarchas*, eventually hundreds of thousands of citizens, including thousands of university students and a smaller number of professors, became involved in public ways to demand that the governor, Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, resign from office. During this time opposition forces formed a broad coalition known as the Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca (APPO), protesters occupied and broadcast from 12 radio stations, others erected barricades throughout the city, and, at the end of October 2006, President Fox sent over 4,000 members of the Federal Preventative Police (PFP) to quell the upheaval.

The governor never resigned. Instead, 23 persons were assassinated by government supporters and none of the killers were brought to trial. Hundreds of protesters were illegally arrested, with over 140 of them sent to a distant prison in the state of Nayarit, over 20 hours drive from Oaxaca. And over 1,200 complaints were filed with human rights commissions—including by students, professors, and others from Oaxaca universities and other institutions of

higher learning—alleging torture and harassment at the hands of the authorities.

The Executive Council of LASA received a petition in December 2006, initiated by Mexican anthropologists Aida Hernández and Teresa Sierra, and signed by nearly 100 other Mexican scholars, many members of the association, requesting a fact-finding delegation be sent to Oaxaca to document events there. After discussion and debate, the EC approved the delegation that I was asked to chair. In consultation with then-LASA president Charles Hale, the delegation came to include Marysa Navarro, historian from Dartmouth College and past president of LASA (2002-03); Orlandina de Oliveira, sociologist from El Colegio de México; and Teresa Valdés, sociologist from Universidad Católica de Chile, Universidad de Buenos Aires, and Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo de la Mujer, Chile. Robin Kirk, Director, Duke Human Rights Center, Duke University, was unable to join the delegation for our visit to Oaxaca; nonetheless she served as the special advisor to the delegation.

Delegation Mandate

The mandate of the delegation from the LASA Executive Council was to conduct a fact-finding visit to Oaxaca and then to issue a report based on what we learned. The visit took place between the 15th and 22nd of June 2007, and the Report was submitted to the EC and endorsed in August 2007.

Our purpose as a delegation was not to investigate human rights abuses in general but to focus on the impact of events in Oaxaca on intellectuals and academic institutions. In addition to several state and national human rights reports on the conflict in Oaxaca, the Comisión Civil Internacional de Observación por los Derechos Humanos

(CCIODH) in 2007 published a general and thorough report on the conflict.¹ The charge of the LASA delegation was thus to complement these earlier reports with a focus on personnel and centers associated with higher education.

As a delegation, we went to Oaxaca with the goal of determining whether there was credible evidence of significant violations of the freedoms of intellectual inquiry and expression affecting researchers, teachers, cultural workers, or other such individuals or groups in the area. Such violations were to include, but were not limited to, politically motivated homicides, physical torture or intimidation, illegal judicial detention, the public targeting of individuals on the basis of their political beliefs or affiliations, involuntary separation from employment at educational or cultural institutions on the basis of an individual's political beliefs or affiliations, and so forth.

If, upon investigation, the delegation determined that such violations had occurred, we would fulfill our mandate by ascertaining the principal causes or sources of them. We would also try to make a reasonable effort to identify what actions should be taken by municipal, state, or federal governmental authorities; by national or international human rights organizations; or by other relevant actors to end such violations and to establish conditions for the effective exercise of the freedoms of inquiry and expression.

June 2007 Visit

With the help of several research assistants—especially Jennifer Ashley at Brown, Adriana Zentella in Oaxaca, and Liliana Arrellanos in Mexico City—the delegation was able over the course of five days to formally interview over thirty people from academic

institutions, the state government, human rights and other non-governmental organizations, the church, and artists and intellectuals, as well as to compile relevant written, web-based, and photographic documents.

In order to get oriented to the social actors and chronology of events, we met first with Salomon Nahmad and Margarita Dalton from the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social Pacífico Sur, Gustavo Esteva from Universidad de la Tierra, and Carlos Plascencia from Radio Universidad at the Universidad Autónoma “Benito Juárez” de Oaxaca (UABJO). In the following days we discussed the conflict with intellectuals like Víctor Raul Martínez who had been actively involved with the opposition movement, as well as those like Gloria Zafra who were critical of the teacher’s union and the APPO.

Interviews with representatives from local Oaxaca human rights organizations were crucial in situating our study within a broader context of general social polarization, persecution by the state government, and impunity for those who had committed abuses against protesters. The delegation talked at length with Yesica Sánchez (Liga mexicana para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos en Oaxaca), Sara Méndez (Red Oaxaqueña de Derechos Humanos), and Alma Soto (Comité de Liberación 25 de Noviembre). Through these discussions the delegation was able to better understand the significance of particular turning points in the history of the conflict, including the initial dismantling of the teachers’ sit-in on the 14th of June, the subsequent *megamarchas* demanding the resignation of the governor, the catalytic effect of the murders of North American photojournalist Bradley Will and four others on the 27th of October, and the deployment

in Oaxaca of the Federal Police a few days later.

A highlight of the visit to Oaxaca by the delegation was our interview with the Rector of the UABJO, Francisco Martínez Neri. The main UABJO campus was a central site for social conflict and pitched street fighting took place just outside the campus from June through November 2006. On the 14th of June 2006, with the express desire to “democratize the media,” university students and faculty took over the radio station of the UABJO, Radio Universidad.

The delegation noted in its Report the important role played by UABJO Rector Martínez throughout the conflict. With few exceptions, the people interviewed by the delegation spoke with respect for the Rector and his attempts to preserve the autonomy of the university. The Rector told the delegation that he was also concerned during the conflict to insure that, “We would defend the participation of any professor and any student” in the social protests. After university students took over Radio Universidad, the Rector told the delegation, there were personal attacks on him such as announcements on a radio station associated with the government that persons were headed to his house to burn it down.

In our interview the Rector detailed the events that transpired at the university on November 2nd: after hearing on the radio that the police was trying to enter the university, the Rector called the Mexican President, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Federal Police that had entered Oaxaca days before. He demanded that “they withdraw from the university.” When he arrived at the university himself, “I observed that a group of state police was trying to force a door to enter” the university and helicopters from the Federal police were dropping tear gas within the university that

had become, in his words, “a war zone.” Nonetheless, despite pressure from the government, the Rector defended the autonomy of the university and the police were unable to occupy the university grounds.

The delegation also investigated specific cases of intellectuals who had suffered as a result of their attempts to exercise freedoms of inquiry and expression. Although the percentage of university professors who openly supported the social movements to oust the governor was small, the state government’s persecution of these individuals served to intimidate intellectuals more generally. In an interview with Víctor Raúl Martínez, a professor-researcher at the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociológicas UABJO, we learned that in the years leading up to the conflict he was well known in the city for his participation in a variety of academic, civic, and religious organizations. Dr. Martínez and others we interviewed in Oaxaca believed that because he was active in these ways, he received threats on his life and against his family. These threats were received by telephone calls to him, his wife, and two of his brothers. His photograph was published on an anonymous website with 25 others that announced: “These are the delinquents who have kidnapped your city. Grab them wherever you see them or go find them in their homes!” Five of the 25 persons reportedly had been killed by July 2007. Dr. Martínez was threatened repeatedly on a government-affiliated radio station.

In order to gain the government perspective on the conflict, during our visit we interviewed leading members of the Oaxaca state government. Héctor Pablo Ramírez, Secretario Técnico of Oaxaca and former president of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in the state, and Luz Divina Zárate, Secretaria de Comunicación

GUTMANN continued...

Social for Oaxaca, stated in our interview that “lumpen proletarians from other countries like Nicaragua” as well as malcontents from other states were imported by APPO to destroy the historic city center. This assessment contradicts all other interviews conducted by the delegation, including with people who supported the state government’s actions against the protest movement.

Principal Findings

The principal findings of the delegation were that repression, violations, and a general atmosphere of threats extended broadly among researchers, teachers, cultural workers, and intellectuals associated with universities, schools, nongovernmental organizations, and similar institutions. The delegation found these violations and threats deeply disturbing as specific cases and chilling in their implications for democracy in Mexico.

The social polarization that occurred in the course of events in Oaxaca in 2006 was the result of generalized conflict in Oaxaca society reflecting obvious and extreme social inequalities. The social protest that occurred during this time was unprecedented in the history of the state in terms of scale and impact. We documented in our interviews and materials gathered attempts by the government and police of Oaxaca, and later by federal authorities and police, to intimidate, threaten, punish, and even murder with impunity those who expressed themselves in opposition to the governor and to the violent state repression.

During its visit to Oaxaca in June 2007, the LASA delegation was also able to determine that throughout the conflict in 2006, and in the face of government violations and threats against academic freedoms, universities and

institutions of higher learning and individuals associated with these institutions in Oaxaca performed a vital role in establishing a civic space for information, debate, and independent and critical social commentary and protest. This space was crucial for intellectuals and other academics who wished to participate alongside other citizens to articulate the demands of various social actors, including indigenous peoples and women.

The conflict and social protests in Oaxaca in 2006 represented a time when government repression was met with what one person the delegation interviewed described as “an effervescence of popular initiative.” Numerous intellectuals and others interviewed by the delegation spoke of positive changes and expectations in the state as a result of the conflict, including renewed efforts to address long-standing social problems of access to education and developing public spaces for dialogue and debate. An artist told the delegation that for everyone in Oaxaca regardless of political viewpoint, “there is a before and an after—Oaxaca will never be the same.”

The Report of the delegation concluded with these recommendations:

- That LASA call on Oaxaca state and Mexican federal authorities to uphold Mexican laws and international accords that protect the right to life, due process and freedom of thought, assembly, and expression;
- That LASA call on Oaxaca state and Mexican federal authorities to bring to justice all public officials who have violated these laws and accords;
- That LASA support the defense of university autonomy in Oaxaca;

- That LASA censure the threats, intimidation, and punishment by the state and federal authorities of academics who have sought to exercise their freedoms in inquiry and expression;
- That LASA be vigilant regarding the personal safety of individual academics.

“Violations Against Freedoms of Inquiry and Expression in Oaxaca de Juárez,” the Report from the LASA Fact-Finding Delegation to Oaxaca, may be found in English and Spanish versions through the LASA website:
<http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/news/oaxaca-report.html>

Endnote

¹ See: http://cciodh.pangea.org/quinta/informe_final/informesinmarcas.pdf. ■

Establishment of a LASA Commission on Academic Freedom

At the January 2007 meeting of the LASA Executive Council (EC) it was agreed that the Association should put in place a Commission on Academic Freedom. Following a lengthy planning process, at its September 2007 meeting the EC approved establishment of such a Commission, to be chaired by the Vice President. This document specifies both the Commission's mandate and the guidelines for its operation.

The call for a Commission emerged in the context of the denial of visas to dozens of researchers—LASA members—who as a result were unable to take part in the 2006 San Juan Congress. This motivated the EC to move the 2007 meeting from Boston to Montreal. It also generated interest in finding ways to publicize this decision so as to highlight LASA's opposition to a broader pattern of U.S. visa denials that was constraining LASA members' work. Another factor motivating the EC to propose such a body was a desire to protest the growing number of government actions—principally but not exclusively visa denials—that constrained the free exchange of ideas among academics based in the United States and between them and their counterparts abroad. Indicative of the issues in play was LASA's offer during the first half of 2006 to file amicus briefs in support of plaintiffs in two judicial proceedings in the United States relating to academic freedom. Whereas many scholarly associations had in place mechanisms to respond to alleged violations of academic freedom, or to decide not to do so, LASA had no such institutionalized framework.

Two broad considerations have informed our decisions concerning the mandate and operating mechanisms of the Commission. First, as an Association of researchers and educators, no principle is more central to our identity than that of the freedom of our members, and our counterparts outside of

LASA, to conduct their professional activities free of threats, intimidation, constraints on mobility, or other sanctions. It is incumbent upon us to respond in those instances where these basic freedoms are demonstrably in jeopardy. Yet, secondly, numerous factors limit the scope of action that can or should be taken by the Association. These include:

- i) LASA's status as a scholarly association whose members hold a wide variety of views concerning social and political conflicts that typically provide the context in which alleged violations take place; at a minimum, this highlights the need to take every measure possible to avoid LASA's being used for partisan purposes;
- ii) LASA's status as an international organization whose members work in countries where customs and legislation concerning academic affairs (e.g. tenure, university autonomy) and speech (e.g. libel codes) vary widely; and
- iii) LASA's lack of investigative capabilities, the limited human and financial resources at its disposal, and the potential volume of cases upon which the Association might be asked to opine or take action. These factors compel the Commission to focus its efforts on members of LASA and/or researchers whose professional profile fits that typically associated with LASA membership.

With this as its point of departure, the LASA Commission on Academic Freedom, appointed by the President, will have the following characteristics and operating procedures.

A. The Commission will be chaired by the Vice President, will operate in direct consultation with the President, and will include among its five members two individuals currently serving as members of the EC. This will underscore the organic

nature of its ties to the Association's governing body, and will imbue its work with greater prominence and legitimacy than was the case with the former Task Force on Human Rights. Terms of Commission members will be 3 years, with initial staggering. Its composition will incorporate researchers based in Latin America and outside the region and will strive for gender and disciplinary balance. As a condition of their service, members of the Commission will agree to respond in a timely fashion, electronically, to requests by the Chair for action concerning specific cases.

B. In responding to petitions submitted by at least six members of the Association seeking response to an alleged violation of academic freedom, the Commission will consider five types of action in light of the constraints noted above and any others it deems relevant:

- i) determination that the matter at hand lies outside the purview of the Commission such that the case will not be entertained and a generic statement of principles—the Association's commitment to the free conduct of research and teaching and the unconstrained exchange of ideas—will be issued without reference to the specific case;
- ii) determination that the matter at hand is within the purview of the Commission, and that the alleged violations are credible, in which case it will be determined what actions can be taken by the Commission on behalf of the Association (writing letters to corresponding authorities, circulating a petition, etc.);
- iii) determination that the matter at hand is (or may be) within the purview of the Commission but that additional information is required before action can be taken, in which case members of the Commission may deploy its limited capabilities to assess the

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eligibility and/or validity of the allegations. Based on these findings, action may be undertaken as in i) and ii) above;

iv) determination that the situation appears to be within the purview of the Commission but calls for a more detailed investigation than that which is within the capabilities of the Commission and seems best suited for the attention of human rights organizations. In these instances, appeals will be made to such organizations requesting their attention to the matters at hand. Pending the outcome of such efforts, a generic statement of principles—the Association’s commitment to the free conduct of research and teaching and the unconstrained exchange of ideas—will be issued without reference to the specific case;

v) determination that the situation is within the purview of the Commission, entails urgent threats to aggrieved parties, and requires documentation that is not being undertaken by appropriate human rights organizations despite demonstrable requests for them to do so. In such extraordinary cases, the Commission may recommend the convening of a fact finding delegation sponsored by LASA. Seven of the ten EC members must endorse the commission recommendation to form a fact finding mission in order for the initiative to go forward. Such delegations would report directly to the President. Their composition would be determined by the Commission following the principle that they must be impeccably independent of the conflicts in question and comprised of researchers representing a variety of countries from which LASA members are drawn.

Procedures for the Commission will be as follows:

- a majority vote of the five members (the chair is a voting member) will be required

in order for any particular case to be considered and in order for it to take any sort of action;

- given limited resources, the Commission will normally be expected to consider no more than three specific cases at any given time;
- given limited resources and the extraordinary nature of such circumstances, the Commission will authorize a maximum of one fact finding delegation per year;
- funding for any fact finding delegation will be provided primarily through resources raised by the delegation itself, with assistance where possible of the Commission. Seed money of up to \$5,000 may be supplied to any such effort, if seven of the ten members of the EC deem it necessary.

In assessing whether specific allegations meet the criteria outlined above, it is established that LASA is not equipped to investigate or otherwise deal with issues that lie within the purview of academic policies in any given setting, that are currently before the courts, and/or that have been resolved in judicial venues. Exceptions will be made only if the Commission is supplied with compelling grounds to indicate that these entities are themselves hostile to the basic principles guiding LASA’s commitment to unconstrained intellectual exchange. In these instances, the Commission may entertain such allegations following the procedures outlined above.

Independently of the work of the Commission, and in consultation with the President, the LASA Secretariat is authorized by the EC to:

a) issue upon request a statement on behalf of the Association to the effect that it condemns universally any constraint on the freedom of academics and other intellectuals to travel, to publish their research, or to share the results of their research with their counterparts abroad;

b) direct to the corresponding executive, legislative and/or judicial authorities letters of complaint on behalf of the Association in any instance where (a) member(s) of the Association is(are) impeded from taking part in any activities sponsored by LASA. This will most frequently refer to the LASA congresses, but may also apply to events sponsored by official LASA sections.

Initial members of the Commission include:

John Coatsworth
Columbia University, LASA VP, Chair

Jonathan Hartlyn
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill,
EC

Felipe Aguero*
The Ford Foundation-Santiago, Chile

Elizabeth Jelin
IDES – Buenos Aires

Barbara Weinstein
New York University

*Confirmation pending. ■

Racial Inequalities and Public Policies: Debates in Latin America and Beyond

Debating Race Policies in Latin America

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The winter 2008 issue of the *LASA Forum* discusses the legitimacy, justice, and appropriateness of the use of race and affirmative action in public policies in Latin America. The historical background for this discussion is the decision taken by the Brazilian government at Durban during the 2001 United Nations Conference on Racism and Intolerance to adopt affirmative action policies to cope with the country's racial inequalities. A measure that could otherwise be read as a diplomatic maneuver to alleviate international pressure became a genuine policy concern as several federal universities across the country introduced racial quotas, ranging from 20% to 40%, for the admission of black students. At the same time, the Ministry of Health undertook national campaigns focusing on diseases prevalent in the African Brazilian population. These events provoked a nationwide debate in the media, as well as within intellectual and academic circles, on the moral, ethical, legal, and scientific meaning of race.

The Brazilian case is both emblematic and singular in Latin America. Like other Latin American countries, Brazil has been formed as a nation under the republican ideal of a polity that should not recognize color, race, or religion (gender was later included in this list), as an important characteristic of citizenship. Race or color should not matter, although in practical terms they were accepted as having class consequences. Elites throughout Latin America subscribed to the view that class inequalities were the central obstacle to democracy inherited from the colonial past and the era of slavery. The ideal of a racial and national formation

came from France; that our Indigenous, Africans, and Europeans would enter the melting pot as had the Celts, Gauls, and Franks to form a unique people and a sole nation. This myth absorbed the imagination of our founding intellectual fathers, from Valadares, to Marti and Freyre. Moreover this difference from the northern, Anglo-Saxon states was the pride and joy of Latin America. Brazil, however, unlike all other states in the region, maintained the color names of races in its census and in some of its official statistics. Under the pressure of Negro mobilization and the growing denunciation of racial discrimination at private and public institutions, the Brazilian Congress passed laws against racial prejudice (1951), thus guaranteeing Brazilian racial democracy's recent acquired status as an example of racial integration and harmony. But eventually sociologists and economists destabilized prevailing orthodoxies through their multivariate studies of inequalities. Race as well as class affect the poverty, disease, unemployment, and urban degradation of blacks in Latin America. That is real. But is race real, and are racial policies ethically or politically feasible?

We commissioned four papers from authors with diverse backgrounds and experiences in Latin America to reflect on these questions. All of them have done some work in Brazil as well as elsewhere in Latin America, the United States, Europe, or Africa so as to give us more than a provincial perspective. As someone with a decade-long involvement in the study of race relations in Brazil and a personal commitment to the defense of race-based affirmative action policies I will do my best to present the authors' arguments in the most neutral manner possible.

All the contributors recognize that racial inequalities are a scourge in the democracies of the region, but they all have a different answer to the question posed most clearly by

Peter Fry: can race politics and policies reproduce race as a category and, by doing so, reproduce discrimination and racism at the same time?

In fact, Peter Fry, a long time resident and student of Brazil and southern Africa, argues against affirmative action on the assumption that the use of race in public policies reproduces racism. In his view, race is itself a product of inequality and cannot be used to combat inequality. Fry advises that we shouldn't engage ourselves with racial justice if we can experiment with other remedies. Fry looks to France for examples of what would be sound non-racialist policies to combat racial inequalities. But is there in the real world of politics a vicious circle of categorical racism? Does the belief in the existence of race and human color perpetuate racism? Is the belief in God sufficient to make a religion? I am skeptical. The other half of Fry's argument, one that is particularly appealing, is that there are other, non-racial, policies and instruments that can do the job of racial justice. This is a pragmatic argument. I would like to see the practical policies of distributive justice in place to evaluate its racial effects.

João Feres, a young political scientist from Rio de Janeiro involved in the study of affirmative action worldwide, seems to agree with Fry's argument concerning the iron cage of categorical inequality, but completely disavows the dismissal of affirmative action. Promoting racial justice through affirmative action policies, Feres argues, has shortcomings that should be measured against its strengths. Pragmatism should offer the standards to evaluate politics and policies. How much would we gain in distributive justice and racial equality at the cost of bringing race consciousness to the forefront of the political scene? Both Feres and Fry should be read against the backdrop of the strenuous debates over affirmative

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action in present day Brazil, where both support different sides. As I said earlier, the cultivated distance Latin American nations took from engaging race in the past makes us intricate and sophisticated non-racialists. Fry voices our alter ego.

Anani Dzidzieyno and Suzanne Oboler speak from a different perspective. Dzidzieyno is a scholar born in colonial Africa and a long time student and critic of Latin America's racial democracy; Oboler is a Latina and feminist intellectual who has experienced and reflected on the various sides of inequality in the Americas. There is no non-racialism embedded within their discourse. The issues surrounding race are unambiguous and because of it Dzidzieyno and Oboler can directly address the vested interests in play. If Fry explored the cultural interests at stake and Feres the moral ones, from a sociological point of view, what are the material interests of people against, or in favor, of affirmative action in Latin America? What are the costs of redistribution for different people? Could racial equality ever be achieved without disturbing class hierarchies? What are the class challenges of affirmative action and quotas in Latin America today? The Latino experience in the United States is colored in white, black, Moreno or mestizo, yet we are all Latino. One could expect that racialization in the postcolonial center should reinforce the mestizo identity forged at the periphery. However, that is but one possibility among many. We are all racialized subjects of domination in postcolonialism, but the White dominant who becomes Latino in the United States has lost the power to maintain the mestizo myth intact. Blackness can survive the postcolonial experience masked and labeled as Afro-Latino. But would Latin American whiteness survive the feeling of being Latino? Should this postcolonial experience shed some light on the debate over the self-

racialization of politics in Latin America? If the point of arrival is the same—racialization through Blackness or Mestizaje—the process of becoming is the opposite: in Latin America self imposed categories of race make us fight the disguises of democracy by assuming a counter-hegemonic discourse of Blackness against Mestizo and White domination; at the metropolitan imperial center, racialization is imposed on us through the Latino label. That is why the way Blackness is defined becomes crucial to understanding the play of identities in decisive historical points of domination. The same can be said about the intertwined fabric of class and empire.

Michel Agier uses his experience in Brazil, Colombia, and western and southern Africa to discuss the republican model of his native France: a model he knows that in the absence of a strong working class mobilization (as in the 1960s) is neither accommodating nor integrating the current postcolonial wave of immigrants. He also registers the failure of French intellectual leadership over the new political activists of the *banlieus* and the postcolonial nostalgia that consumes part of the French intelligentsia. The recalcitrance of France to call its postcolonial citizens “Black” or “African,” thus avoiding naming the racial attributes by which they are discriminated against, is an example of the struggle France is undergoing to rescue its republicanism. It is at the same time an open door to political hypocrisy. In Latin America the enslaved became a Black, and now is struggling to be a Black citizen as in North America.

Some intellectuals in Brazil and in the United States have denounced affirmative action as the Americanization (and racialization) of social relations in Brazil, as Freyre long ago denounced negritude. Some intellectuals have pointed out that several of these policies are funded by international

organizations or philanthropic foundations reflecting postcolonial interests (imposing American cultural values, serving African American desires for leadership). The main problem with these arguments is that they treat these agencies *in prima facie*, as the agents of social change and not as part of the fabric of historical constraints for postcolonial politics. They also ignore that Brazil as a state, i.e. the Brazilian elite, has concentrated all its efforts in the last decades to play the role of the emergent economy and is trying to insert itself into the imagined emergent continent formed by Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC). In this sense, racial and social inequalities have to be addressed directly and competently by these elites. Affirmative action in Brazil is therefore at the same time a Black conquest and a state prescribed remedy, both a progressive and conservative instrument, depending on the way it intermingles with other policies and is conditioned by ongoing structural changes.

Let us read how this debate evolves. ■

RACIAL INEQUALITIES AND
PUBLIC POLICIES: DEBATES IN
LATIN AMERICA AND BEYOND
continued...

Viewing the United States from a Brazilian
Perspective and Vice-Versa

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In a ground breaking book on public attitudes to race and ethnicity in Britain and France Adrian Favell looked at Great Britain through French eyes, and vice-versa. In this way he was able to understand the amazement of the British at French reluctance to recognize race as a legal category, let alone as a target for public policy. In the opposite direction Favell was able to understand the French aversion for British multiculturalism.

In this short essay I attempt a similar exercise for Brazil and the United States. Looking at the recent Supreme Court decision in the case of *Parents involved in community schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 et al.*, from a Brazilian perspective I argue that it is possible to shed light on the dilemmas currently facing antiracists in favour and against the introduction of racial quotas and other race focussed legislation in Brazil.

On Thursday June 28th, 2007 the Supreme Court ruled against positive discrimination by race in certain American high schools by the narrow margin of five votes to four. The schools' case concerned two school districts, one in Seattle, Washington and the other in Louisville, Kentucky. The cases were brought by parents of white children excluded from certain schools by the positive-discrimination policy. The court decided that skin color should not be used as a basis on which to assign students to one school or another.

Liberal, or progressive, opinion in the United States was shocked by the court's ruling which was described as one more step of the Supreme Court down an increasingly conservative road (Dworkin 2007). And yet, the majority opinion (voiced through Justice Roberts) that policies which oblige individuals to identify themselves racially have the effect of perpetuating the salience of race in American public life, deserve to be taken seriously, especially in the light of the ongoing debate about racial quotas in Brazil, where critics have long maintained that racial quotas and a proposed Statute of Racial Equality will not so much consolidate racial categories as bring them effectively into being (Fry et al., eds. 2007).

Justice Roberts argued that "classifying and assigning schoolchildren according to a binary conception of race is an extreme approach in light of our precedents and our Nation's history of using race in public schools, and requires more than such an amorphous end to justify it." Citing previous judgements, he argued that "allowing racial balancing as a compelling end in itself would effectively assur[e] that race will always be relevant in American life, and that the 'ultimate goal' of 'eliminating entirely from governmental decision making such irrelevant factors as a human being's race' will never be achieved." An interest, he added, "linked to nothing other than proportional representation of various races . . . would support indefinite use of racial classifications, employed first to obtain the appropriate mixture of racial views and then to ensure that the [program] continues to reflect that mixture."

Justice Anthony Kennedy, "concurring in part and concurring in the judgement," endorsed the majority opinion that the use of racial classification could delay the ultimate irrelevance of race in public life: "To make race matter now so that it might

not matter later may entrench the very prejudices we seek to overcome." "The enduring hope," he exhorted, "is that race should not matter; the reality is that too often it does."

In the case in question, Kennedy went further, questioning the very use of "the crude racial categories of 'white' and 'non-white' as the basis for its assignment decisions in a district composed of a diversity of races, with fewer than half of the students classified as 'white'." Kennedy goes on to criticize what he calls the reduction of an individual to an assigned racial identity for differential treatment as being "among the most pernicious actions our government can undertake. The allocation of governmental burdens and benefits, contentious under any circumstances, is even more divisive when allocations are made on the basis of individual racial classifications."

But he went further still to question the very basis and legitimacy of racial classification *per se*:

When the government classifies an individual by race, it must first define what it means to be of a race. Who exactly is white and who is non white? To be forced to live under a state-mandated racial label is inconsistent with the dignity of individuals in our society. And it is a label that an individual is powerless to change. Governmental classifications that command people to march in different directions based on racial typologies can cause a new divisiveness. The practice can lead to corrosive discourse, where race serves not as an element of our diverse heritage but instead as a bargaining chip in the political process . . . The idea that if race is the problem, race is the instrument with which to solve it cannot be accepted as an analytical leap forward . . . Under

FRY continued...

our Constitution the individual, child or adult, can find his own identity, can define her own persona, without state intervention that classifies on the basis of his race or the color of her skin . . .

Crude measures of this sort threaten to reduce children to racial chits valued and traded according to one school's supply and another's demand.

Kennedy's critique not only of the use of individual racial classification in public policy, but also the very legitimacy of "the crude racial categories of 'white' and 'non-white'," must appear extraordinary to most Brazilians, given the general assumption in Brazil that the bizarre "one drop rule" continues to appear natural to most North Americans. Strong as this system of racial classification continues to be, opposition grows apace, as G. Reginald Daniel has recently documented.

But the principle reason for Justice Kennedy's separate opinion was that he did not concur that race should be excised entirely from public policy concerns in the United States. He recognized that since racial discrimination continues to contribute to inequality, policy cannot simply ignore race altogether. The dangers presented by individual classifications, he claimed, "are not as pressing when the same ends are achieved by more indirect means." Accordingly he proposed alternative policies designed to affect situations of inequality without obliging citizens to define themselves in racial terms, nor, therefore, creating divisions between people of distinct racial identities: "Race-conscious measures that do not rely on differential treatment based on individual classifications present these problems to a lesser degree." Kennedy suggested that:

School boards may pursue the goal of bringing together students of diverse

backgrounds and races through other means, including strategic site selection of new schools; drawing attendance zones with general recognition of the demographics of neighborhoods; allocating resources for special programs; recruiting students and faculty in a targeted fashion; and tracking enrollments, performance, and other statistics by race. These mechanisms are race conscious but do not lead to different treatment based on a classification that tells each student he or she is to be defined by race.

These suggestions are similar in spirit to French attempts to redress racial inequalities through investment in public facilities in zones with high percentages of immigrants (after all, in Republican France to recognize race is still taboo) (Favell 1998). They recognize the significance of race in the generation of inequality but avoid having to classify individuals in racial terms. Such policies do not classify individuals, but are not racially neutral (Bowen and Bok 1998).

Brazil is a relative newcomer to affirmative action. The first racial quotas were introduced in 2001 in the state universities of the State of Rio de Janeiro by the State government in the wake of the III World United Nations Conference for the Combat of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Correlate Intolerance in Durban. Since then, almost 40 institutions of higher learning have adopted one or another form of racial quotas. Separate health programs have been devised for Brazilians of African descent and a Statute for Racial Equality which would extend quotas to almost all areas of social life is ready to be voted by Congress. A Special Secretariat for Policies to Promote Racial Equality (SEPPIR) with the status of a ministry was created in 2003 and

coordinates federal government policy throughout the country.

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of these developments. Prior to 2001 concerns with racial inequality were confined to a number of relatively small black militant groups and a similarly small cohort of sociologists and anthropologists who occupied a pretty marginal position in their universities and academic associations. Now, racial inequality has become a topic of major public interest. The sudden passionate indignation over racial inequality on the part of many university students and a sizeable number of their professors, has almost supplanted their traditional concerns with inequality *tout court*. No meeting of the Brazil's Anthropological or Sociological Associations would be complete without at least one round table on affirmative action at which the academic community provides ritual evidence of its internal divisiveness over this issue.

Most of the proponents of racial quotas in Brazil argue that such measures would be but temporary and that they are necessary to correct the disadvantages of black citizens which continue due to persistent racial discrimination and which make laughing stock of Brazil's universalistic pretensions (Carvalho 2005). They are surely right when they point to the pernicious nature of discrimination, but from the point of view of their critics, they seem willing to embark on an equally if not more pernicious course of action, giving legal sanction to a racially bipolar Brazil; unless, of course, they would prefer their country to be organized in this way. It is not uncommon for defenders of racial quotas to remark that Brazil already is neatly divided along racial lines, pointing to the little doubt in the minds of those who discriminate. Critics ask whether racially based affirmative action might not simply consolidate such sentiments, rather than

challenge them. They argue, furthermore, that in the absence of a clear criterion such as the one drop rule dividing black from non-blacks and where racial identities are based more on appearance and situation than descent, and where there is no overall consensus on who is black and who is not, racial quotas which are based on the assumption that the country can or should be divided neatly into blacks and non-blacks would have the power of a self fulfilling prophecy, converting such an assumption into material reality. One Brazilian anthropologist used an inflammatory metaphor suggesting that quotas would be akin to trying to douse a fire with gasoline.

Whereas Justice Kennedy fears that racial labelling would perpetuate the U.S. system of racial classification, critics of such labelling in Brazil argue that they would have the effect of strengthening and legitimising definitively a bipolar racial taxonomy in their country. Most critics of racial quotas in Brazil would probably endorse Justice Kennedy's suggestion of alternative policies which take race into account when decisions are taken over the distribution of social services of all kinds, concentrating on providing quality educational and health care facilities in the poorer territories where darker skinned people are in the majority, rather than taking as the first and principle measure quotas in all spheres of social life; for it is this that the Statute of Racial Equality would bring into being. They would argue that it is not necessary to abandon Brazil's republican tradition and that policies similar to those suggested by Justice Kennedy would have the effect of boosting the social mobility of poorer and darker Brazilians without racial labelling. These, coupled to all manner of activities designed to challenge the negative stereotypes associated with blackness, would set Brazil on a course which would allow it to avoid the divisiveness of race.

These would be, of course, long-term solutions to a long-term problem. And they certainly do not appeal to the immediate demands of Afro-Brazilian activists and their allies, especially in the academic rank and file of the country's most prestigious universities. Recent student demonstrations in favour of quotas in Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, which is situated in Brazil's whitest state, were as passionate as the demonstrations against the military dictatorship 40 years ago, for example. In this situation, the proponents of long-term solutions who base their arguments on a radical critique of the very notion of race find themselves classed as conservatives and even racists by the more exalted proponents of racially focussed public policy. But then, it seems, all is fair in love and war.

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RACIAL INEQUALITIES AND PUBLIC POLICIES: DEBATES IN LATIN AMERICA AND BEYOND continued...

Using Race and Skin Color in Public Policies: Justice in Context

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The question of whether the use of race or skin color in public policies is legitimate is complex and must be examined in several of its dimensions. First of all, we should ask what is understood as legitimacy. The term belongs to the technical vocabulary of sociology and as such denotes an empirical assessment of what are the values and practices a person or a given social group consider right, just, or becoming. Thus, according to this sociological conception, the answer to the question above would be purely empirical: the use of race would be legitimate or not depending on the society's own criteria of legitimacy, values, belief, etc. At most, the sociologist could try to sort out the values and beliefs that support (or not) such legitimacy but not question their rational nature. In this short piece I want to examine this question from the perspective of moral theory, which entails delving into the rational arguments that support claims for or against the use of race in public policies. For such an endeavor it would be wise to replace the term legitimate with "just." The language of justice is not made of purely descriptive rationalizations but of rational arguments that deal with empirical facts and normative values rooted in a given social context. So the question should be rephrased in the following manner: Is the use of race or color in public policies just?

I shall analyze this question in two steps, first considering the use of those categories in general, that is, for any society, and second, discussing such use in the context of present-day Brazil and the United States. But before delving into the core section of

the essay, the ontological status of race must be examined. Does race really exist?

A negative answer to this question based on recent scientific findings by geneticists has been frequently used in Brazil to condemn affirmative action policies as a form of injustice. After all, the argument goes, if science has proved that race does not exist, adopting it as a policy criterion would be reactionary and irrational. But the answer to that question cannot be so naïve. The astounding development of molecular biology and genetics in the last decades has for the most part contributed to demolishing the possibility of a scientific concept of race. However, the recent racist statements of Nobel Prize winner James Watson and some of his supporters demonstrate that this subject is far from set, and that race is a concern that still dwells in the minds of some of the world's most prestigious and well funded scientists. The lesson to be learned from this is that the supporters of anti-racism should not assume that the existence of race has been definitely denied by science. Not long ago, from mid-nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century, science provided support for racist theories and it might do so again in the near future.

As social scientists we should be aware that the knowledge produced by the natural sciences do not exhaust the entire realm of reality, and that racial perceptions and discrimination might be real in social interaction even in the absence of a firm biological basis. Thus the naïve negative answer should be replaced by an informed "yes, race does exist." And it exists as a social construct and a lived reality for millions of people in the contemporary world who discriminate and are discriminated against. Furthermore, although one may consider the social reality of race morally condemnable, as I do, this

does not mean that its existence can simply be negated by an act of the will.

Once the question of justice and the meaning of race have been explained, we can delve into the question of whether the use of this socially constructed category in public policies is justified. There are two basic types of moral arguments that can be used to justify public policies, laws, as well as moral actions in general: the universal and the communitarian. Richard Rorty (1993) has called them Kantian and Hegelian, respectively. Kantian arguments recognize a moral worth residing in every human being that is independent of her or his belonging to a particular political community, thus these arguments tend to take very seriously ideas such as inalienable human rights, equal human dignity, and humanity as a whole. Hegelian arguments on the other hand, are based on the notion that the value and meaning of moral principles can only spring from the actual social interaction of individuals in a given community, thus recognizing humanity only as a biological unity.

In fact, Kantian ideas such as equal protection under the law and universal human rights are pillars of modern liberal constitutionalism, even in countries with common law traditions such as England and the United States. Thus, the question to be posed here is whether affirmative action in general constitutes discrimination and violates the principle of equality—a common objection raised against such policies. Despite its currency, this argument suffers from a core defect: it overlooks the difference between negative and positive discrimination. The former debases its victims whereas the latter aims at promoting the greater well-being of its beneficiaries (Dworkin 1985). From a moral point of view these two types of discrimination are immensely different and I think that this is

the case even from a purely descriptive viewpoint. The claim that affirmative action violates the principle of equality is also misguided. There is a fundamental difference between formal equality before the law and substantive equality, either of opportunity or results. While the former is blind to the actual inequality produced through social intercourse, the latter aims at correcting such inequality. That is, the ultimate goal of affirmative action is to produce greater equality, correcting grave asymmetries in life opportunities produced by historical injustices and discriminatory practices. In order to produce greater equality, those policies do violate formal equality, but it is a regional and controlled form of violation that does not endanger the whole edifice of equal protection under the law.

It is important to stress the point that affirmative action is not at all an exception when it comes to regional and controlled violation of equality under the law. The controlled violation of universal law is the *modus operandi* of the welfare state and not an innovative legal quirk introduced by the “ultra-liberal” supporters of affirmative action. Since the British Poor Laws or the New Deal the state has been allocating resources, which formally belonged to all citizens, to groups of people who cannot guarantee themselves a minimum standard of living. This corresponds to granting special rights to targeted sectors of the population. Furthermore, the beneficiaries of such policies have not always been the poor. Several state policies aimed at promoting development and economic growth also work through the same principle, either allocating massive public resources to special branches of the service sector, industry, or agriculture or providing them with special tax reductions and other tariff and non-tariff barriers—the U.S. agricultural policy and the Brazilian

National Development Bank (BNDES) are good examples of such policies. This is all positive discrimination, all affirmative action in a sense. In sum, the pervasiveness of positive discrimination in contemporary liberal democratic states brings us to the following conclusion: discounting the radical advocates of the minimum state, which is in fact an utopia, or better said, a dystopia, affirmative action per se as a modality of public policy does not present an exceptional problem in relation to the principle of equal protection under law.

Although I have offered strong arguments to back up the position that affirmative action is not at odds with the Kantian moral argument, the question of employing racial categories as selection criteria in these policies still needs to be examined. For a policy might be just in general, and yet, a particular application of it may create some sort of injustice. Opponents of affirmative action have argued that the simple adoption of racial categories as selection criteria enhances racism and racial discrimination. According to this line of reasoning, which exemplifies that which Albert Hirshman (1991) has called the perversity thesis, affirmative action has the opposite effect from the one intended. But this is, in fact, a descriptive hypothesis open to empirical confirmation. While the experience in Brazil is too recent to allow for any definite diagnosis, the almost forty years of ethnic-based affirmative action policies in the United States have produced no reliable set of data to support this pessimistic hypothesis. On the contrary, these policies seem to have contributed to improving relations between whites and blacks by enhancing their mutual exposure to more symmetrical social interactions both at school and in the labor place (Holzer and Neumark 2000). Furthermore, the presence of blacks in social and professional positions from which they were almost entirely absent

in the past is in itself a victory against discrimination, and it also helps to demolish established negative stereotypes among whites and blacks, and enhance the self-esteem of blacks through the multiplication of role-models and examples of professional success and achievement.

But we still have to consider seriously the hypothesis that the use of the category of race in public policies might contribute to the perpetuation of race perceptions, that is, to the perpetuation of the social constructed reality of race. Nonetheless, this does not entail necessarily the perpetuation of the same degrees of racial (negative) discrimination. Historical evidence shows that racialized societies might vary according to their degree of discrimination and asymmetric treatment, from the practice of genocide, to enslavement, to high degrees of spatial and occupational segregation, to lower degrees of segregation and discrimination—the latter being the social utopia behind affirmative action policies based on essentialized racial categories.

That being said, it must be acknowledged that the use of racial criteria in public policies also runs the risk of contributing to the essentialization of racialized identities and thus to the perpetuation of the social stigma associated with those identities. Nancy Fraser (2001) takes on this topic in her debate with Axel Honneth about critical theory and transformative action. This is a perverse effect that should be weighted against the positive consequences of affirmative action on the target groups. First of all, one has to keep in mind that in liberal democratic societies the state has limited power and control over social relations and cultural values. Thus, policies that aim at promoting marginalized groups have only an indirect transformative cultural effect. If a given society continues to display similar patterns of racism and prejudice after the

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implementation of race-based policies, it still can be argued that marginalized groups are better-off if compared to the previous situation when these policies were not in place. Second, and most importantly, public policies always involve tragic choices about choosing greater goods and lesser evils. Pragmatism seems to be the only reasonable and the most progressive paradigm to deal with them, because it compels us to face social problems with action and not solely with objections that do not contribute to their actual solution. It also teaches us to judge principles and actions based on their practical consequences, and thus to take these consequences seriously. In sum, the responsible pragmatic position would be to face the problem of racism and racial discrimination in our societies with public policies and to evaluate their results in order to obtain greater social benefits.

It is also reasonable to assume that the racial criteria adopted in affirmative action policies should be chosen from among the most representative non-pejorative native categories in any given society. The actual perpetuation of race perceptions through affirmative action policies can only be assessed if we take into account the meanings and social functions of these perceptions in each societal context. In the present text I will limit myself to short analyses of the cases of the United States and Brazil.

Given the specificities of these cases, we should unpack the concept of racial perceptions into two categories: race and skin color. There is a long tradition of anthropological and sociological writings comparing race relations in Brazil and the United States, produced both by Brazilians and Americans (with the occasional collaboration of “foreigners”). It is almost consensual in this literature that while race perceptions in the United States tend to be

more clear-cut and discrete, in Brazil they vary according to a continuum of skin-color that goes from dark to fair. In the United States, racial identity for non-whites operates according to the one-drop rule, thus even persons with a single ancestor of African origin would have a high probability of considering themselves African American. In Brazil on the other hand, people identify themselves and others according to several categories usually related to the shade of their skin, and given that social status varies along the skin-color continuum, many people of mixed descent (Europeans with African or Indian heritage or both) do not identify themselves as black but as *pardos* (browns) or even as white according to their phenotype. In fact, there are other categories that, like *pardo*, express the idea of “neither white nor black.” However, despite the large number of racial categories appearing in surveys, the statistical relevance of most of them is very small. Moreover, the most relevant of those categories have meanings very similar to that of *pardo*, which is one of them (Osório 2003).

These comparative differences led the Brazilian sociologist Oracy Nogueira (1985, 1998) to coin the concepts of *preconceito de marca* and *preconceito de origem* to describe race relations in Brazil and the United States respectively. According to Nogueira, Brazilian racial prejudice operated mostly through the perception of physical traits (*marcas*) such as skin color, hair type, format of lips and nose, etc., whereas in the United States the origin of one’s ancestors was the determining factor, the one drop rule being the extreme case. Therefore, in Brazil the more physical traits associated with African descent people have, the greater the probability of them becoming the target of racial prejudice. However, in the United States, African ancestry, even when remote, determines a system of classification that has only two values: black or white.

Since Nogueira wrote in the 1950s, race relations in both countries have evolved, and even then they were probably not as simple as the scheme he proposed. Practices such as racial profiling and passing denote that race perceptions in the United States are not as clear cut and discrete as his model indicates. On the other hand, in Brazil, physical traits that are looked down upon are usually, but not exclusively, associated with African ancestry, which in turn, works as a rationale for discrimination. Nonetheless, despite changes in the patterns of race relations in both countries, Nogueira’s conceptual scheme is still a valid heuristic tool, particularly if we reinterpret it through the use of new historical information and theoretical insight.

Human groups are discriminated according to two chief categories: culture and race. Cultural perceptions define the other in terms of different habits, institutions, and values, whereas race perceptions construe them as physically and often psychologically and intellectually distinct (Feres Júnior 2006). In social interactions these perceptions are often intertwined. Let’s first focus on the term “ethnicity,” which has great currency in contemporary debates regarding minority rights and multiculturalism in the United States. It functions as a powerful synthesis between cultural and racial perceptions, conveying both at the same time. The language of ethnicity teaches the following: when cultural difference is perceived, expect racial difference, and vice-versa. Therefore, in the United States it is common to find references to the Latin or Hispanic race, and also to African Americans as constituting a distinct culture. In Brazil the pattern of perceptions is quite different as there seems to be no strong correlation between the perception of racial and cultural differences. Compared to the United States, Brazilian society seems to practice a purer form of racism, one that

does not depend on ascribing cultural elements of difference to justify discrimination. It is not a coincidence that the most representative racial categories in the country are related to the shade of the skin and not to cultural belonging. The phrase “Brazilian blacks have a distinct culture” can hardly be taken seriously and the same claim applied to pardos is truly absurd. This does not mean, however, that practices associated with African or black-Brazilian ancestry, such as *capoeira* and *Candomblé*, are not looked down upon by mainstream Brazilian society.

Given the different pattern of race perception in Brazil and the United States the categories used by affirmative action policies in each country should also differ for the sake of achieving greater expedience and justice. While in the United States the use of the category African American or black does not seem to be very problematic, at least when it comes to the self-identification of this group of people, the adoption of categories such as *Afrodescendente* (Afro-Brazilian) or *negro* (black) in Brazil is a potential source of trouble. According to demographic data based on self-identification only 6.2% of the population identify themselves as *preto* (black) and 38.5% as *pardo*. Thus policies directed exclusively for Afrodescendentes or negros will tend to exclude pardos, who are the vast majority of the non-white poor in the country.

Thus the question should not be whether race or skin color criteria should be used in public policies in Brazil, but what categories to choose in order to design fairer and more efficient policies aimed at producing more equality in a country in dire need of it. And the soundest categories to start with are exactly those that best capture Brazil’s own pattern of pure racism: preto and pardo. There are several reasons to support this

position. First, there is a solid historical series of demographic data showing the consistent socioeconomic inequality between whites, on the one side, and pretos and pardos on the other, with the latter displaying similar socioeconomic conditions. Second, there are analyses showing these categories synthesize well the diversity of racial categories employed in the country. Third, preto and pardo are not associated with one or two particular ethnicities in Brazil, and thus can benefit people who suffer from racial discrimination living in diverse regions and cultural settings of the country. And finally, the adoption of those categories do not require the mass conversion of pardos into negros through their recognition of their own African descent—something that might take centuries to happen if it ever will.

Justice is indeed a chief virtue of social institutions, as Rawls once wrote. As we have seen above, it requires courage to act and wisdom to plan the action and evaluate its results—all of them classic virtues. Conservatives just don’t have them.

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RACIAL INEQUALITIES AND
PUBLIC POLICIES: DEBATES IN
LATIN AMERICA AND BEYOND
continued...

Race, Social Justice, and the Law in the Americas: Redefining the Terms of the Debate

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Is there a need to have laws that guarantee the implementation of equal opportunities in Latin America? Isn't the continent known for its flexible and tolerant race relations? Why then should it borrow the more rigid multiculturalist system from the North?

These are some of the questions we have been asked to address in this essay. While the questions themselves are provocative, they fail to frame the discussion in ways that take into account the extent to which the perception of the vast divide between the laws and customs of the United States and Latin America continues to divert attention from the fundamental issue guiding the discussion on race relations today: i.e. how to achieve social justice and equity for all—not in spite of race and color, but rather grounded in the historical realities of the hemisphere as whole.

From this perspective, our point of departure is that the extent of the relevance of the law to race relations management in the Americas is *not* what is in question. It is true that in some societies, such as Brazil and the United States, the relationship between law and race relations management has become more contentious as the debates over Affirmative Action have spilled into the public spheres of both nations. After all, laws have always framed race relations from the very beginning of the encounter of the three races in the

Americas as a whole. They have influenced and been influenced throughout the hemisphere by customary practices which have varied in their impact on dominant and subaltern groups alike, dictating such issues as access to positions of influence within the various societies and polities, as well as to ecclesiastical offices, educational facilities, and positions of power and influence.

Why, then, the recent intellectual and political contortions over applying the laws and practices of the United States to the management of race relations, whether in institutions of higher learning or in other arenas in Latin American societies where non-whites have traditionally or customarily been excluded, intentionally or not? Why is the suggestion of a more activist role for the state and its laws perceived as a major threat to the very existence and integrity of the edifice of higher education and other institutions of society?

It is difficult to contemplate that there is serious disagreement over the gross inequalities which have characterized both race relations and the specific predicament of Indigenous peoples and Blacks since the early founding of the various countries in the region. Certainly, like the genocide of Indigenous peoples, which effectively cleared the terrain for the conquered, slavery, together with other forms of servitude and coerced labor of Indigenous and Black populations, has been a cornerstone in the historical process of nation building throughout the hemisphere. It has long been acknowledged to be the “original sin” which gave birth to racism as we have come to know it in the Americas today. At the same time, scholars have long accepted the reality of U.S. dominance and ideological influence in shaping the political economy and cultural developments of the entire hemisphere. Yet, there is resistance to the notion of a shared ideology rooted in racial and social

differences in the two Americas. As a result, studies of the varied societies and national realities continue for the most part to reinforce the commonly held assumption that race, rather than class or wealth, is the fundamental American (i.e. United States) dilemma. This questionable assumption has in turn served to reinforced the corollary belief that issues of class and poverty—rather than race—are the “real” problems in Latin America.

Indeed, in addressing the questions raised above, it is important to note that, unlike the United States, Latin American societies rarely acknowledge race *per se* as an important historical signifier of experience (Guimarães 2001, 157-185). The fact that in their founding documents Latin American governments invariably declared that everyone was equal and that no special provisions of a corrective or compensatory nature had to be taken by either state or society, effectively has meant that both Indigenous peoples and the descendants of slaves were left in a socio-political, educational, and economic dead end. In effect, throughout the continent, the discourse of equality without meaningful action took away any responsibility from the state and society for the condition of Indians or Blacks. Hence, in spite of glaring prejudices based on color and phenotype in all the Latin American countries, there is still a distinct preference for focusing on social, cultural, and class considerations. At the same time, the steadfast adherence to ideologies of progressive whitening (*blanqueamiento*) continues to be difficult to overcome. Class-based considerations embedded in such popular euphemisms as “money whitens” have tended to subsume racial considerations in debates on social and political equality and justice in Latin America.

Part of the problem in discussing the issue of racial inequality within a Latin American context is the lack of consensus about the meaning of blackness and whiteness. Arguably, the ideologies of the various nations of the hemisphere have generally dictated that whiteness, the polar opposite of blackness, should be the destination to be aimed at, for those who are not white. The result seems to have been that unlike the United States, where race has had a long and complicated history of uncompromising belligerence in structuring public identities and private destinies, in Latin America—and with the exception perhaps of the Southern Cone, where the celebration of whiteness has been much more prevalent—the ratification of the official ideologies of *mestizaje* has led to the neglect of racial difference as a significant aspect of social experience. Instead, most of the Latin American societies have emphasized class and gender as the principal and often sole explanatory and analytical categories. Undoubtedly, these categories are important to consider. However, the neglect of the significance of racial difference has tended to put the burden of upholding national myths of racial harmony on individuals' efforts to whiten and hence "improve" the race, whether through intermarriage or informal interracial sexual unions (Callirgos 1993)—thus justifying the ongoing political and social marginality of non-white populations in the varied national contexts of that continent. Indeed, the discourse of "racial democracy" has long been dominant in countries as different as Brazil, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela.

Whether it was the colonial days' "gracias al sacar" trope or the subtle and not-so subtle official rhetoric in support of color "flexibilities" in Latin America, which for the most part aimed to suggest reasonable opportunities for individual mobility with respect to race and color, it is difficult to find

substantial evidence that the existing possibilities radically transformed the position of the majority of Indigenous and Black people in Latin American societies. To a certain extent their predicament has been even more complicated because of the absence of laws addressing racial inequities until the recent passage of legislation in several countries, both before and after Durban 2001. Thus, race, color, and ethnicity have now entered the public discourse in ways that could not have been imagined at the beginning of the 1980s.

The challenge today is not so much to apply or not to apply race and color considerations in public policies, but rather how to apply them in ways which seek to sufficiently reconcile old customary practices which are anchored in "understood" structures of inequality that have in turn long been in existence to the detriment of non-whites. This is not exclusively a matter of intellectual preferences but also one of coming to terms with a changing political and cultural environment.

Despite each country's historical and socio-political specificities, the changing contemporary racial context in no way undermines the extent to which the post-colonial racial hierarchy of the Americas continues to contribute toward structuring and limiting access to full citizenship rights of Blacks and Indigenous populations throughout the region. Important commonalities in the experience of non-whites in the hemisphere as a whole have tended to be obscured by a continuing over-emphasis on the race-versus-class binary and by such persistent myths as Latin America's supposedly more "benign" slavery and its consequences. In spite of historical and contemporary evidence to the contrary, these notions have served, explicitly or otherwise, to frame the debate on the relationship

between racial equity and the law and the future of race relations in Latin America.

Indeed, what has always appeared to rankle in any discussion on comparative U.S.-Latin American race relations is the slightest suggestion that the point of national pride, that is, the exceptional nature of Latin America's race relations order, could be contemplated within a broader transnational framework—a framework that would recognize that, throughout the Americas, "freedom" has always had a different meaning for Indigenous peoples, for Blacks, and for other "people of color," when they censure their movements on streets and in areas where people of white-European descent live; when the hemisphere's indigenous populations know they are taking a chance by leaving their towns, villages, or reservations; or when African Americans, Blacks, Afro-Latinos, Afro-Latin Americans, dark-skinned mestizos, and people of Asian descent are discriminated against in terms of employment and denied access to political and other institutions in all the societies of the American hemisphere.

Racism is an ideology that posits the inherent superiority of one population group over another. Hence, it is our position that regardless of the triumph of ideologies of national unity (e.g. "We are all Mexican," "We are all Brazilian," etc.) and of *mestizaje*, racism continues to be a major obstacle in the quest for and attainment of social justice and political inclusion throughout the continent. As Ariel Dulitzky (2005) has noted, "the official notion of mixed race (*mestizaje*) camouflages diversity, denies non-whites the right to dissent, while making conditions ripe for excluding anyone who falls outside the 'norm' of *mestizo* or mixed."

Herein enters the role of the law, albeit unobtrusively. Insofar as laws framed the most negatively perceived and universally-

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excoriated race relations order in the shape of the segregationist societies of South Africa and of the United States, throughout much of the 20th century, the thought of inserting Latin America into such company was seen to be tantamount to a demonstration of bad faith. On a superficial level, this was not unreasonable. The problem is that certain dimensions of the existence of such legal impediments in the negative example offered by the historical race relations of the United States, for example, also produced consequences that cannot be ignored. The existence of Black institutions of higher learning and the consequent production of generations of Black graduates who could, admittedly, cater to a segregated community in U.S. society, initially had no counterpart either in Brazil or anywhere else in Latin America. With political changes and, even more importantly, with the possibility of challenging specific parts of the segregationist and discriminatory laws in the courts of the United States, the post-World War II period witnessed important changes in race relations, with far-ranging impacts for the nation's polity and society. Such changes affected customary structures of privileges whose traditional beneficiaries did not delay in mounting counter-legal and political initiatives to reclaim their lost terrain.

Not surprisingly, the remedies implemented through such policies as Affirmative Action over the past 40 years in the United States in an effort to counter the noxious effects of long years of racial discrimination have been less than fail-proof. After all, Affirmative Action was not enacted as a "law of the land"; rather, the policy came about by fits and starts, as a result of the long struggle and the moral imperative resulting from the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s, which were the motivating force that created, at least initially, a societal agreement concerning the need to remedy past racial inequities.

In this respect, it is interesting to note that the Brazilian discussion about Affirmative Action and quotas has focused attention on certain difficulties such as the different classification of twins—one black, the other white. Hopefully such an issue does not become a diversion from the more general and fundamental problem of attempting to transform the country and society into much more than a country with an exceptional race relations order. Certainly, in the United States, there is ample evidence today of the peaceful co-existence of extensive racial mixture and the concomitant maintenance of rank orders of racial/color preferences in the national society and polity. Hence, it would be equally disingenuous to argue that the mere existence of a rainbow in familial and societal orders whether in the United States or in the rest of the Americas automatically obviates practices of preferential treatment, which ultimately are prejudicial to darker people.

The need to continue such policies as Affirmative Action, in spite of their shortcomings, is patently evident in the case of the United States, in light of the lack of any alternative measures or, perhaps more importantly, of any political and societal will to address the society's ongoing racial inequities. Indeed, it would be disingenuous to argue that the recent defeats in the arena of racial equity created by the backlash against race-based policies in the U.S. context provide the hemisphere with compelling evidence against the introduction of policy measures, or the use of the agency of the law aimed at ensuring racial equity and social justice.

The issue at hand, then, is not about the value of one society's race relations paradigms or responses over any other. Instead, it is about the collision of two visions or versions of how societies and polities, which have long been characterized

by racial discrimination and inequality, go about managing the relationship between the "activist" and "passive" roles of the state in an effort to correct historical and continuing discriminatory practices. The perception that any form of legal tinkering is tantamount to the introduction of divisions among a heretofore united people who have been spared the racial conflicts which have constituted the bane of other multiracial polities, invariably causes the preservation of the status quo to take precedence over every other issue. What is indisputable as an argument is that the societies of the Americas continue to be just as committed to the idea that harmonious race relations belong much more in the realm of the desired objective rather than the description of reality.

It has been noted both in the United States and elsewhere in the hemisphere that whenever advantages have begun to accrue to blackness in contradiction to the historical and ongoing practices, some individuals suddenly "discover" hitherto unacknowledged black ancestors in order to claim newly designated privileges for Blacks. Undoubtedly, the sheer size and complexities of countries such as Brazil or even the United States for that matter, problematizes any simplistic, one-size-fits-all solution in terms of unambiguously designating potential beneficiaries. Similarly, the old and often repeated trope of the "one drop rule" does not function effectively as a certain line of distinction between the United States and the rest of the Americas. Geography and local knowledge have to be factored into individual cases.

Finally, it bears emphasizing that class considerations are never far removed from this discussion. The visible consequences of neo-liberalism—together with the concomitant implosion of the nation-state—unambiguously signify the demolition of the social contract on which, according to Locke,

the security of the commonwealth depends. The growing unemployment, reduced social services, and rampant poverty of significant segments of the populations throughout the Americas, and the concomitant rise in crime and drug and human trafficking, exemplify this phenomenon. The cumulative effect of these realities leaves little if any doubt as to the existence today of a widening chasm which Carlos Fuentes (1996) has described as “a third world within the first world, and a first world within the third world.” Indeed, the lives of the growing numbers of poor and disenfranchised people in the hemisphere—many of them non-white—provide a sharp and painful contrast to the wealth, sophisticated technology, and high standards of living of a relatively small segment of the population, comprising a semi-anonymous transnational economic caste emerging from the elites of the hemisphere’s nations. This is not to say, of course, that the majority of the Latin American elites are anywhere near having the wealth and power of those in the United States; nor that the standards of living of the poorer sectors in the United States match the manifold misery in which large sectors of the Latin American people live. Nevertheless, it is significant that many of the Latin American elites are lighter-skinned than most of their compatriots.

Whether in the United States or in the societies of Latin America, equality of opportunity, like access to the rule of law, differ according to social class (Guimarães 2001). In Latin America, and increasingly in the United States, the rich are above the law, while the poor are victims of the law (Mendez, O’Donnell, and Pinheiro 1999)—a situation that is not entirely foreign to poor racial minorities in the U.S. context as well. Indeed, whether in the United States or in Latin America, it is increasingly difficult to ignore the now common recourse to what William Greider (1992) has called “hollow laws,” the implications of the spiraling

numbers of socially and politically excluded populations, the abrupt ossification of channels of political participation, and the disappearance of viable alternative policy solutions. Together, they raise serious and complex questions about the consequences for the future of relations between and among racial, ethnic and other social groups, of the decline of traditional representative institutions, and the strangulation of the public sphere.

This is the hemispheric reality that must be taken into account in future discussions on race relations and the struggle for social justice and equity in the Americas. It is always easier to point to the differences that separate one society from another—albeit, undoubtedly, these must also be taken into consideration in any local discussions of our respective national realities.

Introducing the North American race dualism and corresponding legal panaceas may be, and often is, a demagogic maneuvering of ambitious politicians and public personas in Latin America. But it is also a political leaven for indispensable social policy and discussion in this, our globalized post-utopian neo-liberal world. For, the simple introduction and efforts at implementing “foreign-grown” or “imported” solutions to local problems of inequality will, inevitably, bring about the indispensable broadening of the understanding and experience of racism as well as of the conditions for the elaboration of the new social consensus, both North and South of the Rio Grande. After all, why should it be more legitimate to speak of and to have struggled to implement the ideals of the French Revolution with respect to modern politics, than to face the problematics of race relations and affirmative action? The growing importance of “Latino/as” for the political lexicon of the entire hemisphere is an eloquent case in point.

At the same time, the rising numbers of immigrants within Latin America and throughout the United States, all of whom carry with them an understanding of race which is nationally grounded and experiential, also points to the need for all of us to reconsider the import of the transnational flow and counter flow of racial ideologies in the hemisphere, and its implications both for the respective national laws and customs of each nation and for the ongoing struggle for social and racial justice throughout the Americas.

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RACIAL INEQUALITIES AND PUBLIC POLICIES: DEBATES IN LATIN AMERICA AND BEYOND continued...

Is the Use of Race or Color Legitimate in Public Policies?

by MICHEL AGIER

Professor École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales and Director of the Centre d'études africaines agier@ehess.fr

I will respond to this question within a French context, but from my distinct perspective as an anthropologist who has worked for many years in Brazil, Colombia, and Black Africa. In France, two recent events profoundly influence the representation of race and color in both society and public policies: the suburban riots of November 2005 and the election of Nicolas Sarkozy in May 2007.

The new context in France emerging from the riots of November 2005 in the suburbs of large cities, principally around Paris, is marked by the presence—or rather by the visibility—of young immigrants and descendants of immigrants from Black Africa and the Maghreb. There increasingly have emerged the more or less euphemistic notions of “visible minorities,” “people coming from immigration,” and even “people coming from diversity” (sic). These labels have arisen alongside public polemics about positive discrimination or ethnic statistics. This new context is part of a renewal in political action which has its roots in the crisis of political representation of inequalities in the 1970s-1980s. This renewal has resulted in the presence of “ethnic” candidates, mainly Caribbean, in national elections. One example is Christine Taubira, a Presidential aspirant in 2002 who later become involved in Ségolène Royal’s campaign committee when the latter was a candidate for the Socialist Party in the Presidential elections of 2007. Another example is George Paul-Langevin, a lawyer and national human rights secretary of the

Socialist Party, elected as a Parliamentary deputy from the 20th arrondissement of Paris in 2007, and the only Black deputy in France.¹ This new context is also characterized by the formation of the Representative Council of Black Organizations (Conseil Représentatif des Associations Noires- CRAN), founded on November 26, 2005, in the midst of the suburban riots.

Over the past few years, France has discovered through the sporadic, violent expression of dissonant minority voices, that it has a *racial question*. Other countries, such as the United States, South Africa, and Brazil, have experienced this issue in the personal lives of their citizens, have recognized it as a national problem, and have attempted to resolve it at different times in history. The United States has confronted the riots and demonstrations for African American’s civil rights in the 1960s; South Africa has *known* it with the Soweto riots and the multiracial opposition to apartheid in the mid-1970s and the 1990s. Brazil has also experienced it, although somewhat diffusely, starting with Black cultural and political movements under the military dictatorship of the 1970s, and continuing to the present through the official but contested affirmative action policies undertaken since the beginning of 2000. All these experiences put in perspective the panic-stricken comments expressed about the suburban riots. In these events, one have identified a protest qualified as “afro-french” or “franco-maghrebian.” It is interesting to note that those terms are somehow scandalous in France, whereas they are common parlance in English, Portuguese or Spanish! This does not mean that other countries have found better ways to resolve the discord that France has so newly recognized. Besides, each country has its own history of racial thought and racism,

and it would be fruitless to look for any single correct model to follow.

France is proud of its supposedly non-racial model, akin to that which other movements, such as Mandela’s African National Congress, defended in the 1980s. Yet, the country is stuck in its colonial history, without having taken stock of its racial action and thought defined by its colonial context. Colonization was both a repressive and “civilizing” period that entailed a two-fold violence, physical and symbolic, socio-political and cultural, meant to integrate into the French Empire the peoples of West and North Africa, who were defined in terms of colonial categories. This double violence is still the reference for the French way of representing the “others” France had to deal with in its history. The most proximate “others” are those who moved to the metropolis in the 1960s, attracted by the calls for immigration in those years, or their descendants who today find themselves French and African, or “African of France.” The expression “African of France” is not as scandalous as could claim the defenders of an African identity defined as a fixed, immutable, and localized reality.

The inventory of the post-colonial situation would be incomplete if we failed to consider, in this same theoretical framework, the integrative reach of French egalitarian ideology. It had effects on African political culture in the period between the Second World War and the independence of the colonies, among the intellectual world of both the “Africanists” and the African political elites of France. In the 1940s and 1950s, solidarities were formed between French and African intellectuals within the framework of French Republican ideals. This is what has been lost: strong personal relations, social solidarities and political networks, even if hierarchical differences ran through them. A militant, rank-and-file

French Left, the one of the Communist and Socialist Parties and the Communist-affiliated General Confederation of Labor (CGT), had close relations to, helped the emergence of, and supported and influenced African political leaders (such as Senghor, Houphouët-Boigny, etc.), who in turn became deputies or ministers in the French government in the 1950s. At the same time, social scientists (sociologists, economists, anthropologists) have developed research and analysis of African colonial realities and their dynamics (the “colonial situation” of G. Balandier), and have transferred their commitment into the formation of critical and politicized intellectuals. It is this relation, ambiguous yet based on solidarity, which has been lost in the recent period, with the transformation of the relations between Africa and France. A certain “postcolonial melancholia” (to use Gilroy’s expression) is noted in the crisis of French-African relations and in today’s representations of Africans in France.

Therefore, no model exists, but many examples can illuminate the French situation and help us to understand it. For example, Brazil is still struggling to move away from a social and racial thought based mainly on slavery (which was abolished in 1888). Questions of reparations and affirmative action are often raised in the debate. Racial quotas (or “facial features” quotas, as we say in French) have not radically changed the conditions of young Black people in universities or in terms of employment. Moreover, quotas have created confusion in the modes of identification; one’s identity becoming more strategic than ever, and expressing itself as an essence or even as a pure origin. However, measures such as quotas have provoked a debate in the public arena, a debate on Brazilian racism that is pointless for some and embarrassing for others. In France, discussions of positive discrimination and ethnic statistics have

started, with similar effects. However, strong belief in the egalitarian principles of the French Republic has muzzled the debate. This belief requires that one forget the ethno-nationalist effects of such principles such as the exclusion of a part of the nation in its imperialistic times. It is not uncommon for liberating movements to emerge when egalitarian models permit discourse about injustice rather than when the people are in actual crisis. Certain public policies can allow this to happen as long as they are based on political pragmatism.

On the other hand, the affirmation of the universal value of the *res publica*, might not play the same revolutionary role in France as it did in other historical circumstances. This affirmation has responded in an authoritarian manner to dissonant voices claiming that the Republic is unjust. In the current French context, the emphasis on the Republic’s values expresses exclusively the repression of a political voice, and is synonymous with cultural censorship. This cultural repression is even stronger when the expression of a dissonant voice takes a different form—and this is not a novelty in the history of popular mobilizations. The rejection of difference in the name of “origins” or lifestyles, works in fact against even the possibility of a dissonant voice. In other words, we cannot express racism and at the same time defend democracy; there is a contradiction between the two.

However, this is what the commentators on the suburban riots of November 2005 attempted. For many years, but more obviously after the riots, a question has been raised in France, “Do we still need to learn to talk without an accent to fit into the landscape of a democratic society?” Nowadays, we do not imagine that cultural uniformity is necessary in order to part of a “community of equals.” This is not a social or a cultural question; it is a question that is

particular to democracy. The right wing philosopher Alain Finkielkraut, condemning the “mumbo-jumbo of the suburbs” is articulating nothing less than the rejection of democracy as a voice for the people. According to this philosophy, only authentic citizens, the ones with good lineage or the right knowledge, would have access to politics.

What happened in France in November 2005 demonstrates that this elitist democracy imagined by a few does not correspond to the political situation. One of the reasons is certainly that the French conjuncture is more dependent than we think upon what is happening elsewhere. The French social movements are aware of cultural and political ways of mobilizing that are being tested all over the world, taking spectacular forms, or new and diverse communitarian bases.

Endnote

¹ Paris’s 20th arrondissement is one of the most multicultural areas of the French capital. It is also going through an important social change, with a new middle-class called ‘bobo’ (which stands for bohemian bourgeoisie) now arriving in the traditionally popular classes of the neighbourhood. ■

Calling All Members

Nominations Invited For 2009 Slate

Deadline: *June 1, 2008*

LASA members are invited to suggest nominees for Vice President and three members of the Executive Council, for terms beginning May 1, 2009. Criteria for nomination include professional credentials and previous service to LASA. Each candidate must have been a member of the Association in good standing for at least one year prior to nomination. Biographic data and the rationale for nomination must be sent by **June 1, 2008** to LASA Executive Director Milagros Pereyra-Rojas at the LASA Secretariat, 416 Bellefield Hall, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. E-mail: lasa@pitt.edu.

The winning candidate for Vice President will serve in that capacity until October 31, 2010, and then as President for an additional eighteen months. Executive Council members will serve a three-year term from May 1, 2009, to April 30, 2011.

Members of the Nominations Committee are Laurence Whitehead, chair, Oxford University, Nuffield College; Laurence Prescott, Penn State University; Marcelo Ridenti, Universidade de São Paulo; Candace Slater, University of California, Berkeley; Irene Silverblatt, Duke University; Barbara Stallings, Brown University and Deborah Yashar, Princeton University who will serve as the liaison with the LASA Executive Council.

Call For Silvert Award Nominations

Deadline: *June 1, 2008*

The Kalman Silvert Award Committee invites nominations of candidates for the year 2009 award. The Silvert Award recognizes senior members of the profession who have made distinguished lifetime contributions to the study of Latin America. The award is given every 18 months. Past recipients of the Silvert Award were: John J. Johnson (1983); Federico Gil (1985); Albert O. Hirschman (1986); Charles Wagley (1988); Lewis Hanke (1989); Victor L. Urquidi (1991); George Kubler (1992); Osvaldo Sunkel (1994); Richard Fagen (1995); Alain Touraine (1997); Richard Adams (1998); Jean Franco (2000); Thomas Skidmore (2001); Guillermo O'Donnell (2003); June Nash (2004); Miguel León-Portilla (2006) and Helen Safa (2007)

The selection committee consists of Charles R. Hale (chair), LASA immediate past president; Sonia E. Alvarez and Marysa Navarro, past presidents; Philip Oxhorn, editor of the *Latin American Research Review*; and Helen Safa, 2007 Kalman Silvert awardee. Nominations should be sent to LASA Executive Director Milagros Pereyra-Rojas at the LASA Secretariat, 416 Bellefield Hall, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. E-mail: lasa@pitt.edu by **June 1, 2008**. Please include biographic information and a rationale for each nomination.

Call For Bryce Wood Book Award Nominations

Deadline: *November 1, 2008*

At each International Congress, the Latin American Studies Association presents the Bryce Wood Book Award to the most outstanding book on Latin America in the social sciences and humanities published in English. Eligible books for the 2009 LASA International Congress will be those published between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. Although no book may compete more than once, translations may be considered. Anthologies of selections by several authors or re-editions of works published previously normally are not in contention for the award. Books will be judged on the quality of the research, analysis, and writing, and the significance of their contribution to Latin American studies. Books may be nominated by authors, LASA members, or publishers. Persons who nominate books are responsible for confirming the publication date and for forwarding one copy directly to each member of the Award Committee, at the expense of the authors or publishers.

All books nominated must reach *each member* of the Award Committee by **November 1, 2008**. By the month preceding the next International Congress (June 2009), the committee will select a winning book. It may also name an honorable mention. The award will be announced at the Award Ceremony of the LASA2009 business meeting, and the awardee will be publicly honored. LASA membership is not a requirement to receive the award.

Members of the 2009 committee are:

Alejandra Bronfman, Chair
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Claes Brundenius
Lund University
Research Policy Institute
Ideon Alfa 1, Scheelevagen 15
Lund SE-223 63, Sweden

Call For Premio Iberoamericano Book Award Nominations

Deadline: *November 1, 2008*

The *Premio Iberoamericano* is presented at each of LASA's International Congresses for the outstanding book on Latin America in the social sciences and humanities published in Spanish or Portuguese in any country. Eligible books for the 2009 award must have been published between January 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. No book may compete more than once. Normally not in contention for the award are anthologies of selections by several authors or reprints or re-editions of works published previously. Books will be judged on the quality of the research, analysis, and writing, and the significance of their contribution to Latin American studies. Books may be nominated by authors, LASA members, or publishers. Individuals who nominate books are responsible for confirming the publication date and for forwarding one copy directly to *each member* of the award committee, at the expense of those submitting the books.

All books must reach *each member* of the committee by *November 1, 2008*. LASA membership is not a requirement for receiving the award. The award will be announced at the Award Ceremony of the LASA2009 business meeting, and the awardee will be publicly honored.

Members of the 2009 committee are:

Pedro Manuel Monreal González, Chair
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La Habana 10600 Ciudad, Cuba

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México, D.F., 10740

CALLING ALL MEMBERS continued...

Call For Nominations LASA Media Award

Deadline: *November 1, 2008*

The Latin American Studies Association is pleased to announce its competition for the year 2009 LASA Media Awards for outstanding media coverage of Latin America. These awards are made every eighteen months to recognize long-term journalistic contributions to analysis and public debate about Latin America in the United States and in Latin America, as well as breakthrough journalism. Nominations are invited from LASA members and from journalists. Journalists from both the print and electronic media are eligible. The Committee will carefully review each nominee's work and select an award recipient. The award will be announced at the Award Ceremony of the LASA2009 business meeting, and the awardee will be publicly honored. LASA may invite the awardee to submit materials for possible publication in the *LASA Forum*. Recent recipients of the awards include: Gustavo Gorriti of *Caretas*, Lima, Peru (1998); Patricia Verdugo Aguirre of *Conama*, Chile and *Diario 16*, Spain (2000); Guillermo González Uribe of *Número*, Bogotá (2001); Eduardo Anguita, freelance journalist, Buenos Aires (2003); Maria Ester Gilio (2006); Julio Scherer, journalist, Mexico (2004) and Hollman Morris of *Morris Producciones y Comunicaciones*, Colombia (2007).

To make a nomination, please send one copy of the journalist's portfolio of recent relevant work to LASA Executive Director Milagros Pereyra-Rojas at the LASA Secretariat, 416 Bellefield Hall, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. E-mail: lasa@pitt.edu by *November 1, 2008*:

Members of the Media Award committee are: Christy Thornton, North American Congress on Latin America, Chair; Peter Kornbluh, National Security Archive/George Washington University; Fred Moehn, Stony Brook University; and Blanche Petrich, La Jornada, México.

LASA/Oxfam America Martin Diskin Memorial Lectureship

Deadline for nomination: *November 1, 2008*

The Martin Diskin Memorial Lectureship is offered at each LASA International Congress to an outstanding individual who combines Professor Diskin's commitment to both activism and scholarship.

This distinguished lectureship is made possible largely by a generous contribution from Oxfam America, an organization committed to grassroots work—and one with which Martin Diskin was closely associated. Past Oxfam America Martin Diskin Lecturers were Ricardo Falla, S.J. (1998); Gonzalo Sánchez Gómez, (2000); Elizabeth Lira Kornfeld (2001); Rodolfo Stavenhagen and Rosalva Aída Hernández Castillo (2003); Jonathan Fox (2004); William Leogrande (2006); Orlando Fals Borda (2007).

Nominations, including self-nominations, are welcome. A nomination should include a statement justifying the nomination, the complete mailing address of the nominee, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. To nominate a candidate, send these materials no later than *November 1, 2008*, to LASA Executive Director Milagros Pereyra-Rojas at the LASA Secretariat, 416 Bellefield Hall, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. E-mail: lasa@pitt.edu.

Members of the 2009 Martin Diskin Memorial Lectureship Committee are Kimberly Theidon, Harvard University, chair; Jonathan Fox, University California, Santa Cruz; Brinton Lykes, Boston College; Seemin Qayum, Independent Scholar, and Margarita López Maya, Universidad Central de Venezuela. ■

Report from the Program Chairs

by EVELYNE HUBER | University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill | ehuber@unc.edu

and CYNTHIA STEELE | University of Washington-Seattle | cynthias@u.washington.edu

We began preparing for LASA 2009 this past summer, in close collaboration with (then incoming) President Eric Hershberg and with the benefit of feedback from the program chairs for the Montreal Congress, Neil Harvey and María Socorro Tabuena, and from several Montreal track chairs. The location of the 2009 Congress in Rio de Janeiro will be a first, and while this is very exciting, it introduces several unknowns into the planning process. Most importantly, it is difficult to project the number of proposals that we will receive for this Congress. For now, we are operating on the assumption that the number of submissions will be roughly the same as for the last two Congresses.

As has been done for most Congresses, we introduced a number of modifications into the menu of tracks. Most importantly, we broke the track with by far the largest number of submissions for Montreal, Democratization and Democratic Performance, into three separate tracks: Parties and Elections, Political Institutions and Processes, and Politics and Public Policy. We also broke another track with a very large number of submissions, Economies, Development and Regional Alternatives into two tracks: Development and Regional Alternatives, and Economics and Development. We did the same with the heavily subscribed track International Relations, Transnationalism and Globalization, breaking it into the separate tracks for International Relations, and Transnationalism and Globalization. We also reintroduced a track with previous history, Labor Studies and Class Relations, and we introduced three tracks in areas where important work has been done in the past few years and/or where there was strong interest: Human Rights and Memory, Latin American Diasporas, and Linguistic Pluralism and Language Policies. Finally, we deleted or regrouped the tracks that received

the lowest number of submissions for Montreal, and we tinkered with some names to clarify the areas that the tracks are to cover. We trust that the new track structure will accommodate the wide variety of interests and contributions that LASA members have to offer.

We are working on a number of ideas for high profile sessions that will address the Congress theme, Rethinking Inequalities. By press time these remain ideas, but stay tuned for updates in future issues of the *Forum*. Let us conclude by thanking all the colleagues who have agreed to take on the important role of track chairs for LASA 2009, as well as the LASA Secretariat, key participants in the planning process. ■

LASA2009 – XXVIII INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

June 11 – 14, 2009 · Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Call for Papers

RETHINKING INEQUALITIES

Latin America has long been known as the world region with the highest levels of inequality, yet the degree and nature of inequalities vary across the domains of economics, politics and culture, and they vary among countries. The struggle to overcome inequalities has engendered social movements for centuries, and today as in various moments in the past has motivated interventions by policymakers. Many of these efforts have not been without impact, and their achievements may be underestimated by scholars and citizens alike. Yet by all accounts the distribution of assets and power remains fundamentally unequal even as the region undergoes profound changes in its social and economic structures, political institutions and cultural norms. Neither theory nor practice has grasped adequately the complexities of Latin America's inequalities or the factors that sustain or undermine them over time. Understanding of inequalities requires insights from disciplines across the social sciences and humanities, and demands attention to the circumstances and strategies of the rich as well as the poor, of the privileged as well as the subaltern.

Eric Hershberg
Simon Fraser University
LASA PRESIDENT

Evelyne Huber
University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
PROGRAM CO-CHAIR

Cynthia Steele
University of Washington – Seattle
PROGRAM CO-CHAIR

You are invited to submit a proposal for LASA2009 addressing the Congress theme and/or any topics related to the program tracks listed below. A complete electronic copy of the proposal, including requests for travel grants by proposers residing in Latin America or the Caribbean, or requests for student travel grants, must be sent to the LASA Secretariat by March 28, 2008.

The deadline to submit proposals is March 28, 2008.

Proposal forms and instructions are available on the LASA website: <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu>.

All proposals must be submitted by email to lasacong@pitt.edu. No submissions by regular mail will be accepted. The Secretariat will send confirmation of the receipt of the proposal via e-mail.

All participants will be required to pre-register for the Congress.

PROGRAM TRACKS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Select the most appropriate track for your proposal from the following list and enter it in the designated place on the form. Names of Program Committee members are provided for information only. Direct your correspondence to the LASA Secretariat ONLY.

Afro-Latin and Indigenous Peoples

Jean Mutabe Rahier, Florida International University

Agrarian and Rural Issues

Martha Rees, University of Cincinnati

Biodiversity, Natural Resources and Environmental Policies

Silvel Elias Gramajo, Geography, Universidad de San Carlos, Guatemala

Children, Youth and Youth Cultures

Ana Yolanda Ramos Zayas, Rutgers University

Cities, Planning and Social Services

Bryan Roberts, University of Texas at Austin

Citizenship, Rights and Justice

Mark Ungar, Brooklyn College

Civil Society and Social Movements

Zander Navarro, IDS-Sussex (UK)

Crossborder Studies and Migration

Cecilia Menjivar, Arizona State University

Culture, Power and Political Subjectivities

Benjamin Arditi, UNAM (Mexico City)

Marc Zimmerman, University of Houston

Development and Regional Alternatives

Kirk Bowman, Georgia Institute of Technology

Economics and Development

Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, São Paulo

Education, Pedagogy and Scholarly Resources

Hector Lindo, Fordham University

David Block, Cornell University Library

Feminist Studies

Margaret Power, Illinois Institute of Technology

Film and Documentary Studies

Rolando Romero, University of Illinois

Emily Hind, University of Wyoming

Gender, Sexualities and LGBT Studies

Carlos Decena, Rutgers University

Ben Sifuentes, Rutgers University

Health, Medicine and Body Politics

Gabriela Sotolaveaga, University of California/Santa Barbara

Histories and Historiographies

Kenneth Mills, University of Toronto

Paul Gootenberg, SUNY/Stonybrook

Dain Borges, University of Chicago

Human Rights and Memory

Ludmila da Silva Catela, Univ. de Córdoba (Argentina)

Patrick Dove, Indiana University

International Relations

Arlene Tickner, Univ. Nacional de Colombia (Bogotá)

Labor Studies and Class Relations

Nadya Guimarães, Univ. de São Paulo

Latin American Diasporas

David Kyle, University of Arizona

Latino/as in North America

Aldo Lauria Santiago, Rutgers, the State University

Law, Jurisprudence and Society

Elisabeth Hilbink, University of Minnesota

Linguistic Pluralism and Language Policies

Laura Graham, University of Iowa

Pilar Valenzuela, Chapman University

Literary Studies: Colonial and 19th Century

Santa Arias, Florida State University

Juan Poblete, University of California at Santa Cruz

Literary Studies: Contemporary

Javier Sanjines, University of Michigan

Rodrigo Canovas, Universidad Católica, Chile

Literature and Culture: Interdisciplinary Approaches

Stephen Hart, University of London

Mass Media and Popular Culture

Eva Bueno, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas

Parties and Elections

Juan Pablo Luna, Universidad de Chile

Performance, Art and Architecture:

Critical and Historical Perspectives

Christopher Dunn, Tulane University

Political Institutions and Processes

Catalina Smulovitz, Universidad di Tella (Buenos Aires)

Politics and Public Policy

Fernando Filgueira, CIESU (Montevideo)

Religion and Spirituality

Virginia Burnett, University of Texas at Austin

Transnationalism and Globalization

Leslie Armijo, Portland State University

Violence and (in)security

Francisco Gutiérrez IEPRI, Univ. Nacional de Colombia (Bogotá)



Section Reports

Brazil

Hélio Guimãres and Susan Quinlan, Co-chairs

The Brazil Section held its business meeting on September 5th. The meeting was conducted by Co-Chairs Susan Quinlan and Hélio Guimãres. Three new members for the Brazil Section Council were elected for the period of 2007-2010: Eduardo Gomes (UFF), Elisabete Leal (UFRGS) and Ana Beatriz Gonçalves (Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora). Ana Paula Alves Ribeiro (UERJ), César Braga-Pinto (Rutgers University) and the Treasurer Sônia Roncador (University of Texas) are part of the Executive Council until 2009, when new elections will be held for three new members of the Executive Council and the two co-chairs.

The Section held a reception at LASA2007 and provided US\$500 for each of the two book prizes and US\$500 for each of the two essay prizes. The best book about Brazil, published in English, was *Needs of the Heart: A Social And Cultural History of Brazil's Clergy And Seminaries*, by Ken Serbin; the best book in Portuguese was *FHC, Forças Armadas e Polícia: Entre o Autoritarismo e a Democracia*, by Jorge Zaverucha. The prizes for best essays went to Bárbara Weinstein for "Inventing the 'mulher paulista'" and to Simone Osthoff for "Elsewhere in contemporary art: topologies of artists' works, writings, and archives."

During the meeting, Emanuelle Oliveira volunteered to help with the Brazil Section webpage.

Colombia

Patricia Tovar, Co-Chair

La reunión de trabajo de la Sección Colombia, se realizó el jueves 6 de Septiembre de 2007 con la presencia de más de cincuenta personas y con la bienvenida de la coordinadora saliente Mary Roldán.

Después de tratar el tema de las finanzas, el de la selección de paneles y el de la dificultad en obtener becas de viaje para los participantes latinoamericanos, muchos de los cuales al no obtenerlas cancelan sus presentaciones, se

realizaron elecciones. Para el cargo de representante de estudiantes, ocupado previamente por Lina del Castillo y Erica Márquez, se seleccionó Mercedes López, estudiante de doctorado en Georgetown University. En reemplazo de Luis Fernando Restrepo, quien estaba a cargo del Boletín Los Inmarcesibles, se eligió también por amplia mayoría a Juana Suárez, quien hacía parte del consejo y es ahora reemplazada por Yolanda Forero Villegas. Para el cargo de co-chair, en reemplazo de Mary Roldán, quien cerraba su ciclo de tres años en la coordinación se eligió a Virginia Bouvier. Leah Carroll continúa con las labores secretariales de la Sección.

Se informó sobre el establecimiento y la convocatoria para los premios en honor de Montserrat Ordóñez y el premio Michael Jiménez, a partir de la decisión tomada por la sección en la reunión de Puerto Rico. Para futuros premios se conformó un "Comité nominador de jurados". El fondo para el premio "Montserrat Ordóñez cuenta con US\$3723.65, gracias al aporte de Nina Scott, Dartmouth College y Kathryn J. McKnight. Resultaron ganadores de estos premios: Margareta Russotto – homenaje a Montserrat Ordóñez, con el libro *La ansiedad autorial: Formación de la autoría femenina en América Latina: Los textos autobiográficos*, Universidad Central de Venezuela y Editorial Equinoccio, 2006; y Winifred Tate – categoría Michael Jiménez, con el libro *Counting the Dead: The Culture and Politics of Human Rights Activism in Colombia*, University of California Press, 2007

A solicitud de una de las integrantes de la Sección, Ana María Bidegain, los asistentes a la reunión acuerdan hacer un pronunciamiento formal sobre los recientes hallazgos de que varias personas habían salido con vida, del holocausto del Palacio de Justicia y su posterior desaparicimiento, entre ellas el jurista y académico, esposo de Ana María, Carlos Horacio Urán. Se propuso circular una carta y recoger firmas con el fin de reabrir la investigación y el esclarecimiento de la verdad, trabajando por intermedio de la página web "Los inmarcesibles". Esta propuesta fue aprobada unánimemente.

Cuba

Felix Masud Piloto, Co-Chair

After the LASA membership's historic vote to move the conference from Boston to Montreal, the Cuba Section leadership worked incessantly to find non-U.S. resources to help finance the participation of our Cuban colleagues. It was not easy, but we were able to support 135 Cuban scholars who participated in nearly 100 different panels. The largest Cuban delegation in LASA's history was headed by Dr. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, President of the Cuban National Assembly, whose participation in the Congress was capped by an intellectually stimulating and politically charged keynote address to a standing room only audience of more than 500 people.

The 2007 Section prize for academic excellence in Cuban studies was awarded to Roberto Fernández Retamar, President of Casa de las Américas and one of Cuba and Latin America's most important intellectuals. Mr. Retamar could not attend LASA2007, but the plaque awarded for the prize was presented to him in a ceremony at the University of Havana in December of 2007.

More than 300 members attended the business meeting and more than 150 voted in the elections. We are happy to report that our elections resulted in the reelection of Cristina Díaz López and Felix Masud-Piloto as Section Co-Chairs in Cuba and outside of Cuba, respectively, for 18 month terms. Milagros Martínez and Philip Brenner were elected to 3 year terms as Executive Committee members in Cuba and outside Cuba, respectively, and Iraida López was elected as Secretary-Treasurer for a three year term. Lorena Barberia and Rafael Hernández remain in the Executive Committee until their three year terms expire in 2009.

Our Section is already working on LASA2009, looking for funding, and applying for a U.S. Treasury Department License that would allow LASA to provide travel funds to some of our Cuban colleagues. 2009 marks the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, so we expect a large and wide variety of Cuban-related panels at the Rio Congress.

Culture, Power and Politics

Marc Zimmerman, Chair

During 2006-2007, CPP continued maintaining the essential linkages between politics, power and cultural studies, while we continued our efforts to connect with Latino, indigenous, gender, and other concerns. Section officers also agreed to hold a competition for four travel grants which helped members attend the congress. We announced a competition for the best papers, but had to postpone this for lack of sufficient submissions.

Given our concern with new left formations, we sought to develop sessions that generated discussions in this direction. For LASA2007, we organized a main session on the work of Jesus Martin Barbero, but were unable to secure travel funds. Nevertheless over 50 participants held a lively discussion of JMB's important contributions. A second main Section explored populism and post-Marxism as a means for conceptualizing recent Latin American developments. Two sessions of roundtables promoted discussions of CPP themes.

At the business meeting, we approved the new slate of officers, and a proposal for a modified council structure. Susana Kaiser is Chair, Sylvia Escárcega is Co-Chair, Juan Zevallos is Secretary, and Benjamin Ardití, Robin Delugan, and David Smile are our Council Members. We discussed ways to improve CPP participation and communication to explore developing publications, providing scholarship funds, and to seek connections between members and those working on similar themes in Brazil for LASA2009. Marc Zimmerman and Benjamin Ardití will serve as program coordinators for LASA2009 Track 8 (Culture, Power & Political Subjectivities). Once again the Section has sufficient members to merit four sessions for the next Congress.

Decentralization and Sub-national Governance

Alfred Montero, Chair

Twelve members of the Section were present for the business meeting. After greetings, I reported on recent uses of Section funds, including monies to provide a paper award for the 2004 meeting (to Rodrigo Mardones) and to support the travel costs of an Argentine graduate student, Gabriel Vommaro. For LASA2006 and 2007 each paper award will receive \$150 from the Section account. We opened the floor for nominations. None were received, however the Section agreed to keep the nomination process open via email until the end of November. One nomination, the paper presented by Imke Harber (2007 meeting) was

nominated by Chris Mitchell (NYU). It is presently under the consideration of the Section Council.

Nominations were then solicited to fill two vacancies on the Section council (seats held by Mimi Keck and Emma Zevallos which expire in November 2007). After the meeting in Montréal, Julian Durazo Herrmann (McGill University) and Annabelle Conroy (University of Central Florida) agreed to serve on the Council. Alfred P. Montero (Carleton College) will continue as Chair and Maria Escobar-Lemmon (Texas A&M) as Treasurer/Secretary. Council members are Rodrigo Mardones, Tulia Falleti, Julian Durazo Herrmann and Annabelle Conroy.

The members also discussed ways of distributing papers, links, and datasets. The idea of starting a wiki or blog was mentioned. The topic of setting up a website was also discussed.

The next agenda item concerned ideas for raising the profile of the Section. Among the topics under discussion was a special issue of the *LASA Forum*, forming contacts with IPSA (International Political Science Association), and starting a newsletter.

Defense, Democracy and Civil-Military Relations

Kristina Mani, Co-chair

At the Section business meeting in Montreal the topic that engaged members for most of the session was the expansion of the Section's agenda, to include the area of public security alongside the existing attention to national defense and civil-military relations. The idea arose because many members are involved in the study and policy making of public security issues, which concern the use of force in ways that are distinct from the use of force for national defense. Advocates of the expansion felt that it would enable the Section to further the study of this important area of public policy, and to advance the clearer comparative study of the differences and similarities between police and military functions. The decision to expand the Section's agenda was approved by the Section members after the Montreal meeting, through an electronic vote in which 41% of the members participated, with 90% in favor of the change (27 in favor, 3 against). The change also brings a new title for the Section: *Defense, Public Security and Democracy*, or *Defensa, Seguridad Pública y Democracia*. For the 2009 Congress, we envision sponsoring events that will examine both national defense and public security topics.

Finally, we elected new officers. David Pion-Berlin and Paz Tibiletti were elected unanimously as Co-chairs, replacing outgoing Co-chairs Kristina Mani and Francisco Rojas. Elected to the Section's

Program Committee were Mani and Héctor Saint-Pierre, who will serve in addition to continuing Committee members Tom Bruneau and Marcela Donadio.

Special thanks go to Tom Bruneau and Felipe Agüero for organizing this year's Section sessions. The first event, "U.S. Security and Defense Policy Towards Latin America," ably took up the challenge of analyzing the current trajectory of U.S. policy, despite the last-minute cancellation by the U.S. government officials who were slated to participate. The second event, "Military Reforms and Democracy – Assessing Setbacks, Accomplishments and Trajectories," focused attention on the continued need to pursue the study of civil-military relations with consideration for the range of political, social and economic trends that have emerged within the subregions of Latin America.

Economics and Politics

Leslie Elliott Armijo and Andrew Schrank, Co-Chairs

The Section is dedicated to the promotion of policy relevant dialogue as well as pure scholarship at the intersection of economics and politics. We therefore organized two roundtables for the 2007 LASA Congress. The first roundtable focused on the "Economics and Politics of Natural Resource Management on the Left." Panelists with experience in the natural resource sector or expertise on natural resource exporting countries discussed the management of natural resources by left-leaning governments in contemporary Latin America before a standing room only audience of academics and policymakers. The second roundtable asked what would—or perhaps should—come "after the Washington Consensus." Panelists with experience in the donor community addressed the current crisis in development thinking and entertained an array of questions and comments from an enthusiastic audience. We plan to post summaries of the statements prepared for both roundtables to the Section website—which will soon be transferred to a more permanent home at the University of New Mexico.

Our Section business meeting was attended by approximately two dozen Section members. We discussed the Section's history and goals, the year's activities and achievements, the possible uses of Section resources (including the subsidization of future roundtables and panels and the possibility of awarding an article or book prize), and Section governance. Andrew Schrank (University of New Mexico) and Diego Sánchez Ancochea (University of London) were elected Co-chairs of the Section for the coming term.

SECTION NEWS continued...

Ecuadorian Studies

Will Waters, Chair

At the business meeting in Montreal, the secretary-treasurer reported on the status of the Section. The Section has members in Latin America, Europe, Japan, and North America. Recent expenditures were for publication of the collected papers from the *3er Encuentro*, \$500 each for the travel expenses of two scholars, and our share of the reception held with the Peru Section.

President Will Waters reported on and invited discussion on the following topics: 1. The developing relation between the Canadian Association of Latin American Studies and LASA as a result of the meeting in Montreal; 2. The issue of providing travel funds for people who come to the summer Quito conference from other parts of the country, who organize a session, or who are invited for a special reason (Liisa North raised this issue); 3. The upcoming *4to Encuentro de los Ecuatorianistas*, (Quito, summer 2008; the issues are timing and appreciation for assistance from FLACSO Sede Quito); 4. The imminent publication of the collected papers from the *3er Encuentro*; and 5. Publication of Marc Becker and Kim Clark's book on the state and highland Indians (University of Pittsburgh Press).

Nominations were solicited for Section offices and elections conducted. The results of the elections are as follows: Will Waters, reelected as Chair; Scott McKinney, reelected as Secretary-Treasurer; Michael Handelsman, Luciano Martinez, and Ximena Sosa-Buchholz, reelected as Section council members; and Carmen Martinez replaced Jorge Leon as Section council member.

Finally, several other topics were discussed. The question of reactivating the archive of Aurelio Espinosa Polit was raised and a brief discussion was held on how to help scholars get to the LASA Congress in Rio for 2009. LASA support is decided late and only 17% of the applicants are supported. Will Waters encouraged members to place more publications on the Section's website. Liisa North announced her recent article with Luciano Martinez.

Educación y Políticas Educativas en América Latina

Eulalio Velázquez Licea, Co-chair

En el Hotel Fairmont Queen Elizabeth, el día jueves 6 de septiembre se realizó el Business Meeting de la Sección, organizado por el Co-Chair Dr. Eulalio Velázquez Licea, de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional (México) con el apoyo y colaboración de la Dra. María Isabel da Cunha (UNISINOS, Brasil), también Co-Chair de la Sección, contando con 31 asistentes.

El salón fue insuficiente para el público asistente, por lo que la sesión se realizó en el pasillo contiguo a dicho salón, ofreciéndose un informe general de la actividad de la Sección en el periodo abril 2006 a septiembre 2007, en el cual la actividad principal se limitó a fortalecer la Sección e incrementar su membresía. La lista oficial de miembros en ese momento es 40 menos de los miembros que habían estado inscritos al recibir los co-chairs la responsabilidad de la Sección. También se mencionó que por alguna razón ajena a los organizadores faltaban de incluir en la lista al menos a otros diez miembros. Se lamentó, también, que prácticamente no hubiésemos contado con Travel Grants, lo que hizo que algunos paneles no se presentaran. Se planteó la necesidad de modificar el formato de la Sección, al ya no elegir dos co-chairs, sino elegir un comité representativo que permita desarrollar un trabajo efectivo en todo el continente, por lo que se propuso se organizara, siempre siguiendo la normativa de LASA, con un Chair, un Secretario-Tesorero y dos Consejeros.

Una vez realizada la elección, el Comité quedó constituido de la siguiente manera: Dr. Rodolfo Rincones Delgado (UTEP, USA) Chair de la Sección; Dra. Cleoni María Barbosa Fernandes (UNISINOS, Brasil) Secretaria Tesorera; Profra. Martha Esther Nepomneschi (UBA, Argentina) Consejera; Dr. Daniel Schugurensky (U. de Toronto, Canadá) Consejero.

Una vez nombrada la directiva se retomaron las ideas que inicialmente externara el Dr. Velázquez de fortalecer la Sección a través del trabajo de sus miembros y de sus productos de investigación, relacionándolos más con los aspectos de tipo social, político y económico que actualmente se viven en Latinoamérica, para ello se propuso como actividades prioritarias del Comité: Promover la afiliación a LASA y a la Sección de Educación; diseñar una página de la Sección, donde se pueda interactuar más con sus integrantes y se llegue fortalecidos a LASA2009 en Río de Janeiro, Brasil; se diera más importancia a los temas que se relacionen con la realidad socio-política-económica de la educación en América Latina. También se promovieran más paneles para el próximo Congreso.

Environment

John Soluri, Chair

John Soluri opened the business meeting by presenting an update on Section membership and budget, and solicited items for the agenda. He raised questions about membership and reported on the Section Chairs Meeting. The most significant issue for the Environment Section is that LASA is receiving a growing number of requests for travel scholarships. Only 17% of applicants received support to travel to Montreal. Charlie Hale expressed frustration that the total dollar amount awarded is rising but the need is rising even faster.

New Section officers through 2009 include: Sherrie Bayer, Co-Chair; Kate McCaffrey, Co-Chair; Jim Bass, Listserv Manager; and David Barkin, Timmons Roberts, Regina Root and John Soluri, Council Members. Note: The Section chose to eliminate positions beyond co-chairs, since the Secretariat provides all meaningful data on membership and budget and also handles disbursements of Section funds. Elected officers represent a wide range of disciplines including anthropology, economics, history, literature, political science, and sociology.

In late July, the Section announced a \$500.00 travel grant for LASA Montreal. We received only one applicant whose paper was not clearly linked to the major themes typically explored by Environment Section panels. Therefore, no grants were awarded. However, attendees supported the idea and urged that announcements for LASA2009 be made earlier. The Section also needs to consider increasing the amount of the award so that it can cover a higher percentage of expenses likely incurred by international travel. We are encouraging U.S.-based, non-student, Section members to donate an additional \$5.00/year to ensure that we can sustain travel grants over the long haul.

One member raised the possibility of selling/serving fair trade coffee/sustainably produced food items. The fact that LASA2009 will not be held in a conference hotel expands options for "alternative" food/drink. The group also discussed organizing a field trip in conjunction with the conference. The Section also could sponsor a film/documentary screening (possibly in conjunction with the LASA Film Festival). Finally members discussed the possibility of making travel grants open to filmmakers and other Latin American "cultural workers" whose works are inspired by environmental themes.

Ethnicity, Race and Indigenous Peoples

Mario Blaser, 2006-2007 Chair, and Jerome Branche, 2008-2009 Chair

The Ethnicity, Race and Indigenous Peoples' business meeting was conducted on Thursday the 6th. The agenda included the introduction of recently elected new council members. We had issued a call for nominations on July 5th. Douglas Carranza was self-nominated to be Secretary Treasurer and Jerome Branche was the only nominee for Chair. Three other candidates ran for council seats. The results of the elections were as follows: Elena Cirkovic, Victor Montejo, and Jan Rus. As it turned out, when Jerome became president, we had an additional seat on the council, so all three candidates were named to the council, which is currently constituted as follows: Jerome Branche, Chair; Douglas Carranza Mena, Secy Treasurer; Marc Becker, Sylvia Escarcega, Victor Montejo, Elena Cirkovic, and Jan Rus, Council Members.

The following point in the agenda was a discussion of plans for the ERIP-LACES conference: members were encouraged to propose panels. To date the plans for the first ERIP conference are proceeding well. The response to the Call For Papers has exceeded our expectations and we anticipate a very successful event. This term we also need to execute our plan for fundraising so as to bring our other projects to fruition.

A report on activities performed during the past term was presented: highlights were the creation of the Indigenous and Afro-descendant Travel Fund, the permission obtained from the LASA Executive to fundraise, and ongoing plans for web development.

Film Studies

Gilberto M. Blasini, Chair

Twenty-four members (16% of the Section) attended the Film Studies business meeting in Montreal, Canada. The increase in membership entitles the Section to have three sessions during the 2009 Brazil Congress. The Section provided grants to two Latin American scholars who participated in the Film Studies Section's special sessions, Roberto Parejar from Bolivia, and Fernando Martín-Peña from Argentina.

Film Studies organized two special sessions for the Congress: "Reassessing Contemporary Latin American Cinema" (with Kathleen Newman, Laura Podalsky, Jorge Ruffinelli, Roberto Pareja, and Isabel Arredondo) and "Interdisciplinary Dialogues between Film Studies and Latin American Studies" (Patrice Petro, Randal

Johnson, Cristina Venegas, Fernando Martín-Peña, Gilberto Blasini). In addition, the business meeting included a very useful presentation by Jesús Alonso-Regalado, from the Section on Scholarly Research and Resources (SRR). He provided information about online scholarly resources related to Latin American media. Finally, we discussed possible topics for the Rio Congress. The list of topics includes: Latin American film industries and their changes due to digital technologies; Cinephila and reception/audience studies; Role of and/or history of film schools in Latin America; Alternative cinematic formats/Latin American shorts; Documentaries and social movements, indigenous videomaking; Focus on film directors/relationship to theater.

The Section conducted elections via email after the Congress. The names of the newly-elected officers are: Rafael Hernandez Rodriguez, Co-chair; Emperatriz Arreaza-Camero, Co-chair; Carolina Rocha, Secretary/Treasurer; and Isabel Arredondo and Beatriz Urraca, EC Members.

Haiti/Dominican Republic

Henry (Chip) Carey, Chair

The Haiti and Dominican Republic Section had a successful Section panel and business meeting. We are hoping that Section members can come to Brazil in 2009, where the connections between the African diaspora on Hispanola and in Brazil will make for important scholarly contributions. We also hope to link up with the many Brazilian scholars of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, who have never been able to travel to a LASA conference. Finally, we are planning to have a best paper award at next year's conference on Haiti and/or the Dominican Republic by a graduate student and a best book award on the field. The newsletter will provide further details on these subjects. Chip Carey and Emelio Betances were elected co-chairs of the Section. We are seeking new leadership following the next Congress, as we have served longer than is desirable.

Health, Science and Society

Ann Blum, Co-chair

For LASA 2007 the Section on Health, Science and Society organized a panel entitled "Nature, Science, and the State in Latin America: Reflections on the Work of Nancy Stepan." Panelists Anne-Emanuelle Birn, Julia Rodríguez, Alexandra Stern, Steven Palmer, and Gilberto Hochman examined insights they had gained from Stepan's work on Latin American eugenics, scientific inquiry, and public health and discussed

Stepan's influence on their own research and on others working on social and political aspects of science and medicine. Nancy Stepan herself commented on the papers. She discussed her new work on the scientific and social dimensions of eradication campaigns, in particular the eradication of malaria, and suggested new directions for research.

The Section also held its first competition for Best Article or Book Chapter. The board reviewed submissions and awarded the prize to Gabriela Soto Laveaga for her article, "Uncommon Trajectories: Steroid Hormones, Mexican Peasants, and the Search for a Wild Yam," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 36:4 (December 2005): 743-760.

The prize was announced at the Section business meeting, with a quorum in attendance. Co-Chairs Ann Blum and Ann Zulawski reported on Section activities and issues discussed in the Section Chairs meeting. Attending members then discussed preparation for LASA 2009.

The Section's new officers are: Co-Chairs, Ana María Kapelus-Poppi, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, and Adam Warren, University of Washington, Seattle; Secretary-Treasurer, Florencia Peña, National School of Anthropology and History, Mexico City; Board Members, Claudia Agostoni, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City, Gilberto Hochman, Casa de Oswaldo Cruz/Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), Heather McCrea, Kansas State University, and Julia Rodríguez, University of New Hampshire.

Labor Studies

Cirila Quintero, Chair

Section elections were conducted and the new offices are the following: Kirsten Sehnbruch, Chair (Center for Latin American Studies, UC Berkeley); Maggie Gray, Secretary-Treasurer (Adelphi University, New York); and Carolina Bank Munoz and Andrew Schrank, Councilors.

The Section business meeting was celebrated on September 6 and was chaired by Cirila Quintero, Section President. The issues treated were: membership and finances, nominations to the new Committee to serve until LASA2009, sponsorship of the Session and showing of Film "Maquilapolis," the prize for the best article of labor studies "Changes in relations between the state and independent unions: Mexico under Fox's Presidency" by Jean Francois Mayer, invitations to submit themes for the next LASA

SECTION NEWS continued...

Congress, and challenges for the next Committee.

The Section's Congress sessions were joined with Social Movement and Class Struggles; in total the track had 29 panels. The Section also sponsored two panels: "The Spread of 'Wal-Martization' in the Americas: Comparative Labor and Developmental Impacts of Globalized Retail and Sourcing Networks" and "Labor & Economic Rights Advocacy in the Americas: Mechanisms Central to Coalition-building, Protest and Political Mobilization." The Section also sponsored the showing of "Maquilapolis" in the LASA Film Festival with the film winning recognition from the Association.

Law and Society in Latin America (Lasla)
Renzo Honores and Mark Ungar, Co-chairs

At the Lasla business meeting in Montreal, members and friends discussed activities of the past year and plans for upcoming years on three main areas of Lasla's work. The first was the Maggi Popkin Award, which the Section gives to an outstanding Congress paper on the law and society. The winner of the LASA2007 Popkin Award was Máximo Langer for his paper, "Revolution in Latin American Criminal Procedure: Diffusion of Legal Ideas from the Periphery."

The second focus of the meeting was the Lasla website, which was established in 2007 as a source of news, publications, links, and other information on Latin American law. To expand the website, members suggested adding links to other law associations, creating listservs to facilitate communications, and asking members to send in bibliographies. Several members also volunteered to create a monthly bulletin for the Section, which will be sent to all members and then posted on the website.

The third main issue was on panels for LASA2009, which the co-chairs will initiate with a call for proposals. The final order of business was the election of a new Section co-chair. The Section's co-chairs are elected for three year terms. In Montreal, the term of Renzo Honores ended, and Kif Augustine-Adams (Professor of Law, J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University) was elected as co-chair to replace him. The term of Co-Chair Mark Ungar will end at LASA2009, when an election will be held to replace him.

Peru
Paulo Drinot, Co-chair

The Section's business meeting was attended by 39 members. The secretary-treasurer, Christina Ewig, gave her report on the Section's finances and on the successful travel grant campaign which raised \$1,708.04. Travel grants were awarded to five members based in Peru. Unfortunately only two, Ponciano del Pino Huaman and Ralph Willem Hoetmer, were able to attend LASA. Co-chair Paulo Drinot, then gave a report on (i) the three panels organized by the Section, one of which was unfortunately cancelled, (ii) the new book and article prizes, which were awarded, respectively to William P. Mitchell, Professor of Anthropology and Freed Professor in the Social Sciences at Monmouth University in New Jersey and Lisa J. Laplante, of the Praxis Institute for Social Justice, and (iii) the election of the new executive, which is now composed of Elena Alvarez and Carlos Ivan Degregori as Co-chairs, Joanna Drzewieniecki as Treasurer-Secretary, and Rocío Quispe-Agnoli and Iñigo García-Bryce as Council Members. Mary Beth Tierney Tello, Laura Balbuena, and Mark Cox continue as executive members until Rio. The new initiatives agreed to by the membership included (i) following up on the visa denial to a Section member, (ii) a restructuring of the Section's travel grants, (iii) the organization of a Peru Section-sponsored conference in Peru, and (iv) a statement on the Pisco earthquake, which is now on the Section website.

Political Institutions
Joy Langston, Chair

A paper award for the best paper delivered by a Section member at LASA2006 was given to Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro (Columbia University) for her paper, "The Local Connection: Local Government Performance and Satisfaction with Democracy in Argentina." The Chair thanked the paper award committee members Maria Escobar-Lemmon, Bonnie Fields, and Steve Wuhs for all their hard work.

A new chair was elected, Aníbal Pérez-Liñan (Department of Political Science, University of Pittsburgh). Joy Langston was elected the new secretary. The Councilors for the Section are Miguel Centellas (Dickenson College), Kirk Hawkins (Brigham Young University), Peter Siveles (Wake Forest University), and Steve Wuhs (Redlands College).

Several issues were discussed by the assembled members, including the idea of placing a blog on the Section website as a space for interesting links, new paper abstracts, and other news.

Miguel Centellas volunteered to be in charge of the blog. The need to update the website more frequently was also noted.

The Chair discussed several points of interest that had been communicated by Charles Hale, Milagros Pereyra-Rojas, and Sandra Klinzing in the Section Chair Meeting, including the *LASA Forum* article submission policy, the session tracks at LASA Congresses, and the scheduling of panel sessions.

Sexualities Studies
Raul Rubio and Jossiana Arroyo, Co-chairs

The Section election results are the following: Ruben Rios (University of Puerto Rico) and Horacio Sívori (CLAM, Rio de Janeiro), Co-chairs; Guillermo de los Reyes (University of Houston), Secretary.

At the Section business meeting the co-chairs discussed the *LASA Forum* issue. Members agreed that publications give visibility to the Section and that they should be promoted, if not in the *Forum* than by other academic venues. One suggestion was that of publishing a special issue on Queer Sexualities by the *Latin American Perspectives Journal*.

A new web site for the Section had been proposed by past Section members. Some members suggested the creation of a "My Space" web page, which will be created by Rolando Longoria (UC Santa Barbara) and Carlos Manuel Chavarría.

Discussion then turned to organization for the LASA2009 Congress. Section members decided on a pre-conference event. An organizing committee will work not only with panels for the pre-conference (associated with Human Rights, Reproductive Rights, and coordinated by CLAM), but also with performance and entertainment. Horacio Sívori and Claudio Medeiros discussed their respective plans and were selected as the Organizing Committee LASA2009 in Rio de Janeiro.

Members then discussed future prizes for the Section, a Junior-Professor Essay Prize and a Senior Scholar Prize. Prize names suggested included the "Silvia Molloy Prize" and the "Carlos Monsiváis Prize." It was not decided what monetary value would be offered.

Section members then turned to the selection criteria and the responsibilities of next year's co-chairs, in preparing the themes for the panels (for LASA2009) and organizing a pre-conference in Rio de Janeiro. Members decided that the

Section needed someone who had contact with local organizations and Rubén Ríos and Horacio Sivori were elected unanimously. Sivori will serve as the main contact person for LASA2009.

Southern Cone Studies

Laura Demaría, Chair

The Southern Cone Studies Section held elections during the summer. Laura Demaría (University of Maryland) is the new Chair, Eva-Lynn Jagoe (University of Toronto) is the Secretary, and Angel Tuninetti (University of West Virginia) continues as Treasurer. The Section also now has three official liaisons: Soledad Falabella (Universidad Diego Portales) in Chile, Teresa Porzecanski (Universidad de la República) in Uruguay, and Álvaro Fernández Bravo (Universidad de San Andrés) in Argentina.

During the business meeting in Montreal, Section members decided to start working on the following issues: 1) To increase the number of members in the Section to have more panels in the official program; (we have already accomplished something on this issue; for LASA Rio 2009 the Section will have four panels instead of the traditional three; 2) to create a Travel Fund supported by members' donations which would allow the Section to help our colleagues with no institutional support; 3) to have a Pre-LASA in Rio or at least a "mesa de trabajo" (either before or after) in order to expand communication among scholars who share an interest in the Southern Cone; and 4) to intensify an interdisciplinary approach in our Section's Panels or "mesas redondas."

Venezuelan Studies

Cathy Rakowski, Secretary/Treasurer, Elizabeth Nichols and Kim Morse

The meeting began with a welcome by outgoing President Dan Hellinger, followed by his report on activities of the council during the prior 18 months. These included a report on how the three Section-sponsored panels for LASA2007 were selected, an update on the status of the webpage, and results of the writing competition. This was followed by outgoing Secretary-Treasurer Cathy Rakowski's report on membership, the financial situation, and her report on the elections that were conducted in May by e-mail. A brief discussion ensued regarding outgoing Council's recommendation on a close vote and members present voted to ratify the results of the elections (per LASA rules for Sections) and council's recommendation.

The new officers and council members are: Dan Levine, President, Kim Morse and Elizabeth Nichols, Co-Secretary-Treasurer, Luís Gómez Calcaño (CENDES UCV), Patricia Márquez (IESA) and Verónica Zubillaga (USB), new council members resident in Venezuela, and Jennifer McCoy (University of Georgia), Charles Briggs (UC Berkeley), and Francisco Rodriguez (Wesleyan University), new council members resident outside Venezuela. Cathy Rakowski will take over management of the Section website, which has not been updated for quite a while; we have been looking for a new web manager for several years. The web page will be hosted by Ohio State University. The new website should be up in January 2008.

The Section sponsored three panels at LASA2007. A call was circulated several times prior to the LASA deadline for panel submissions. There were 3 panel proposals submitted; all were deemed excellent by the council. Winners of the paper competition will receive a one-year membership to LASA and the Section plus payment of registration for LASA2009. In the Student Category, Manuel A. Gómez (Stanford University) won for "All in the Family" with Honorable Mention going to Paula Vásquez (Escuela de Altos Estudios de París and EHESS-IRIS, France) for "Rituales de Dignificación." The winner for Professional paper, published, was Sujatha Fernandes (Queens College, CUNY) for "Barrio Women in Chávez's Venezuela." The awardee for Professional paper, unpublished was María Pilar García-Guadilla (Universidad Simón Bolívar) for "The Bolivarian Comités de Tierra Urbana: Between Autonomy and Political Cooptation" (presented at LASA2006). ■

FORD-LASA SPECIAL PROJECTS - FOURTH CYCLE

LASA is pleased to announce the *fourth cycle* of the Ford-LASA Special Projects competition, made possible by a contribution by the Ford Foundation to the LASA Endowment Fund. Funds provided will support such activities as transregional research initiatives, conferences, working groups, the development of curriculum and teaching resources, and similar projects organized and carried out by LASA Sections or by ad hoc groups of LASA members. Proposers are encouraged to think creatively about how this funding might be used to advance the principles of hemispheric collaboration among Latin American Studies scholars and teachers. Proposals that do not assign priority to this objective will not be considered for funding.

Proposals should identify the participants in the proposed activity, the objectives of the project, and the process by which those objectives are to be achieved. The total amount requested in each proposal may not exceed \$12,500. Grants may be combined with other sources of funding, and may be used to initiate projects that continue with funding from other sources. No project or group will be funded more than once.

Proposals of no more than five (5) single-spaced pages in length must be received by the LASA Secretariat by **March 15, 2008**. Proposals will be reviewed by a panel of four LASA members appointed by the President for each program cycle, chaired by the Vice President of LASA. Applicants will be informed of the results within two months after the submission deadline.

Preference will be given to projects that involve transregional collaboration in the Western Hemisphere, and which are intended to result in publication of project results. It may be possible for LASA to disseminate project results, including conference papers, through its website, which would not preclude eventual publication in other media. Project directors are encouraged to consider submitting a panel proposal based on their work for presentation at the June 2009 LASA Congress. Within 18 months of the announcement of the award recipients, the project directors will be required to submit a report on the activities undertaken with Special Project funding, suitable for publication in the *LASA Forum*.

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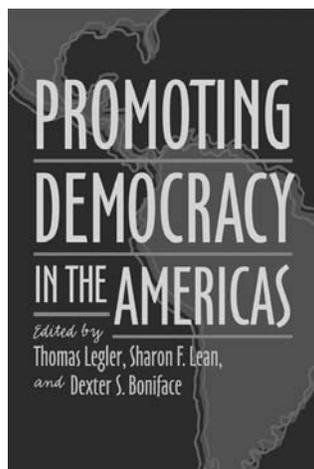
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OBSERVATORY ON INEQUALITY IN LATIN AMERICA

The goal of the Observatory on Inequality in Latin America is to foster attention and research on social and economic inequalities in the region. The project, funded by the Ford Foundation, is directed by Dr. Merike Blofield at the University of Miami's Center for Latin American Studies. We would like to draw the attention of LASA forum readers to the following resources:

- The centerpiece of the project is a [portal](http://www.observatoryla.org) with information about the project and links to institutions, databases, and publications and reports that deal with social and economic inequality in Latin America. The web address is www.observatoryla.org. There is also a discussion board for sharing information and making inquiries.

- The Observatory will give out **three individual and three institutional grants of US \$5,000 each in 2008**. The individual grants will be given to individual research projects, and are open to both scholars (including graduate students) and practitioners from any country who are doing research on inequality in Latin America. The institutional grants will be given to research teams in order to enable them to advance our knowledge on inequality in Latin America and to contribute to the web portal resources. The deadline for applications is March 14th, 2008. Please go to the website for more information. You can also contact the Director at observatoryla@miami.edu.

- The Observatory runs a [working paper series](http://www.observatoryla.org) that publishes work on inequality in Latin America. We welcome a broad range of papers from any discipline, both theoretical/conceptual and empirical. See the web portal for more information.

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References available upon request.

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The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) is the largest professional association in the world for individuals and institutions engaged in the study of Latin America. With over 5,000 members, twenty-five percent of whom reside outside the United States, LASA is the one association that brings together experts on Latin America from all disciplines and diverse occupational endeavors, across the globe.

LASA's mission is to foster intellectual discussion, research, and teaching on Latin America, the Caribbean, and its people throughout the Americas, promote the interests of its diverse membership, and encourage civic engagement through network building and public debate.



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