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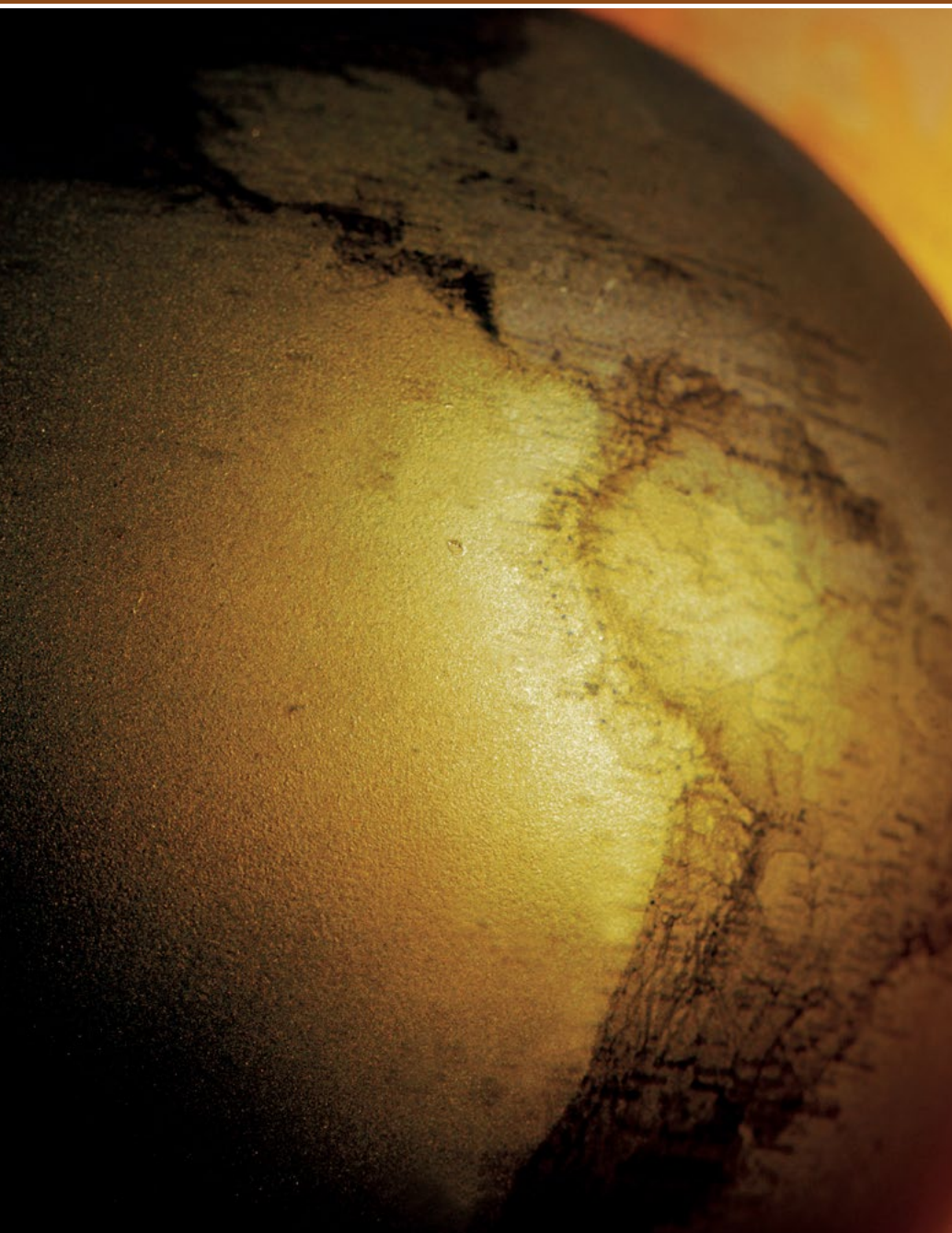


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From the President

by MERILEE GRINDLE | Harvard University | merilee_grindle@harvard.edu

My colleague June Carolyn Erlick recently asked me, “Don’t you think it’s interesting that we who know something about Latin America might have good insights into events that are currently occurring in Egypt and other countries in the Middle East?” She went on to speculate about how Latin America’s experiences with military engagement in politics and its citizens’ long commitment to the construction of democratic governments have contributed to much more general analyses of the causes and consequences of deep political divisions, violence and repression, the dynamics of widespread civic mobilization, and collective efforts to broker and consolidate transitions to more effective and equitable societies.

Her comments were arresting, I thought, for suggesting that the most frequently voiced rationale for area studies—that such a focus leads to deep knowledge of countries, regions, cultures, and societies—needs to acknowledge that depth in knowledge goes hand in hand with breadth in understanding. From this expanded perspective, and whether the discipline is literature, language, history, politics, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, economics, or the environment, scholars in Latin American studies work with concepts and frameworks that can be helpful in understanding fundamental human interactions, and these in turn can provide insight into events happening elsewhere.

Of course, Egypt’s experience must be understood on its own terms, and clearly it and other countries of the Middle East have unique histories, cultures, challenges, and opportunities. Nevertheless, the deep knowledge we have of Latin America’s past and present may hold examples and lessons for those struggling to create peaceful and democratic societies elsewhere. Indeed, our studies and experiences regularly require us

to sort through what is unique to time and place and what is more transcendent. Depth and breadth are also present in the multidisciplinary that characterizes area studies centers and institutes. While most of us come to such organizational settings with training in a specific field, we can’t help learning more broadly about cultures, environments, and historical legacies when we meet, discuss, and debate.

How are these reflections relevant to LASA? At our Congress in Washington in 2013, over 40 directors of Latin American centers and institutes met to consider how the Association might encourage discussions among them and advance common objectives of research, teaching, and outreach. The discussion was lively and quickly turned to the need to ensure that Latin American studies centers and institutes had an appropriate and relevant explanation for the benefits they bring to educational institutions. In a post-Cold War and increasingly global context, what do such centers have to offer the worlds of scholarship and practice?

The meeting closed with a commitment to organize a workshop to focus on this question at the 2014 Congress in Chicago. As a director of a center for Latin American studies, I am looking forward to the workshop discussion and the opportunity to learn from the experiences of others. I suspect that all of us are confronted by the dilemma of reconciling scarce resources, high expectations from colleagues and students, and skeptical attitudes from university administrations. How different centers have tried to deal with such constraints and demands is certain to be illuminating. Together, we might generate a significant statement about the value and contributions of our organizations, reflecting both depth and breadth. In addition, I hope that this will be another



opportunity to consider how the conference theme of “Democracy and Memory” is one that encourages us to investigate and discuss both deeply and broadly.

In planning for this workshop, and the many panels and other events for Chicago, the new annual schedule of LASA Congresses has, of course, been a challenge to the Secretariat, Program Co-chairs Florencia Garramuño and Raúl Madrid, and to those who have taken time and effort to propose papers and panels. This year, 622 sessions have been proposed, an increase of 21 over last year; 1,174 individuals have submitted paper proposals independent of panels, 151 more than last year. Both of these data points indicate strong interest in LASA Congresses and are a challenge to planners who are responsible for reviewing and scheduling a large number of excellent panels across many different disciplines.

Indeed, we are still adjusting to the quicker pace needed for planning and responding to deadlines. In particular, deadlines for joining LASA in order to submit proposals and request travel funding have been an on-going concern of members and Secretariat alike. This year, the Secretariat extended deadlines to ensure broad participation and it will continue to make efforts to keep us on track for the annual event. Members and would-be members also need to anticipate the deadlines that appear under “Important Dates” on the LASA website. With another year’s experience to reflect upon, we should be on schedule for subsequent meetings.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE REAL WORLD

The State of Latin American Democracies in the Early Twenty-First Century

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I am excited about the program that is being prepared for the Chicago meeting and am deeply grateful to the track and section chairs who are working to ensure that we have a stimulating and inclusive Congress and that we can maintain our goal of being both deep and broad. Florencia and Raúl are working overtime to ensure an excellent program, the track and section chairs are on schedule to meet deadlines, numerous committees are engaged in the hard work of reading materials and discussing awards, the Film Festival is taking shape, and the Secretariat is making sure that the Congress flows smoothly and efficiently for all. I think we can all look forward to a great meeting in Chicago in May. I look forward to seeing you there. ■

In an effort to include different voices and perspectives from key players in Latin American politics, we have invited former Ecuadorian president Jamil Mahuad (1998–2000) to provide his analysis of the state of Latin American democracies in this second decade of the twenty-first century. He contends that democracies must pass a test of legitimacy to understand their true nature. In essence, they must be examined based on their legitimacy of origin, legitimacy of behavior, and legitimacy of results. President Mahuad is not very optimistic about the results of this legitimacy test and leaves the reader with a warning based on neuroscience theories of perception: beware of those who destroy Democracy by using democracy. ■

Elementary, My Dear Watson: Neurons That Fire Together Stay Wired Together

by JAMIL MAHUAD | Former President of Ecuador | jmahuad@law.harvard.edu

Democracy and Politics

If politics is “the method to decide who gets what and who pays the price,” there are two prices to consider: a “prize” that some people get and a “price” which some others pay. The separation between payers and beneficiaries, winners and losers is clearly connected to politics. Societies adopt a system and an accepted set of rules and practices to play this distributive game.

Democracy, “the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time,” according to Winston Churchill, has proven to be the most popular way to exercise politics nowadays. Democratic rules decide the *whos* (who will participate and how; who will make the final call on contentious issues) and the *whats* (what are the stakes, the options, the rewards).

Democracy appears to many as a solid, clear, precise, and self-evident concept. To others, democracy looks like a porous, fuzzy, too general, ambiguous idea that requires adjectives and qualifications to be properly grasped.

What are the essential elements of democracy? What gives democracy its specificity?

In Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, the president described a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people.” His dictum contains the three essential tests of democratic legitimacy:

Legitimacy 1: Legitimacy of origin. The government should be “of” the people. The will of “We, the people” expressed through an open and fair electoral process decides who has the right to govern.

Legitimacy 2: Legitimacy of procedures. A democratic government should be presided over “by” authorities representative of the population who enforce the rule of law.

Legitimacy 3: Legitimacy of results. By leading economic growth and applying redistributive policies, governments work “for” the people. Governments should serve first and foremost the interests of the majority of the population while respecting the rights of the minorities.

Many governments in developing countries have consistently failed at least one legitimacy test. Freely elected governments in Latin America in the “lost decade” of the 1980s were not able to promote economic growth and social progress. They failed the third legitimacy test.

In the 1970s’ Cold War atmosphere, authoritarian regimes deposed many democratic governments arguing that to stop communism and eliminate chaos (Legitimacy 3) compensated for the lack of legitimacy of origin and method. They failed legitimacy tests 1 and 2.

Some elected governments have blamed the inadequacy of institutions for their incapacity to lead development. They orchestrated *autogolpes* sacrificing the legitimacy of behavior at the altar of the frequently illusory legitimacy of results.

The present is an excellent time for Legitimacy 3 in Latin America. Since 2003 the region’s exports have increased in volume and price due especially to the strong growth of the Chinese economy. However, Legitimacy 1 and 2 suffer in the few places where government controls the independent media.

This article reflects on the building up of Legitimacy 1. Neuroscience, by explaining human decision making, contributes to clarify how voters decide which authorities and rules would come “of” the people.

Neuroscience and Decision Making

Two famous political expressions attempt to prescribe political practices: Nazi propagandist Goebbels said, “Repeat a lie one thousand times and it becomes the truth”; Machiavelli wrote, “To govern is to make believe.” What does neuroscience have to say about these statements?

Neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield, considered the “greatest living Canadian” in the 1960s, demonstrated that our brain collects and retrieves memories by bundling together events and their associated feelings, storing them in a physically accessible part of our brain, and constructing a neural pathway to reach them. If a certain stimulus triggers the playback key, we not only remember but involuntarily relive the stored experience with its original intensity. We can discover the impulse that evokes the positive or negative stored memory.

In 1964, while working for President Lyndon B. Johnson’s presidential campaign, Tony Schwartz applied the same basic understanding of the human brain’s activity to generate his insightful Resonance Theory of Communication and tested it in practice with the “Daisy ad,” poised to become the most famous TV ad in political history.

Campaigns are not the right moment to educate the audience, to give them new information to process, Schwartz thought. How a voter feels about a candidate determines how she votes. Any communication activates unconscious brain networks; effective communication triggers

the “right” one to elicit the expected emotional response. Voting is not a rational decision-making process; it is rather a highly emotional one.

When accused of manipulating people, Schwartz argued that the messenger could not do anything without the receiver’s cooperation. In the worst case, he said, he would be accused of “partipulating” because he offers the stimulus and the other provides the reaction. Communication is a collaborative effort. Electoral campaigns will never be the same after Schwartz’s theory. Marshall McLuhan called him the “guru of electronic media.”

Professor Gary Orren has been teaching the very popular course “Persuasion: the Science and Art of Effective Influence” for decades at the Harvard Kennedy School. The golden rule of persuasion is to know your audience, he says. Whom are you speaking to? They would be persuaded if they perceive that your message is salient (relevant to their lives), simple (easy to understand and remember), and sound (appealing to their rationality).

George Lakoff shocked our political minds by defending the idea that we think inside frames coming from the “metaphors we live by.” The mind is in the brain, he believes. As we can’t rationally control our neural system, most of our reasoning is unconscious, hence emotional.

Daniel Kahneman, the first psychologist to win the Nobel Prize in economics (2002), in his best seller *Thinking, Fast and Slow* explains that humans have two systems of thinking. System 1 is automatic, fast, hyperactive, nonrational, and cannot be deactivated at will; System 2 is slow, lazy, fact-based, and needs to be voluntarily engaged.

We spend most of our time in our emotional self, in System 1 (basically impressions and desires). System 2 follows system 1 (we believe our impressions and act on our desires) contextualizing them with explicit beliefs and deliberate choices.

Reflecting on the well-known “Invisible Gorilla Experiment,” Kahneman highlights how intensely focusing on an imposed task (counting ball passes and ignoring one of the teams) can make people effectively blind. “We can be blind to the obvious...be blind to our blindness.” No one who watches the video without knowing the task would miss the gorilla in the scene.

Airwaves Are to Elections What Airpower Is to War

Political consultants know that the act of voting is the corollary of a three-step process. The electoral campaign’s purpose is not to change the voter’s intention (final result) but to influence every instance of the voter’s decision making by working on the stimulus/associations network. Campaign communication strategies develop three objectives in sequence:

Step 1: Get name recognition. A person needs to “exist,” to get into the “political menu,” to be in the top of the mind recollection of the voter to become a viable candidate. Getting a recognizable name takes a lot of time and/or money. Competition is fierce. Newspapers, radio, and TV screens are already cluttered with familiar names and faces. Incumbents have the upper hand in Step 1.

Step 2: Win the favorability contest. Candidates evoke strong emotional reactions. That is why it is not possible to wrap them up nicely to “sell” them

like emotionally inert industrial products. The favorable/unfavorable ratio opens the space for increasing vote intention or limits it with a low ceiling cap.

Step 3: Harden the favorability ratio. Investigate the reasons for the emotional reaction expressed in Step 2. Unveil the trigger and the emotional/belief bundle associated with it. Discover what aspects of the candidate’s appearance, positions, or actions make the click. After understanding why voters like or dislike a candidate it is possible to measure the depth of their emotional reaction and figure out how to deactivate that circuit or create and activate an alternative one.

“Hard” voters—either for or against—are very difficult if not impossible to change due to their strong allegiance. They enter into their familiar stimulus/recollection groove and remain there. “Soft” voters, in contrast, can be influenced by the spreading of “information”—false or true—about any candidate.

Negative campaigns create or reinforce negative associations. They work at Step 3 in order to change Step 2, the favorable/unfavorable ratio.

The decision to vote for or against a candidate is the logical consequence of this process: if I know somebody (Step 1), have a favorable opinion about him/her (Step 2) based on solid reasons (Step 3), I will vote for him/her.

This process is public. In a mass society, it needs to be implemented through the mass media, the only mechanism to get to the eyes and ears of all voters. Voters have the right to access different perspectives on reality and evaluate them before making their choices. The legitimacy of origin is based on debate. Political debate clarifies

concepts, exposes risks, analyzes options and compares alternatives. It is democracy at work.

We lose this practice when economic or political powers control access to media. The control or monopoly of mass media plus the relentless repetition of a “unique selling proposition” is a poisonous combination for democracy. It substitutes propaganda in place of information. Later propaganda becomes ideology, the only valid truth that deserves to be disseminated.

Unfortunately, a few Latin American governments enthusiastically embrace the Orwellian Ministry of Truth concept. They suppress or capture independent media through blatant abuse of power, manipulation of judges, or economic asphyxia. The government-controlled media exclusively broadcast government propaganda; they saturate air and print spaces with ideology disguised as information. They cancel debates, eliminate discussion, disqualify, threaten, and ostracize opponents. Where is Legitimacy 1 in that atmosphere?

If we don’t understand the emotional mechanisms of human decision making, we will not realize how a totalitarian-inspired but research-based, strategically planned, artistically designed, massively broadcasted campaign inundates the voter’s System 1 and practically eliminates consideration of other options. Such a campaign destroys the essence of democracy while playing within apparently democratic rules.

If we are not aware of the modern mechanisms of persuasion we can naively support these totalitarian attitudes by, for example, certifying elections as clean and fair based on formal administrative procedures or election-day conduct like

organized lines in front of the voting booths.

The democratic spirit is resilient, however. Lawyers and computer programmers frequently remind us that we undo actions in the same way that we do them. To restore a democratic lifestyle we need to eliminate absolute truths and reopen the capacity to doubt, reframe, and disseminate antagonistic perspectives. We need to generate a critical mass, a choir of discordant voices, and guarantee them access to mass media. Redundancy here is not a vice but a virtue.

In summary, words, facial expressions, and body language activate neural circuits. The most-used brain circuits (neurons that fire together) become the default “thinking” (neurons stay wired together). We can easily mix illusion and reality through consistent repetition controlled by mass media that “nails” as a truth a bundle of carefully intertwined threads of emotional stimuli.

Beware of those that apply Goebbels’s “Repeat a lie one thousand times” aiming to achieve Machiavelli’s “To govern is to make believe” and cynically claim democratic titles. They are using democracy to destroy Democracy.

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More Power to the Executive: The State of Latin American Democracies in the Early Twenty-First Century

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In this issue, our contributors converge on the notion that twenty-first-century Latin American democracies are deeply flawed and perhaps not at all what people would expect three decades after the democratic transition in the region. They argue that Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Nicaragua are beginning to look more authoritarian and less like the liberal participatory democracy everyone expected to see in 2013. At the same time, Argentine democracy continues to show the deep contradictions that have afflicted it since the advent of *kirchnerismo*. In all cases, this new wave of democracy has served to increase the power of the executive eroding the emergence of liberal democracies.

Omar Sanchez-Sibony, from Texas State University, is perhaps the most adamant critic of the current state of affairs in the region. Arguing that the term “democracy” is itself problematic in describing the type of governments that have emerged in Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, he prefers to use the term “competitive authoritarianism” (a hybrid model of authoritarian regime types) to describe the new phenomenon. He further states that what we are really observing in the region is the advent of what Samuel Huntington called “political decay”; after all, democratic transitions do not always give way to stronger political institutionalization. María del Pilar García-Guadilla and Ana Mallen, from the Universidad Simón Bolívar in Venezuela, echo this sentiment by describing the ongoing polarization of the Venezuelan people, which has ultimately played into the hands of the executive. The Venezuelan Bolivarian project, or Socialism for the Twenty-First Century, inspired other similar regimes in the region, but according to the authors, these democratic initiatives were never really able to transcend their local character. The inability to formulate a

unifying vision for the country and the ongoing violence associated with this polarization have ultimately played into the hands of the Chávez/Maduro government, creating a powerful executive.

In Argentina, according to Maristella Svampa of the Universidad de la Plata, an entire decade of kirchnerismo allows us to see important trends in this political initiative. Plagued with contradictions from the beginning, kirchnerismo is perhaps more deeply rooted in the historical experience of Peronism than the current regime would like to believe. The author states that kirchnerismo clearly diverges from the experiences of other democratic initiatives in the region that tried to bring about more inclusion and popular participation. Instead, it was troubled from the very beginning by conflicts between its historical roots and its political agenda, its ability to connect with powerful multinational corporations, and its loyalty to the progressive middle class. The author believes that those contradictions are more likely to be exposed in the years to come, as Argentina’s experience increasingly evokes Gramsci’s “passive revolution,” specifically, the ability to bring about transformation and restoration while ultimately creating a hierarchical model of governance.

Two highly respected Latin American journalists—Raul Peñaranda, political analyst, journalist, and founder of the Bolivian newspaper *Página Siete*, and Mónica Almeida, the Quito editor of the Ecuadorian newspaper *El Universo*—provide us with powerful and detailed grassroots analyses of the daily challenges and contradictions inherent in the democracies of Bolivia and Ecuador. According to these authors, Evo Morales and Rafael Correa have astutely used democratic institutions to destroy the rule

of law. Peñaranda and Almeida maintain that government leaders have hijacked the national media and/or passed laws (Ley de Comunicación in Ecuador) that not only give them more power over the national discourse but at the same time are used to punish opposition voices. In both countries, the obsessive attention to the media has had negative implications for the freedom of the press. In a telling example, Almeida claims that Ecuadorian journalists are not able to discuss Julian Assange and Edward Snowden, even while the Ecuadorian government has offered or granted them asylum. Recent protests by CONAIE and other organizations demonstrate how various sectors of the population, including indigenous people, increasingly resent the current state of affairs in Ecuador. In Bolivia the president and vice president are able to appear as many as ten times a week in various media outlets to advance their political agenda, Peñaranda contends. Evo Morales and Rafael Correa have used revisions of their national constitutions to increase the power of the executive branch and ensure their ability to run for office again and again. The combination of legal manipulation and persecution of dissenting voices makes it impossible for any meaningful opposition to emerge. Indeed, government monopoly of most political institutions has allowed the Morales government a free hand in persecuting and imprisoning political opponents, forcing many to seek refuge in Brazil and elsewhere. In both countries, according to Peñaranda and Almeida, initial gains in inclusion and greater political participation have given way to massive state control of political institutions. They appear to describe the emergence of what seem to be almost *caudillo*-style leaders with a modern twist, who use modern technology and the mechanisms of democracy to get their message across. These contributions also

Democratic Breakdowns via a Thousand Blows in Latin America

by OMAR SANCHEZ-SIBONY | Texas State University | os17@txstate.edu

imply that committed journalists are increasingly risking their professions and their safety in an effort to make their governments accountable to the rule of law and to their constituents.

Paradoxically, the contributors in this debate are actually in agreement. They claim that democracy in Latin America (especially in Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Argentina) is being eroded and weakened by leaders who monopolize the structures of government and use the mechanisms of democracy to increase their power. In this way leaders are effectively able to provide the perception of participatory democracy while at the same time disenfranchising various sectors of the population in the name of preserving democracy. The authors here maintain that as voices are silenced, controlled, or co-opted, and as the rule of law is eroded, government rhetoric is increasingly in conflict with the experience of the majority of the people. The ability of these governments to revise constitutions to stay in power and to more boldly attack their opponents once they are reelected does not bode well for the future of democracy in Latin America, these authors assert. ■

Peru's drift toward electoral authoritarianism under Alberto Fujimori entailed a notable aberration in Latin America insofar as it deviated from hemispheric democratizing trends. While such hybrid regimes flourished in Africa and Asia in the 1990s, virtually all regimes in Latin America were, at a minimum, electoral democracies. The 1990s provided substantial empirical evidence that democratic consolidation—defined here as the deepening of democracy—would not be a linear process attained by the mere passage of time, as a good number of commentators implicitly assumed. The first decade of the 2000s has provided even stronger evidence underlining the formidable difficulties and obstacles on the road to consolidated democracy and lent credence to critics who contend that the concept of democratic consolidation is plagued with a teleological flavor. Events of recent years serve as a stark reminder, as the late Samuel Huntington noted, that political decay is just as common an outcome as political institutionalization.

Nondemocratic hybrid regimes are no longer rare specimens in Latin America. The region has witnessed the emergence of competitive authoritarianism by way of sustained assaults on democracy. As of 2013, at least four countries in the region are incorrectly and regularly referred to as democracies (whether with adjectives or as diminished forms): Venezuela, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and Bolivia. In truth, all fit the category of electoral authoritarianism. While a good many presidents in Latin America engage in sporadic executive assaults that undermine some aspect of democratic governance, what distinguishes rulers of competitive authoritarian regimes is that they act systematically to tilt all of the main arenas of political competition—elections, legislatures, judiciary, and the

mass media—in their favor, thereby ushering in an incumbency hyperadvantage.

That these regimes are all too often mislabeled may indicate that a good many Latin Americanists have yet to heed the call to define democracy more precisely by including the slope of the playing field; second, ideological reasons may work against an impartial assessment of these left-wing regimes on the part of some scholars. Many defenders of these regimes argue that Ecuador, Venezuela, and Bolivia are entering a new phase of participatory democracy and that their leaders have been democratically elected. However, a regime must first be deemed a democracy before it can be called a participatory democracy. (The claim that the Correa regime is participatory is particularly far-fetched given its concerted strategy to disorganize and undermine autonomous civil society organizations, including indigenous ones). The notion that these leaders have been democratically elected is also false as it applies to reelection contests and referenda—that is, virtually all electoral events except the very first one that thrust them into power. Electoral contests in Chávez's Venezuela (now Maduro's), Ortega's Nicaragua, Morales's Bolivia, or Correa's Ecuador have not been free (due to frequent violations of freedom of the press, coercion of state employees to vote for the incumbent, and at times, the de facto or de jure banning of opponents from participating) nor fair (the playing field is not level in the electoral arena because the electoral management body is controlled by the incumbent and because state resources are massively deployed to favor the incumbent as well). In consequence, these regimes simply do not pass the bar of minimalist electoral democracy. The onset of competitive authoritarianism will undermine the prospect that the afflicted countries shall attain democratic

consolidation in the foreseeable future as well as delay considerably the time frame in which they may achieve it. (One need only look at the deleterious legacies of the Fujimori decade for Peru's post-2000 democracy.) The reason is straightforward: democratic institutions have been manipulated and revamped to fit the rulers' political interests, perpetuating a cycle of institutional instability by way of undermining the acceptance of such rules and institutions (including tailor-made constitutions) on the part of current opponents and future politicians.

The appearance of self-sustaining nondemocratic hybrid regimes and their possible spread to yet more countries raises the obvious question: what causal factors undergird the onset of electoral authoritarianism in Latin America? To be sure, an important factor lies in the elevation to the presidency of populist leaders, as argued by Levitsky and Loxton (2013), particularly if they are outsiders rather than mavericks (insiders who choose to distance themselves from the political class). Populists who become chief executives may be prompted to undermine existing democratic institution by their predispositions (due to a lack of socialization and practice in the ways of democracy), incentive structures (lack of a political stake in the existing rules of the game), and windows of opportunity (prevailing winds of public opinion, weakness of opponents).

But populism constitutes a proximate cause, itself the manifestation of more deeply rooted structural causes. A deeper factor underpinning the erosion and eventual breakdown of democracy lies in the collapse of party systems. It is not coincidental that three of the four cases of electoral authoritarianism identified here have emerged in the wake of such collapses,

as did the nondemocratic regime of Alberto Fujimori. The vanishing of traditional parties in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador opened the door for populists to be elected to high office, for it spawned a newfound mass of floating voters disgruntled with the old parties available for political socialization. But crucially, party system collapses also removed key veto players (i.e., political parties) with the wherewithal to restrain or impede elected presidents' ambitions to accrue power. In the absence of bona fide parties, institutions of horizontal accountability (legislatures and others) tend to lose much (or all) of their clout and independence. Moreover, the electoral vehicles and proto-parties that come to replace their deceased and more solid partisan cousins are more politically malleable, less organic, and more beset by collective action dilemmas. In consequence, they are much less effective at constraining incumbents. The onset of competitive authoritarianism in the wake of party system collapses (in four out of five cases) evinces the indispensability of parties for the very *viability* of democracy. Where democracy does survive the weakening of party systems, its quality inexorably erodes. It is not coincidental that Álvaro Uribe amassed enormous power and undermined the relative solidity and impartiality of a number of democratic institutions in the wake of the breakdown of the traditional Colombian parties; nor is it coincidental that the Kirchners—aside from the political effects of the resource boom—were able to build a decade-long politically hegemonic rule while politicizing a number of institutions in the wake of the breakdown of the Radical party at the national level. Because party system deinstitutionalization has transpired in a number of countries (Sanchez 2008; Morgan 2011) across the region (affecting even unsuspected candidates such as Costa Rica), Latin America as a whole arguably has weaker

levels of representation, interest aggregation, and state-society mediation than before—the very functions political parties fulfill, however inadequately. It is worrying that party building has proven elusive in most places, given an inauspicious historical time, populist politicians uninterested in the task, and social landscapes marked by poverty, rampant inequality, and enfeebled civil societies. This nonevent stands as a bad omen for the future health of democratic governance in the region. (To be sure, exceptions exist. Successful party-building cases include the MAS in Bolivia or the Polo Democrático in Colombia.) A deeper cause for the erosion and breakdown of democracies lies in state weakness. Because this condition is so prevalent in Latin America, it hardly serves as a useful indicator of countries in imminent danger of democratic decay and breakdown. But it does constitute a near-necessary condition: democracies with sturdy state institutions are poor candidates for competitive authoritarianism.

The scourge of the drug trade and its damaging effects on democratic institutions and civil rights aside, the gravest threat to Latin American democracy in recent times has come, rather counterintuitively, from democratically elected presidents. As the subfield moved away from analyzing transitions and toward assessing the quality of the young democracies, Latin Americanists largely obviated this creeping gravedigger of democratic governance. The late Guillermo O'Donnell presciently pointed out the danger to democratic governance that can come from a “thousand blows” rather than one big blow (the classic coup d'état), a danger less visible to the eye but fatal in its consequences. This is precisely how democracy has been destroyed in some Latin American nations and eroded in

others in recent years: incumbents systematically chipping away at the rights of political minorities via legal and other means while concurrently augmenting their own power resources. Old-fashioned coups d'état have become rarer, for well-known reasons. Nonetheless, coups have not disappeared from Latin America, as seen in recent years in Honduras and Ecuador. And the region continues to be marred by the abuse of existing legal frameworks even in the realm of high-level politics, as witnessed in the dubious ouster of Fernando Lugo in Paraguay by conservative forces. (While not an illegal act, it was an abuse of constitutional authority on the part of Congress.)

The domestic barriers that can avert democratic breakdowns via a thousand blows are essentially two: the strength and vitality of civil society, and the strength of political institutions. Barring these—and such traits are absent in many countries in the region—the last frontier of democracy protection may be said to rest on regional organizations and the foreign policy stance of the United States and other Western states. The Organization of American States (OAS)—the main organization with an explicit mandate to safeguard democracy in the region—has proven embarrassingly inadequate to the task. As the number of nondemocratic regimes ensconced in the OAS has increased, these regimes have predictably banded together in order to shield each other from potential censure by democratic member states. Nondemocracies have also joined efforts to pull the teeth out of regional bodies whose task is to scrutinize deviations from civil and political rights, while dismissing reputable reports coming out of Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch. The OAS can hardly be more than the sum of its parts: if it keeps in its midst nondemocratic regimes, its defense of

democratic governance will predictably falter. Concurrently, democracies with economic ties to nondemocracies have been reluctant to use their clout with a view to increasing the political cost of assaults on democratic governance on the part of Chávez/Maduro, Correa, Ortega, or Morales, following instead a supremely pragmatic (but hardly principled) approach. Sadly, democracy has had few powerful defenders among Latin American nations in recent years. The clear unwillingness of Brazil, Colombia, and other democracies to put pressure on the Venezuelan government to address the credible claims raised by the opposition surrounding the probity of the 2013 presidential election vote count constitutes only the latest example. The waning clout of the United States in hemispheric affairs coupled with the presence of a bloc of hybrid regimes in the Andes means that the international and regional constraints on authoritarian rule have been somewhat relaxed in Latin America—surely as compared to the 1990s.

It may be countered that democracy has become consolidated in countries with relatively long democratic histories such as Uruguay, Costa Rica, and Chile, while it has built deeper roots in Brazil. However, the regression toward nondemocratic rule in no less than four important countries, the undermining of checks and balances in others also beset by overpowering presidents (such as Argentina under the Kirchners, and Panama under Martinelli), coupled with the ravages of the growing drug trade on institutionally feeble Central American countries, paints a rather desolate canvas of the health of democracy in Latin America. A snapshot of the state of democracy in the region as of 2013 would arguably show it to be at its lowest point in the post-Third Wave period.

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DEBATES

Venezuela: Democracia participativa, socialismo del siglo XXI y polarización

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Introducción

A comienzos de este siglo, la llegada al poder en América Latina de gobiernos con agendas anti-neoliberales abrió paso a nuevas constituciones, actores y lógicas de poder que se vienen expresando en los modelos de democracia mejor conocidos como el Socialismo del Siglo XXI. En países como Venezuela, Ecuador y Bolivia la transición política se legitimó mediante procesos constituyentes que tuvieron como resultado la inclusión constitucional de la democracia participativa y la incorporación de mecanismos de democracia directa los cuales se orientaron hacia la creación de un nuevo orden que se distanciara del estado neoliberal y empoderara al *Pueblo*, supuesta encarnación del *Soberano*.

Definir el potencial democratizador que tiene el modelo de Socialismo del Siglo XXI y su coherencia a la hora de concretarse en políticas públicas resulta una tarea ardua ya que entre los analistas existen opiniones encontradas. En el caso venezolano, algunas de las interrogantes sobre el modelo se han centrado en los siguientes temas: ¿cuál es su potencial para promover procesos de democratización e inclusión que son sus objetivos fundamentales?, ¿en qué medida éste promueve el empoderamiento del *Pueblo*, particularmente de los pobres y otros grupos previamente marginalizados?, ¿es capaz de prescindir de las viejas prácticas del clientelismo, populismo y personalismo?, ¿puede este modelo combinar armónicamente los mecanismos de representación y de participación que señala la constitución de 1999?

En Venezuela, la democracia directa a nivel comunal representa un espacio importante para el aprendizaje y ejercicio de los valores asociados con la democracia y con los derechos constitucionales de ciudadanía.

No obstante, éste tipo de participación no ha logrado trascender del nivel comunal e incidir en la elaboración de las políticas públicas a nivel local, regional y/o nacional lo cual se considera como un imperativo necesario para institucionalizar la democracia participativa. Las causas que explican esta dificultad no han sido suficientemente estudiadas por lo que en este trabajo se exploran algunos de los obstáculos que se interponen en la construcción de un proyecto de sociedad que esté basado en la Constitución Bolivariana de 1999 y que pueda ser compartido por el *Sujeto* social de la misma con el fin de responder a la pregunta: ¿cuál es la posibilidad que tiene el Socialismo del Siglo XXI de construir la *Voluntad General* del *Soberano*, alrededor del Proyecto Revolucionario Bolivariano?

Se parte de la hipótesis ya expresada en trabajos anteriores (García-Guadilla, Mallén y Guillén 2004; García-Guadilla 2007; Mallén 2013), que la institucionalización de la democracia participativa mediante el uso de mecanismos directos de democracia en contextos altamente polarizados como lo es el venezolano, ha imposibilitado la construcción del *Interés* o *Voluntad General* que destaca la Constitución alrededor del Socialismo del Siglo XXI y ha tendido a exacerbar los conflictos socio-políticos. Por esta razón, el modelo bolivariano o el Socialismo del Siglo XXI ha sido fuertemente rechazado por los adversarios políticos porque los intereses, valores y principios que promueve contrastan fuertemente con los de este grupo. Como consecuencia, la oposición política cuyo peso porcentual ha representado entre el 36 y el 49 por ciento de la población a lo largo del periodo 2000–2013, ha definido los conflictos surgidos alrededor de la interpretación y de la praxis de los derechos sancionados en la

Constitución de 1999, como un conflicto *existencial* (Schmitt 1996) donde las diferencias políticas se interpretan a través de la lógica de un juego de suma cero en el cual lo que se pierde es el *lebenswelt* o mundo de la vida (Habermas 1981). En el caso venezolano, esto ha llevado a los sujetos sociales, en ocasiones, a recurrir a la violencia rechazando al árbitro que en teoría debe mediarlos.

La institucionalización de la democracia participativa y el Proyecto Bolivariano

Venezuela ha sido pionera en la institucionalización de la democracia participativa a través de la Constitución Bolivariana de 1999 y desde sus inicios en el poder, el gobierno de Hugo Chávez (1999–2013) intentó articular su Proyecto Revolucionario Bolivariano con los lineamientos constitucionales. Este proyecto que a partir del 2005 se plasmará en lo que el propio Hugo Chávez denominó como Socialismo del Siglo XXI tiene como trasfondo décadas de organización y movilización social lideradas por las organizaciones sociales de la sociedad civil venezolanas que exigían la descentralización del Estado y proponían una mayor participación de la sociedad civil en la conducción del gobierno (Gómez Calcaño y López Maya 1990; García-Guadilla y Roa 1996; García-Guadilla 2005; López Maya 2005). La Constitución Bolivariana respondió a estas demandas al incorporar mecanismos de democracia participativa-protagónica tales como la figura del referendo, y otorgar poder a la ciudadanía para iniciar procesos legislativos aunque se mantuvieron las estructuras de la democracia representativa. Por primera vez en la historia política venezolana, la constitución nacional consagraba las identidades, derechos y valores de la sociedad civil y movimientos

populares potencializando su incursión en lo político y en la conducción del Estado haciéndoles partícipes activos en la construcción de la *Voluntad General*; de esta forma, transformó al *Soberano* en un actor con potencial para mediar los conflictos sociales vis a vis el Estado.

La institucionalización de la democracia participativa no significa que ésta haya orientado el diseño de las leyes orgánicas y regulares que supuestamente derivan de la Constitución ni que el *Soberano* haya influido en la elaboración de las políticas públicas. Independientemente de las fortalezas de la constitución, una de sus debilidades es el alto poder que otorgó al Ejecutivo lo que estimuló el presidencialismo (Blanco 2006; Márquez 2004) y ha afectado el ejercicio constitucional de la democracia representativa y participativa. En los conflictos entre el gobierno y la oposición política alrededor de los derechos constitucionales, la opinión del Ejecutivo ha tendido a prevalecer prescindiendo del debate legislativo o de los mecanismos de participación estipulados por tal constitución. Igualmente, la concentración del poder en la figura del Ejecutivo ha hecho problemática la implementación de la democracia participativa debilitando a su vez la democracia representativa. Durante la mayor parte de su mandato, el presidente Chavez recibió del Congreso poderes especiales para gobernar por decreto aprobando las leyes más relevantes y eliminando el debate propio de una sociedad pluralista (López Maya y Lander 2011)

Si bien la Constitución de 1999 respondió a un proceso político largamente visionado por la sociedad civil venezolana independientemente de su afinidad ideológica o clase social, ésta se convirtió en la piedra angular del proyecto

revolucionario-hegemónico denominado por el Presidente Hugo Chávez como “la V República” o el “Proyecto Revolucionario Bolivariano” el cual representaba al *Soberano* como encarnado en “el Pueblo” pero constituido primordialmente por “los pobres”. El proyecto Bolivariano articuló la diferencia entre clases sociales ideológica y retóricamente, privilegiando a los sectores tradicionalmente desfavorecidos que apoyaban al proyecto y excluyendo a las clases medias y altas quienes a partir de 2001, tendieron a identificarse con la oposición política y rechazaron el proyecto del presidente Chávez, en ocasiones, de forma violenta.

Alcance y límites de la democracia directa comunitaria

Los estudios más recientes sobre la democracia en Venezuela muestran que la participación de los sectores populares en general y especialmente de los adeptos al gobierno, ha sido alta y relativamente exitosa (García-Guadilla 2008, 2011, 2013; Goldfrank 2008; Ellner 2008; Hawkins 2010a; Buxton 2011; Smilde 2011). Una de las razones es la identificación que hizo el gobierno de la democracia participativa con la democracia directa sobre todo a nivel comunal y con la democracia social de derechos (Ellner 2011) que se desprenden de la constitución bolivariana. Otra de las razones fue el hecho que los sectores populares se identificaran con estas propuestas y se organizaran alrededor de la multiplicidad de organizaciones sociales de carácter comunal (Círculos Bolivarianos, Mesas Técnicas de Participación, Comités de Tierra Urbana, Consejos Comunales y Comunas entre otras) las cuales fueron promovidas por el presidente Chávez para apuntalar su Proyecto Revolucionario Bolivariano.

No obstante, algunas de las limitaciones que tienen estas organizaciones comunales para ejercer la democracia participativa, principalmente aquellas que reciben recursos directamente del gobierno para financiar sus actividades, son: su alta vulnerabilidad a la cooptación sea por parte del gobierno o por los partidos políticos que lo apoyan como es el caso del PSUV, la reproducción de las prácticas populistas y neo-clientelares del pasado sobre todo en épocas electorales lo que refuerza la exclusión de las organizaciones y/o de los miembros que no comparten el proyecto bolivariano, y la corrupción y falta de transparencia en el manejo de los recursos financieros debido a los insuficientes mecanismos de monitoreo social (Álvarez y García-Guadilla 2011). Otros problemas son la sustitución, en vez de la complementariedad, de la representación por la participación de tipo asambleario lo cual podría incidir en la des-institucionalización del municipio u otras figuras constitucionales de representación. Estas limitaciones se tornan aún más relevante si se toma en cuenta que frecuentemente en las asambleas de ciudadanos, organismo deliberativo de la comunidad donde se adoptan decisiones que son vinculantes para toda la comunidad, éstas pueden tomarse por una minoría numérica (la ley señala como mínimo para constituir las el 20 por ciento), vulnerando así los principios tanto de la democracia representativa como de la participativa.

Del balance empírico sobre las organizaciones comunales promovidas por el gobierno para ejercer la democracia directa a nivel comunal se puede inferir que la participación ha tenido un efecto positivo en los procesos de democratización aunque su alcance haya sido limitado; se ha utilizado para incluir y empoderar a la población más desfavorecida dándole

visibilidad política, otorgándole recursos de poder y en ocasiones financieros, y promoviendo y valorizando sus identidades. Sin embargo, la participación también ha servido para excluir a aquellas organizaciones e individuos no alineados ideológicamente con el gobierno. Esta práctica de exclusión, la cual se vincula con la polarización político-ideológica y con la persistencia de prácticas populistas (Roberts 2003; Arenas y Calcaño 2006; Hawkins 2010b) y de cooptación política de carácter clientelar, ha sido más frecuente en épocas electorales y en momentos de crisis política en los cuales la oposición política cuestionó tanto la legitimidad del Proyecto Revolucionario Bolivariano como el liderazgo del Presidente Chávez.

Otra limitación que enfrenta la democracia directa comunal en Venezuela tiene que ver con su incapacidad para trascender de la participación centrada en la resolución de los problemas del hábitat comunal lo cual se ve acentuado en la medida que el gobierno no tiene claros los límites de la democracia directa en los niveles comunitarios ni la forma en que ésta debe articularse y trascender a los niveles superiores.

La Voluntad General en la Venezuela polarizada: Dilemas y desafíos

Dentro del proyecto Bolivariano, la puesta en práctica de la participación en los niveles locales, regionales y nacionales ha generado fuertes conflictos alrededor de la articulación de los nuevos intereses colectivos. La presencia de agudas diferencias entre las clases sociales, el auge de la polarización y las inequidades sociales dividieron en lo simbólico y en la praxis a la sociedad Venezolana en dos grupos de interés con dos visiones de democracia. Las diferencias entre estos dos grupos

tienen que ver primordialmente con el énfasis que se le otorgue a los derechos consagrados en la constitución de 1999: mientras que los sectores opositores han priorizado los derechos civiles y políticos de la democracia representativa, el gobierno Bolivariano y sus simpatizantes privilegiaron los derechos sociales, económicos y culturales que derivan de la democracia participativa ya que ésta enfatiza la inclusión y la distribución del poder, elementos que para el oficialismo son esenciales para lograr la erradicación de la pobreza y la desigualdad social. Estas diferencias llevaron a la definición de dos proyectos de sociedad *antagónicos* según la afinidad política y los intereses de clase lo cual redujo la posibilidad de ejercer la democracia participativa y generó prácticas que atentan contra la propia democracia como sucedió durante el golpe de estado del 11 de abril 2001.

El caso Venezolano demuestra que la institucionalización de la democracia participativa en los niveles que trascienden el espacio comunal está siendo socavada por la polarización derivada de un nuevo proyecto hegemónico de Estado que ha generado altos niveles de conflicto y que por ende ha obstaculizado la construcción de la *Voluntad General*. Bajo un efecto centrífugo, las organizaciones sociales venezolanas se han alineado a favor o en contra del proyecto Bolivariano dificultando la construcción de objetivos colectivos y transformando intereses de clases en intereses políticos.

Adicionalmente, esta coyuntura facilitó la justificación de la concentración del poder en manos del Ejecutivo, quien en casos de conflicto entre los grupos que apoyan y los que rechazan el Proyecto Bolivariano inserto en el Socialismo del Siglo XXI, terminó frecuentemente arrogándose la definición de la *Voluntad del Soberano* y

dictando leyes y políticas públicas sumamente controvertidas en vez que tales decisiones se adoptaran mediante los mecanismos de representación y participación establecidos en la constitución. Como consecuencia, se recrudecieron los conflictos *antagónicos* aumentando la violencia y reduciéndose la posibilidad de resolverlos vía arbitraje, se debilitó la democracia representativa venezolana y se desvirtuó la promesa de la democracia participativa.

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La década kirchnerista: Populismo, clases medias y revolución pasiva

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Este artículo plantea dos tesis: la primera es que el kirchnerismo se ha constituido en una suerte de populismo de las clases medias, en un contexto de polarización intracase, esto es, de confrontación entre sectores de clase media. La segunda tesis es que el transcurrir de la década kirchnerista nos permite realizar una interpretación más global del kirchnerismo en términos de lo que Gramsci denominaba como *revolución pasiva*.

El kirchnerismo nació en una época de cambios: en el plano local, entre 2001 y 2002 la Argentina vivía el estallido del modelo de convertibilidad, a lo cual siguió una ola de intensas movilizaciones sociales; en el plano regional, al compás del cuestionamiento del Consenso de Washington, de la mano de los movimientos sociales, comenzaban a asomar los primeros gobiernos progresistas; por último, en el plano global, el kirchnerismo no sólo se sitúa en marco de un nuevo ciclo económico mundial centrado en el boom de los precios de las materias primas, sino que ilustra de modo acabado el pasaje del Consenso de Washington al Consenso de los Commodities.¹ Desde el comienzo, entonces, la tensión y combinación entre continuidades y rupturas, los dobles discursos y las ambivalencias, constituyeron un hilo articulador del kirchnerismo.

Por otro lado, el devenir populista del kirchnerismo fue gradual. Más allá de la experiencia desastrosa del gobierno de la Alianza (1999–2001), que se había autodenominado progresista, el cambio de época abrió un horizonte inesperado de oportunidades políticas, en clave latinoamericana, que contribuyeron a ampliar y relegitimar el término.² Así, en sus inicios, el gobierno kirchnerista buscó definirse e identificarse en el emergente progresismo latinoamericano. Los

primeros gestos de Néstor Kirchner parecían confirmar así una nueva era de cambios: entre ellos, los reemplazos en la Corte Suprema de Justicia, la asunción de una política de derechos humanos respecto de lo sucedido en los años '70, bajo el terrorismo de Estado, la retórica anti-neoliberal, la opción por una política económica heterodoxa y el incipiente latinoamericanismo.

Sin embargo, la tentativa de innovar en la esfera de la política, a través de la creación de una nueva fuerza transversal progresista, por fuera del partido Justicialista, tuvo una vida breve. Ya en 2005 el kirchnerismo optó por apoyarse en la vieja estructura del Partido Justicialista, sellando por un lado, una alianza duradera con los sectores más conservadores y reaccionarios, entre ellos los intendentes del Conurbano Bonaerense y los gobernadores de provincia; por el otro, fuertes acuerdos con un ascendente Hugo Moyano, jefe de los camioneros y líder de una CGT unificada, en quien conviven las apelaciones antineoliberales de la tradición nacional-popular con un sindicalismo de corte empresarial. Por último, luego de la devaluación asimétrica, que benefició a sectores concentrados de la economía, le siguió un período de reactivación de la industria, lo que fue forjando alianzas de largo alcance con grupos importantes de la burguesía local, muchos de los cuáles se vieron también beneficiados por una política generosa de subsidios.

En este esquema de continuidades y rupturas, el kirchnerismo realizó un giro plenamente populista en 2008, con el conflicto entre el gobierno nacional y las diferentes organizaciones patronales agrarias (2008). Este fue sin dudas el parteaguas de la década kirchnerista, un conflicto de alto voltaje cuyo carácter recursivo terminó por actualizar viejos

esquemas de carácter binario que atraviesan la historia argentina. Entendemos por populismo una determinada matriz político-ideológica que se inserta en la “memoria media” (las experiencias de los años 50 y 70), que despliega un lenguaje rupturista (la exacerbación de los antagonismos) y tiende a sostenerse sobre tres ejes: la afirmación de la nación, el estado redistributivo y conciliador, y el vínculo entre líder carismático y masas organizadas. Pese a que existen diferentes figuras posibles, desde nuestra perspectiva, tal como sostenían Emilio de Ipola y Juan Carlos Portantiero, la tendencia del populismo es “a recomponer el principio de dominación, fetichizando al Estado (“popular” ahora) e implantando, de acuerdo a los límites que la sociedad ponga, una concepción organicista de la hegemonía”.³

El conflicto por la ley de medios audiovisuales y, finalmente, la muerte inesperada de Néstor Kirchner terminaron de abrir por completo las compuertas al giro populista, montado sobre un discurso polarizador como “gran relato”, sintetizado en la oposición entre un bloque supuestamente popular (el kirchnerismo) y sectores de poder concentrados (monopolios, corporaciones, antiperonistas). El giro populista encontró un fuerte apoyo en aquellos sectores medios autoidentificados con el progresismo, pero paradójicamente instaló un escenario de fuerte confrontación con otros sectores medios, que desde las ciudades apoyaban las movilizaciones de las organizaciones rurales, criticando tanto la suba de las retenciones a la soja como, de modo más general, el autoritarismo gubernamental. El debate por la ley de medios audiovisuales (2008) y luego la muerte inesperada del expresidente Néstor Kirchner (2010), abrieron a una época de mayores tensiones, exacerbando la retórica

en clave nacional-popular: desde *Carta Abierta*, pasando por numerosos artistas y periodistas, hasta los jóvenes de la agrupación *La Cámpora*, fueron aportando a la construcción de un aparato propagandístico, una estructura mediática-cultural, que tendría por objetivo llevar a cabo la llamada “batalla cultural”, en el marco de la polarización.

Por otro lado, el conflicto agrario tuvo la virtud de poner en claro cuál era el lugar central de la acumulación del capital en la Argentina de la postconvertibilidad: lejos de ser la industria rediviva, como pregonaban industriales y sectores sindicales, buscando mirarse en el espejo del viejo modelo populista, ésta se asentaba en la nueva economía del agronegocios, cuyo complejo perfil y sus diferentes actores iban asomando como protagonistas plenos de la política argentina. Por último, con el corrimiento y ampliación de las fronteras del conflicto, no sólo hacia lo sindical y a las diversas formas de la precariedad, sino también hacia las dimensiones territoriales y ambientales de la desposesión, las denuncias acerca de la alianza entre gobierno y los grandes agentes económicos, entre ellos las corporaciones transnacionales (desde Monsanto hasta la Barrick Gold) comenzarían a hacerse más ostensibles. El avance de la megaminería, la expansión de la fronteras del agronegocios y la tendencia al acaparamiento de las tierras, ponían cada vez más de manifiesto esta dimensión central del modelo de acumulación.

Continuidades y rupturas. Uno podría preguntarse cómo se configuraban las tensiones en este espacio de geometría variable. En ese sentido, creemos que durante largo tiempo sucedió que, mientras la dinámica de desposesión se manifestaba en progresión aritmética, el gobierno continuaba desplegando una serie de

políticas progresistas en sucesión geométrica, mostrando con ello una gran productividad, capaz de revertir escenarios políticos que le eran desfavorables. Esto sucedió, por ejemplo, luego de perder las elecciones parlamentarias de 2009, cuando el kirchnerismo demostró una gran capacidad para superar la adversidad, gracias a una combinación de crecimiento económico con políticas públicas de gran alcance, como la asignación universal por hijo, la ley de matrimonio igualitario, la estatización de las AFJP y una política de subsidios orientada a ciertos sectores de la producción y el consumo. Esto, a lo cual hay que sumar el impacto social que produjo la muerte de Néstor Kirchner, permitieron que la presidenta Cristina Fernández comenzara su segundo mandato con un gran capital político y simbólico, después de arrasar con el 54 por ciento de los votos en diciembre de 2011, lo cual daba cuenta también de una reconciliación con gran parte de los sectores medios que se habían movilizado en 2008 y habían emitido un voto castigo en 2009.

Al interior de las clases medias, este aquietamiento de las divisiones intracase fue, empero, muy breve. En nuestra opinión, tres elementos mayores contribuyeron a la erosión de la imagen del kirchnerismo triunfante, en su versión unificadora: el primero la tentación hegemónica y el proceso vertiginoso de fetichización del Estado, asentado sobre el avasallante 54 por ciento de los votos y visible en la creencia gubernamental de que sólo “el peronismo puede articular los intereses populares”; el segundo, el deterioro de la situación económica (inflación, precarización, política impositiva regresiva, cepo cambiario, entre otros); el tercero, la profundización incontestable de la alianzas con las grandes corporaciones económicas: desde el agronegocios, pasando por la megaminería, los

hidrocarburos y transportes. Preso de un discurso épico, sobreactuado hasta el hartazgo y con la máxima obsecuencia hacia la figura presidencial, el kirchnerismo no pudo ocultar más sus contradicciones, frente a la cruda realidad de los índices económicos y la manifiesta alianza con las corporaciones, que aparecen abiertamente como los grandes jugadores/actores de la sociedad argentina actual.

Nuevamente, como en 2008, entre septiembre de 2012 y agosto de 2013, las masivas movilizaciones protagonizadas por sectores de las clases medias, pusieron de manifiesto que uno de los frentes principales de conflicto del gobierno es *la puja ideológica intracase*: si desde el oficialismo unos se arrojan el monopolio del progresismo y la representación de las clases subalternas, en nombre de “un modelo de inclusión social”, desde la oposición, otros sectores medios movilizados denuncian la corrupción y critican el creciente autoritarismo del régimen, articulando un incipiente discurso en clave republicana.

Este escenario se vio empeorado con la ruptura de la alianza que el oficialismo tenía con Hugo Moyano, con lo cual el gobierno abandonó la vía del populismo clásico (la “pata sindical” como columna vertebral), para concentrarse sobre sus aliados provenientes de las clases medias. Así, la base sindical del kirchnerismo quedaría reducida a un sector de la CTA, vinculado a sectores medios (maestros y empleados estatales), a lo cual se sumaría una CGT depurada de voces disidentes y tradicionalmente peronista. Por último, fiel al legado personalista de la política latinoamericana, el fuerte encapsulamiento del poder ejecutivo fue configurando un modelo extremo de presidencialismo, poco afecto al debate democrático. En este contexto, que muestra el copamiento del

aparato del Estado por parte de los jóvenes de *La Cámpora* y un estrechamiento de las alianzas sociales, el kirchnerismo terminó por convertirse en *un populismo de clases medias que pretende monopolizar el lenguaje del progresismo en nombre de las clases populares, vía por la cual también busca descalificar a otros sectores de clases medias movilizados*.

Como consecuencia, la Argentina volvió a embarcarse en un proceso de polarización política, aunque diferente al de otros países latinoamericanos. *Uno*, porque más allá del progresismo, el modelo kirchnerista es profundamente peronista, capaz de combinar audacia política y un legado organizacional tradicional, que revela una concepción pragmática del cambio social y de la construcción de hegemonía, basada en el modelo clásico de la participación social controlada, bajo la tutela estatal y la figura del líder. *Dos*, porque el kirchnerismo nunca tuvo el afán de impulsar dinámicas de democratización, como si sucedió con los gobiernos en Bolivia, Venezuela y Ecuador, que encararon procesos constituyentes de carácter participativo, lo cual conllevó —al menos bajo los primeros mandatos— la ampliación de las fronteras de derechos. *Tercero*, a diferencia de los gobiernos de Venezuela y Bolivia, que pueden ser considerados como *populismos de clases populares* pues, más allá de sus limitaciones, apuntaron a la redistribución del poder social y al empoderamiento de los sectores subalternos, en Argentina, lo más destacable es la vocación estelar de las clases medias, su empoderamiento político, en un marco de consolidación generalizada de los grandes actores económicos. Esto no significa sin embargo que las clases populares estén ausentes: asistencializadas, precarizadas, sin relegar sus tradiciones sindicales, abriendo nuevos frentes de conflicto y de lucha, las clases subalternas son cada vez más los convidados de piedra

de un modelo cuya clave de bóveda son las clases medias autodenominadas “progresistas”.

Por otro lado, a diferencia de las primeras fases, los conflictos propios del segundo mandato de Cristina Fernández colocaron al desnudo las alianzas económicas del gobierno que, lejos de ser un “costado débil” o “asignaturas pendientes”, constituyen un núcleo duro del modelo kirchnerista, en el marco del *Consenso de los Commodities*: allí donde se expresa la dinámica de desposesión acelerada ligada al extractivismo (agronegocios, megaminería, hidrocarburos y fracking, megaemprendimientos turísticos y residenciales), cuya contracara es la desposesión también acelerada de tierras, bienes, territorios y derechos. Para dar un ejemplo, sólo en los últimos 5 años hubo doce asesinatos y muertes dudosas de indígenas y campesinos, varias de ellas catalogadas como “accidentes” por las autoridades. Esas “emanaciones de la muerte difusa”, como escribe Mirta Antonelli, sistemáticamente denegadas desde el poder, “nos interroga sobre el horizonte mismo de los derechos humanos”.⁴ Uno de los casos más emblemáticos es el de los pueblos Quom, de la comunidad Primavera, cuyo dirigente, Félix Díaz, ignorado por el poder político nacional, hostigado hasta el ensañamiento por el gobierno de la provincia de Formosa. Hemos ingresado a un nuevo ciclo de violación de derechos humanos individuales y colectivos. Las formas de la violencia política han ido mutando: incentivados y promovidos por políticas públicas nacionales, los modelos de (mal) desarrollo van segando el camino y los territorios de nuevos cuerpos sacrificables. Desde la lógica de esos modelos excluyentes, ya no son los desocupados la “población sobrante”, como en los años 90 —para ellos el poder político prevé planes

sociales masivos— sino otros cuerpos y comunidades, indígenas y campesinos, víctimas del racismo endémico, que hoy devienen un obstáculo, una piedra en el camino frente a la imperiosa expansión del capital.

En suma, el kirchnerismo expresa un caso de *Revolución Pasiva*,⁵ categoría que sirve para leer la tensión entre transformación y restauración en épocas de transición, que desemboca finalmente en la reconstitución de las relaciones sociales en un orden de dominación jerárquico. Cambio y, a la vez, conservación; *Progresismo Modelo* realizado en clave nacional-popular y con aspiraciones latinoamericanistas y, a la vez, *Modelo de expoliación*, asentado en las ventajas comparativas que ofrece el *Consenso de los Commodities*.

A diez años de kirchnerismo no ha sido fácil salir de la trampa de la “restauración-revolución” que éste propone, pues fueron las clases medias progresistas, con un discurso de ruptura, en su alianza no siempre reconocida con grandes grupos de poder, las encargadas de recomponer desde arriba el orden dominante, neutralizando y cooptando las demandas desde abajo. Sin embargo, todo parece indicar que ingresamos a una nueva fase en la cual la dialéctica entre cambio y restauración —y su nivel de visibilidad— se invirtieron notoriamente, pues si antes las políticas de cuño progresista avanzaban en forma geométrica y las fronteras del despojo y la precariedad lo hacían en progresión aritmética, hoy la relación es inversa, poniendo al desnudo los límites de esta estrategia restauradora, sus orientaciones centrales y sus consecuencias, frente al resto de la sociedad.

Decaimiento de la calidad de la democracia en Bolivia

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Notas

¹ Para el tema véase Maristella Svampa, “‘Consenso de los *Commodities*’ y lenguajes de valoración en América Latina”, *Nueva Sociedad*, no. 244, marzo-abril de 2013, http://www.nuso.org/upload/articulos/3926_1.pdf.

² En sus orígenes, el término *progresista* remitía a la Revolución Francesa, e incluía aquellas corrientes ideológicas que abogaban por las libertades individuales y el cambio social (el “progreso”). En la actualidad, bajo la denominación genérica de progresismo convergen corrientes ideológicas diversas, desde la socialdemocracia al populismo, que proponen una visión reformista y/o posibilista del cambio social.

³ Juan Carlos Portantiero y Emilio de Ipola, “Lo nacional-popular y los nacionalismos realmente existentes”, en Carlos María Vilas (comp.), *La democratización fundamental: El populismo en América Latina* (México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1994).

⁴ Véase M. Svampa, “La violencia política estatal y sus umbrales”, *Perfil.com*, 7 de julio de 2013, <http://www.perfil.com/elobservador/La-violencia-politica-estatal-y-sus-umbrales-20130707-0052.html>.

⁵ Retomadas, entre otros, por Néstor Kohan, Massimo Modonesi y Adam Morton. ■

Está claro que la calidad de la democracia ha decaído en los últimos años. Un sistema político vibrante, diverso y libre está dando paso a uno que tiende a la homogenización, a la autocensura y al temor.

¿Existe un Estado de derecho en Bolivia bajo la presidencia de Evo Morales? La respuesta parece ser más un “no” que un “sí”.

Las Naciones Unidas tienen esta definición: “(el Estado de derecho) se refiere a un principio de gobierno según el cual todas las personas, instituciones y entidades, públicas y privadas, incluido el propio Estado, están sometidas a unas leyes que se promulgan públicamente, se hacen cumplir por igual y se aplican con independencia, además de ser compatibles con las normas y los principios internacionales de derechos humanos. Asimismo, exige que se adopten medidas para garantizar el respeto de los principios de primacía de la ley (...) separación de poderes, participación en la adopción de decisiones, legalidad, no arbitrariedad, y transparencia procesal y legal”.¹

Con las actuales circunstancias que vive el país, la sociedad boliviana no vive genuinamente bajo un Estado de derecho, con plena independencia de poderes y la capacidad de las instituciones de colocar bajo la ley a todas las personas, independientemente de cuál sea su cargo, filiación política o poder económico o de otro tipo.

A fines de 2013, los más importantes líderes opositores enfrentan juicios, muchos de ellos motivados políticamente; varios centenares (los involucrados dicen que son más de 700) de bolivianos viven en Brasil y otros países bajo las figuras de refugiados o asilados políticos, un escenario completamente nuevo para la democracia

boliviana; los medios de comunicación independientes son acosados por el Estado; fallos judiciales a favor de dirigentes opositores son bloqueados por el Ejecutivo; dirigentes indígenas contrarios al gobierno están refugiados en sus remotas comunidades por temor a ser apresados; y líderes opositores están detenidos, sin juicios, en cárceles públicas, por mucho mayor tiempo que el que permite la ley.

Este abuso del Estado y el irrespeto a la Constitución y las leyes por parte de autoridades de grupos corporativos, sin embargo, no es nuevo. Hay muchas demostraciones de ello en los últimos 31 años de democracia. Los más importantes son quizás los ejemplos sucesivos y permanentes de abuso de la ley por parte de algunos sectores de la sociedad, la incapacidad de combatir la corrupción, la colusión de quienes detentan el poder con el sistema judicial, etc.

En los 24 años de democracia anteriores a la llegada de Evo Morales al poder, un presidente de la Corte Suprema fue ilegalmente exonerado del cargo por el Legislativo, con evidentes muestras de injerencia externa, además; algunos de los miembros de un grupo armado que secuestró al empresario Jorge Londsdaile en 1990 fueron ejecutados tras haber sido detenidos vivos; diversos acusados de pertenecer a otras organizaciones subversivas fueron torturados y perseguidos con métodos que prohibía la ley; las protestas sociales, especialmente a mediados de la década del 90 y a principios de la de 2000, fueron criminalizadas; las muertes por acción de las Fuerzas Armadas y Policía durante manifestaciones sociales llegaron a ser de entre 10 y 15 por año, según estimaciones, un número muy elevado.

Hasta antes del año 2006, cuando Morales llegó al poder, trayendo consigo una serie de reformas políticas, sociales y culturales de alta significación, la democracia boliviana era vibrante, pero tenía también deficiencias.

La llegada al poder de Morales implicó un cambio trascendental porque cortaba casi dos siglos de vida republicana en los que la participación de los sectores indígenas en el poder había sido reducida e inestable. Por lo menos, no se había tenido un ejemplo en el que el propio Jefe de Estado hubiera sido (o se hubiera declarado él mismo) indígena. El poder simbólico de ello ha sido enorme y, de facto, enriqueció la democracia boliviana. Junto con eso, se dio un positivo y alentado recambio de élites, cosa que ayudó a la movilidad social y a la inclusión en la toma de decisiones de sectores que en el pasado por lo general habían sido mantenidos fuera de ella.

Pero el régimen de Morales trajo otros problemas, ocasionados por la concentración de poder. El oficialismo controla el Ejecutivo, dos tercios del Legislativo, gran parte del Órgano Judicial, la totalidad de las antes llamadas superintendencias sectoriales, la Contraloría General del Estado, el Banco Central de Bolivia, la mayoría de los sindicatos, casi el 80 por ciento de los municipios y siete de las nueve gobernaciones. Además, a través de la cooptación y la compra directa, controla también a los más importantes medios de comunicación del país, sean periódicos, radios o canales de TV. El disenso es cada vez menor y una oposición debilitada no puede, en las circunstancias actuales, hacer escuchar su voz de una manera que pueda considerarse “equitativa”.

Y la concentración de poder lleva consigo, casi siempre, la prolongación en éste. Pese

a que la Constitución aprobada en 2009 prohíbe expresamente un tercer mandato de Morales, el Tribunal Constitucional autorizó, en un polémico fallo de principios de 2013, que el presidente puede postular a la re-reelección. Además de innumerables testimonios, uno de ellos del propio presidente, que señaló en 2009 que había “cedido” su tercera elección, la propia OEA, que fue observadora de las negociaciones que permitieron la aprobación del texto constitucional, expresó con claridad en un comunicado público que el espíritu del artículo referido a la reelección prohibía un tercer mandato.

Esta concentración de poder no tiene visos de reducirse: en el segundo semestre de 2013 Morales lidera diversas encuestas independientes de opinión y se cree que será reelegido con cierta facilidad. Tampoco está descartado que vuelva a controlar dos tercios de las dos cámaras, lo cual puede alentar un nuevo intento de reelección, esta vez en 2020. Los partidos opositores, arrinconados por el aparato judicial, político y mediático gubernamental, están en inferioridad de condiciones para enfrentar una elección. El partido de gobierno controla ingentes recursos estatales y el presidente y vicepresidente aparecen, según un somero estudio realizado por mi persona, un promedio de diez veces por semana en transmisiones en vivo de cadena estatal de radio y televisión en eventos de campaña política, como inauguración de obras. ¡Diez veces por semana!

Si se compara Bolivia con la situación de hace una década (segundo semestre de 2003) se ve con claridad que los disensos son hoy más difíciles de expresar, que la agresividad verbal de las autoridades inhibe parte de la crítica, que diversos dirigentes opositores están atemorizados, que los medios tienden a la uniformización y que

los jueces son aún menos independientes que antes.

Otro factor importante es el accionar de las ONG (organizaciones no gubernamentales) y fundaciones, casi todas ellas de financiamiento internacional. En el pasado, éstas apoyaron diversas posiciones y acciones de la sociedad boliviana, ayudando a su democratización. El régimen de Morales, mediante acciones de facto, ha logrado controlar el trabajo de muchas ellas, echar del país a otras y paralizar a unas más. Es un factor menos en el juego democrático. Paradójicamente, algunas de las ONG perseguidas hoy fueron las que ayudaron a fortalecer el movimiento sindical campesino que lideraba el entonces dirigente cocalero Evo Morales.

No todo es negativo, evidentemente, y tampoco se puede afirmar que Bolivia vive en dictadura. No. El Tribunal Electoral mantiene parte de su independencia, las leyes hacen difícil el fraude, la libertad de expresión, aunque atemorizada y autocensurada, se expresa mediante algunos medios independientes, y los dirigentes políticos, aunque acosados, realizan sus campañas con miras a los comicios de 2014. Las redes sociales, por su parte, expresan el sentir de miles de bolivianos que tienen acceso a Internet.

En el plano netamente electoral, los bolivianos registran uno de los más elevados porcentajes de registro en las Américas con respecto a la población con edad de votar, que se estima en 87,8 por ciento. Ello se deduce porque en 2009, al finalizar el empadronamiento biométrico, se habían registrado 5,13 millones de bolivianos en territorio nacional (sin contar los inscritos en el exterior) y para ese año, el Instituto Nacional de Estadística tenía una estimación de 5,85 millones de

Vuelta de tuerca revolucionaria

por MÓNICA ALMEIDA | Quito Editor, *El Universo*

personas en edad de votar (mayores a 18 años). En el proceso electoral de ese año votaron 4,8 millones de personas, es decir 94,4 por ciento de los registrados y 82,9 por ciento de la población en edad de votar. Un porcentaje muy alto, superior al promedio regional.

Con todo, con defectos y virtudes, la democracia permite que una mayoritaria parte de la sociedad viva sin temor a retaliaciones políticas, ejerza su voto, tenga diversas fuentes de información y cumpla sus derechos de libre asociación y expresión.

Pero lo que sí está claro que la calidad de la democracia ha decaído en los últimos años. Un sistema político vibrante, diverso y libre está dando paso a uno que tiende a la homogenización, a la autocensura y al temor.

Nota

¹ “La ONU y el estado de derecho” (informe del secretario general al consejo de seguridad), agosto de 2004, Nueva York. <http://www.un.org/es/ruleoflaw/>. ■

Luego de seis años de “Revolución Ciudadana” y con el nuevo mandato del presidente Rafael Correa, que comenzó el 24 de mayo pasado, Ecuador experimenta una acelerada vuelta de tuerca legal, con miras a perfeccionar un proceso que cada vez más depende de la voluntad única de su líder y del grado de lealtad que se le demuestre.

Imbatible en las urnas gracias a una gran inversión en el área social y de infraestructura, así como en propaganda (con fondos que provienen de los ingresos petroleros y de una reforma tributaria de carácter progresivo), Correa obtuvo el 57,17 por ciento de la votación en febrero del 2013, en tanto que controla 77 por ciento de la Asamblea Nacional, que tiene un total de 137 miembros. Es así que el gobierno, sin mucho esfuerzo, logró a pocas semanas de iniciado el período, la aprobación de dos leyes clave.

La primera fue la Ley Minera que permitirá la extracción a gran escala sin consulta previa a las comunidades afectadas (Asamblea Nacional 2013). Es decir mayores ingresos al Estado por la explotación de las concesiones mineras, lo que se enmarca dentro del modelo extractivista del gobierno (al igual que la perforación de los bloques 31 y 43 dentro del Parque Nacional Yasuní). Actualmente la única mina de este tipo está en el sur del país a cargo de Ecuacorriente, empresa canadiense ahora en manos chinas.

Y la segunda, la Ley de Comunicación, que convierte a la comunicación en un servicio público regulado por el Estado a través de un Consejo de Regulación (con mayoría del Ejecutivo) y de una Superintendencia (cuyo titular será designado de una terna enviada por el Ejecutivo) (Organización de los Estados Americanos 2013; Human Rights Watch 2013a; Committee to Protect

Journalists 2013; Asamblea Nacional 2013). Y en ese orden, los periodistas, a quienes ahora se nos exige un título universitario en Comunicación Social para poder trabajar en un medio, adquirimos la categoría de administrados para “acatar y promover la obediencia a la Constitución, a las leyes y a las decisiones legítimas de las autoridades públicas”. Adicionalmente, con esta ley, Ecuador creó la figura legal del “linchamiento mediático” para castigar a los medios que decidan publicar conjuntamente o durante varios días información que menoscabe el honor o prestigio de una persona. Todo ello insistiendo siempre en que no se permitirá nunca la censura previa.

Esta ley revela también la gran contradicción entre el discurso y la propaganda hacia el exterior del país con lo que sucede casa adentro, como si los valores democráticos fueran una vara que cambia de medida dependiendo de dónde se aplique. Bajo los parámetros de la nueva ley, en Ecuador no se podrían publicar las revelaciones de Wikileaks y peor aún las revelaciones de Edward Snowden, pues el secretismo está reservado sólo para el Estado. Ello pese a que Julian Assange ya cumplió un año asilado en la embajada ecuatoriana en Londres y Ecuador, inicialmente, le ofreció asilo al ex contratista de la NSA (Agencia Nacional de Seguridad), extendiéndole el salvoconducto con el que éste llegó a Moscú desde Hong Kong (*El Comercio* 2013; Pallares 2013; Zibell 2013; *Guardian* 2013).

El ajuste de tuerca legal también vino del Ejecutivo con la firma del Decreto Ejecutivo N° 16 que regula a las organizaciones de la sociedad civil y que con sus 67 artículos y transitorias más bien es una nueva ley para las ONG (Human Rights Watch 2013b). Más allá de un control estatal de inscripción y verificación

del cumplimiento de las leyes, el Ejecutivo se reserva el derecho de poder disolver una organización si se aleja del objetivo para el que fue creada o si afecta la paz pública, y les prohíbe cualquier tipo de actividad política partidista. Incluso les impone que no pueden rechazar a aquellos que pudieran tener un interés legítimo en ser sus miembros.

Símbolo de la sociedad civil es la Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (Conaie); ¿acaso será disuelta en vista de que el movimiento político Pachakutik nació bajo su regazo y esos lazos se mantienen?

Un decreto que ya de por sí es paradoja en un país que se precia de tener un Quinto Poder del Estado, santificado en la nueva Constitución aprobada en el 2008, alrededor del Consejo de Participación Ciudadana y Control Social; ¿no fueron acaso las organizaciones de la sociedad civil las que contribuyeron a la creación de este Consejo? Actividad que ahora podría conllevar a su disolución por ser de carácter política.

Y aún falta otro gran ajuste: el Código de Procedimiento Penal. Un texto de unos mil artículos, en el que predomina una lógica punitiva. En el último borrador que analiza la Asamblea ya no se incluye el delito de desacato, lo cual es un gran avance, persiste, en cambio, el de la calumnia. Sin embargo, como ya es costumbre en los últimos años, todo dependerá del veto presidencial, pues el Ejecutivo podría incluir hasta artículos que nunca se aprobaron.

Por el momento las vueltas de tuerca parecen haber logrado su efecto. Mucho se debe al enorme carisma de Correa, que mantiene un show personal de tres horas todos los sábados; al millonario aparataje

de propaganda interna y externa (lobistas estadounidenses también forman parte de la estrategia), al control de por lo menos tres canales nacionales de televisión de un total de siete, y a la eficiencia de sus ministros en administrar el segundo Boom Petrolero que vive el país (el primero fue administrado por la dictadura militar de los años setenta). No es un misterio que en los últimos años Ecuador ha entrado en una fase acelerada de modernización caracterizada por el mejoramiento de indicadores sociales (y también del consumismo).

Otro tanto se debe a sanciones ejemplificadoras contra algunos opositores al gobierno, por parte de la justicia, que continúa su renovación luego de que un triunvirato judicial cercano al gobierno iniciara su reforma a mediados del 2011. En el informe de la veeduría internacional sobre este proceso, Baltazar Garzón y su equipo dejaron constancia, entre otras cosas, que a algunos postulantes de la Corte Nacional (Corte Suprema) se les cambiaron puntajes para favorecerlos (Hoy.com.ec 2012). Precisamente una de las primeras sentencias de esta Corte fue condenar en febrero del 2012 a tres años de prisión a Emilio Palacio y a los propietarios de diario *El Universo*, así como a pagarle 40 millones de dólares al presidente Correa por haber ofendido su honor al haber publicado un artículo de opinión firmado por Palacio (<http://rafaelcorreacontraeluniverso.eluniverso.com/>).

Días después el presidente anunció “Perdón sin olvido” por este caso y por el que seguía contra los periodistas Christian Zurita y Juan Carlos Calderón por su libro *El Gran Hermano*, en el que denunciaban la adjudicación de millones de dólares en contratos públicos a favor de empresas

relacionadas con Fabricio Correa, hermano del primer mandatario (Erazo 2012).

Otros dos casos, aún en primera instancia, van directo contra actores políticos, ambos juzgados por terrorismo y sabotaje: Pepe Acacho, líder shuar elegido asambleísta en febrero pasado por Pachakutik, está condenado a doce años de prisión y Mery Zamora, dirigente del gremio de los profesores y del partido Movimiento Popular Democrático (MPD, comunistas) a ocho años (Hoy.com.ec 2013). En esta lógica represiva los jóvenes tampoco se escapan. Un grupo de chicos universitarios conocidos como Los Diez de Luluncoto, por el barrio donde vivían en el Sur de Quito, cumplieron una pena de un año de prisión por tentativa de sabotaje y terrorismo (Amador 2013). A ellos se les encontraron panfletos contra el gobierno cuando se preparaban para manifestar en una de las marchas contra la Ley de Aguas, convocada por la Conaie, el MPD y otras organizaciones sociales.

Apenas han pasado tres meses del nuevo mandato de Correa, que está en el poder desde enero del 2007, y ya se habla de la posibilidad de reformar por segunda vez la Constitución del 2008 (la primera reforma fue la “metida de mano a la justicia” con la consulta popular del 2011) para permitirle al refundador de la Patria la reelección indefinida.

La sociedad ha visto impávida todas estas vueltas de tuerca que van borrando de a poco el tinte democrático de un gobierno supuestamente de izquierda. Un primer anuncio de política pública que hace que todos estos ajustes cobren sentido, debido a la furibunda reacción ante cualquier acción de oposición, es el anuncio presidencial del 15 de agosto pasado de abandonar la iniciativa de no explotar el petróleo del Parque Nacional Yasuní, en vista de que no

se lograron recoger los fondos necesarios para dejar ese crudo bajo tierra. (Véase <http://www.elcomercio.com/tag/yasuni-itt.html>, <http://www.eluniverso.com/tema/yasuni-itt-0>.)

Es indudable que el modelo económico de Correa, sustentado en la inversión pública como motor así como en el aumento del tamaño del Estado, necesita más fondos. El dinero fresco del Yasuní ingresará solo a partir de los próximos años, a un ritmo de unos de 1.600 millones de dólares anuales, pero esa perspectiva ya permite aumentar la capacidad de crédito. Coincidencia o no, el 12 de agosto se acreditó un nuevo préstamo garantizado con petróleo por 1.200 millones de dólares provenientes de China, país que también invertirá en la construcción de una nueva refinería en el Pacífico.

A pesar de que en la consulta popular del 2011 se votó incluso para permitir o no las corridas de toros y las peleas de gallos en las que se mataran a estos animales, esta vez el Ejecutivo no quiere arriesgar la respuesta a si los ecuatorianos queremos o no preservar esa extensa zona declarada reserva de biósfera del planeta y en la que seguramente viven tribus amazónicas que no han entrado en contacto con la llamada civilización. Tanto no quiere arriesgar una consulta que cuando se le planteó esa posibilidad, enseguida aseguró que también incluiría una pregunta sobre si se pueden o no imprimir periódicos, en vista de que se talaban muchos árboles para el papel que utiliza la prensa.

Los colectivos sociales ya presentaron un pedido ante la Corte Constitucional para que se realice una consulta popular sobre la explotación petrolera, pero no existe un plazo definido para que la Corte dé una respuesta y es conocido en casos como estos imperará la lentitud. A su vez, en la

Asamblea el trámite para crear el marco legal que permita la explotación del Yasuní avanza viento en popa.

Con los medios con autocensura a media llave pues aún no se firma el reglamento de la Ley de Comunicación, definitivamente aún hay algo que no se controla en Ecuador: las redes sociales. Y es ahí donde se está moviendo la reacción a la decisión del Yasuní. Solamente que para el gobierno, al parecer, los tuits de los ciudadanos no tienen la misma importancia que los de las autoridades, por lo que no deberían reproducirse en la prensa. Y ya el secretario jurídico de la Presidencia de la República, Alexis Mera, pidió a la Asamblea que se penalice en el nuevo Código Penal lo que se pueda decir en las redes sociales pues “una injuria de una persona que tiene unos 10.000 seguidores puede ser más rápida y hacer más daño”. Es decir, otra vuelta de tuerca a fin de controlar la Internet.

Una marcha de la Conaie y varios colectivos en la que participaron muchos jóvenes, la tarde del 27 de agosto pasado, fue reprimida fuertemente por la Policía. El gobierno sigue enredado en una explicación sobre el uso de balas de Paintball contra los manifestantes pero los consabidos spots de radio y televisión obligatorios intentan explicar que todo es una conspiración de “los mismos de siempre”. Por si quisieran salir otra vez a la calle, Correa ya amenazó a los jóvenes con quitarles el cupo que tienen en los colegios públicos. Y si a algún periodista se le ocurriera visitar el Parque, ahora tiene que entregar al Ministerio del Ambiente una copia de todo el material periodístico antes de su publicación así como una garantía de 500 dólares.

Víctima de su propia propaganda que creó el sueño del Yasuní, el anuncio presidencial

causó demasiado desencanto. Con la explotación petrolera dentro del Parque nacional desaparece una de las últimas utopías del gobierno. Y mientras la quimera se esfuma toma forma un rostro irascible que solo busca la obediencia y el silencio.

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Interim Report from the Program Chairs: Chicago, 2014

by FLORENCIA GARRAMUÑO | Universidad de San Andrés | florg@udesa.edu.ar
and RAÚL MADRID | University of Texas at Austin | rmadrid@austin.utexas.edu

As we write this piece, the 32nd International Congress of LASA is approaching with a wonderful array of interesting panels on varied topics. Forty years after the September 11 coup that toppled Allende in Chile, we have chosen “Democracy and Memory” as the theme for the Congress. This theme has inspired a series of interdisciplinary panels that examine the way new democracies deal with a violent past, and discuss both the legacies of authoritarian regimes and the challenges that new democracies have faced with regard to a wide spectrum of political, theoretical, historical, and cultural concerns. Different and often conflicting ways of conceiving memory have stimulated panels that raise questions about how to conserve, display, teach, and artistically deal with those legacies, in addition to addressing issues of restitution and redemption.

We are delighted to report that the call for papers has generated enthusiasm among Latin Americanist scholars at large, and the proposals cover a remarkably broad range of academic disciplines and fields of study beyond the theme of the Congress. The active involvement of the track chairs and their networks in the planning of the conference has led to the creation of a series of thought-provoking panels on a wide variety of topics. These panels will deal with new objects of study as well as old topics that have inspired renewed interest, and they will reflect new configurations of studies and disciplines that have led to innovative research and teaching. Among the topics that will be discussed in Chicago are sovereignty and political as well as aesthetic communities; new mass movements and civil protests that are ongoing or have happened in the very recent past; new media and original initiatives to report those events; reconfigurations of Latino Studies; the

renovated contours of Latin American art in a global world; and the persisting precariousness of labor. These are only a tiny fraction of the variegated topics and problems that we will have the opportunity to debate at the conference.

Here is a preliminary list of invited panels and roundtables:

- Democracy after Transition
- Democracia, instituciones y agencia: El legado de Guillermo O'Donnell
- Diasporas and Home Country Politics: False Promise or Opportunity?
- Globalization on the Ground: Space, Place, and Media among Mobile Populations
- Knowing the Field: Studying Labor for What and for Whom?
- “Latin American” in the Arts? A Roundtable
- Latin American Urban Studies and Planning: Present and Future Research Directions
- Latina/o Studies: A State-of-the-Field Discussion
- Liberalism in Latin American History and Historiography
- Literature and Globalization
- Memorias del futuro (los Film Studies en América Latina frente a las mutaciones audiovisuales)
- New Approaches to Understanding the Privatization of Violence in Latin America
- Políticas/estéticas de lo común: Políticas del afecto
- Políticas/estéticas de lo común: Umbrales de multitud
- Posthegemony

- Postneoliberalism and Embodiment
- Taking It to the Streets: Perspectives on Recent Mass Mobilizations in Latin American Democracies
- Teaching Memory? Schooling, Cultural Transmission, and Democracy
- U.S.–Latin American Relations: Policy Relevance, Academic Relevance, and the Future
- What's Left in Bolivia? Honoring the Life and Work of Benjamin Kohl
- A World Where Many Worlds Fit? Cosmopolitics and Indigenous Movements in Abya Yala

We want to thank the track chairs and co-chairs for all of their hard work. They are now in the process of reviewing and ranking around 1,174 individual proposals and 622 panel proposals. We are looking forward to working with them as we put together the final program. We will also continue to work closely with President Merilee Grindle and LASA's professional staff in the coming months. We hope that this effort will translate into another wonderful Congress. The city of Chicago, with its impressive architectural, musical, artistic, and historical legacies, promises to be a more than appropriate setting for this intellectual conversation.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Chicago next May! ■

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Claudia Ferman / Director, LASA2014 Film Festival
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LASA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Kalman Silvert and LASA's Fiftieth Anniversary

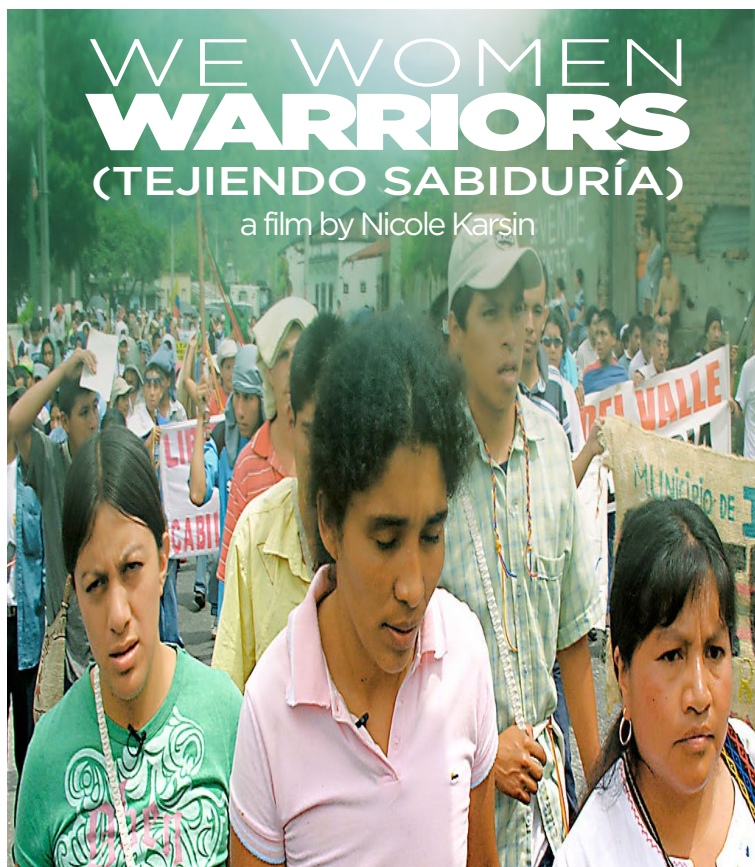
by MARTIN WEINSTEIN | Professor Emeritus, William Paterson University | weinsteinm@wpunj.edu

The 50th anniversary of LASA is an appropriate time to recall Kalman Silvert's extraordinary life and contributions to Latin American studies. Silvert served as LASA's first president; was the program advisor for the social sciences in Latin America at the Ford Foundation from 1967 until his untimely death in 1976; and was teacher, mentor, and institution builder at universities in the United States and Latin America. During the darkest days in Latin America in the late 1960s and early 1970s, accompanied by the tumult and

constitutional crisis in the United States, he turned his energy, intellect, and his institutional position to saving lives and institutions in Latin America, and defending democracy and strengthening democratic theory and practice throughout the Americas.

Abe Lowenthal and I have been coordinating a project on Kal's many roles and contributions. We invite you to read the following essays by Christopher Mitchell (New York University) and John

T. Fishel (University of Oklahoma) concerning Kalman Silvert and the influence he had on them both personally and professionally. If the spirit moves you, send some thoughts or reminiscences of your own to the e-mail above. All of the material will be published on the LASA website in the 50th year. ■



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Silvert Reminiscences Project: A 50-Year Dialogue with Kal Silvert

by JOHN T. FISHEL | University of Oklahoma | j.t.fishel@ou.edu

It was spring term 1962 at Dartmouth College, and I was sitting in the office of Professor Dick Sterling, who headed the International Relations (IR) program. I had finally been allowed to declare IR as my major (Dartmouth did not let students declare a major before the end of their sophomore year) and Sterling was advising me on my program for the next year. I had decided to spend the summer in a rural community development program in Mexico under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee, thereby initiating and indicating my interest in Latin America. Professor Sterling suggested that I take Government 49, Latin American Politics, with a new professor who was a noted expert on the region, Kalman Silvert. I resisted, thinking that perhaps it would be better to wait a year, but Sterling pointed out that there was no guarantee how long Silvert would be at Dartmouth. Strike while the iron was hot. So, I decided to take the course. I did not have the slightest clue as to the impression Kalman Silvert would make nor that I would begin an argument (discussion) with him that still engages me.

Fall 1962: We were seated in one of the larger lecture halls in the college, probably around a hundred young men. The hall was tiered like a theater. Below and in the front was a podium with a blackboard behind. The man who took his place at the podium was somewhat rotund, with a large head, balding; he was not much to look at. Professor Silvert had walked in with a couple of books, that was all. He started speaking and we were spellbound. We remained so for the next ten weeks as he interwove stories about Latin America with concepts about politics and U.S.–Latin American relations.

This was the fall of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Kal, who had been an informal

advisor to the Kennedy administration on Latin America, gave us his analysis of the event a week or so after it was over. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, he argued that although the risk of nuclear war had, indeed, arisen, it had not increased nearly as much as the conventional view thought it had. This was because, in Kal's analysis, the Soviets had knowingly crossed a line with regard to spheres of influence and were not likely to go to war over their own violation of a tacit international understanding. Was Kal right? I am not sure, but his perspective certainly adds depth to the traditional analysis and corresponds to what the USSR, as a rational actor, should have done.

Although his view of the Missile Crisis was classic realism, Kal was not a purist. The point he continually drummed into us in Government 49 was that politics was the result of the relationship between values, institutions, and power. In this, he was making what in IR would have been called an idealist argument (of the liberal variety), but Kal was essentially a comparativist and here his theoretical approach was somewhat unorthodox. The conventional comparative theory at the time was structural functionalism, which continues to be the dominant paradigm today. Nevertheless, Kal's approach challenged it and, while it was harder to use, showed far more promise in terms of being both explanatory and predictive. The problem was just how to operationalize it—something I have been wrestling with for 50 years and have never quite succeeded in doing. Despite this difficulty, the relationship between values, institutions, and power informs the way I see the world, even when I can't articulate it explicitly.

Kal applied this formulation of the overarching nature of politics to a number

of quite specific concepts. Democracy was one. His definition of democracy, while well within the mainstream of political science, is both clearer and more specific than most. It has three components: 1) Leaders are chosen in free, fair, competitive, and periodic elections in which the electorate consists of a majority of the adult population; 2) There must be sufficient freedom of speech, press, religion, and assembly (organization) to organize and advocate for policies, parties, candidates, and ideologies to contest elections and influence policy decisions; 3) There must be an independent and impartial mechanism for the settlement of secular disputes; usually this is a court system. Fifty years later, I still use this definition and apply it in all my courses, both undergraduate and graduate. I have made one change and that is to remove the word "secular" from the final criterion, something I suspect that Kal would argue with me about.

One beauty of his definition of democracy is that it is clearly operational. A government is either democratic or it is not. But, as Kal would argue, if it was not democratic, then what it was became a really interesting question. Although he recognized significant variety among democracies, this variation was extraordinarily limited compared to the differences among nondemocratic states.

I took only one other course with Kal. Unlike the Latin American course, it was a seminar on development. The course met about the same time as Kal's superb edited volume, *Expectant Peoples: Nationalism and Development* (1963), was published. Kal brought in a number of his chapter authors, colleagues from the American Universities Field Staff, who offered differing but congruent perspectives on the subject. Among those Kal invited to speak

to us was Albert Ravenholt, who had written the chapter on the Philippines. In the discussion, someone made the comment that there are always opportunities to influence what is happening in the environment in which one finds oneself. It was something that Kal had always done and advice that I took to heart and applied during my field work in Peru as well as during duty as a staff officer in the U.S. Southern Command in Bolivia, Peru, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama.

In Kal's class, as in *Expectant Peoples*, Kal introduced us to the philosophical underpinnings of his view of nationalism, which he traced from Machiavelli through Hobbes, Locke, Hegel, and Marx, with a nod or two to Coke and the American Constitution. This approach so intrigued me that as a graduate student at Indiana University in political science, I retraced his steps in a major paper. It took me many years, but I finally made the link between Kal's concept of democracy and his concept of nationalism. The fact is that they are intimately related in his usual optimistic point of view. As I worked in an urban community development project in Mexico shortly after graduation from Dartmouth; or in Peruvian highland villages while researching my dissertation; or in trying to assist Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Panamanians in establishing and developing democratic institutions in the face of insurgencies and the aftermath of dictatorships, Kal's wisdom guided the things I attempted to accomplish. What I always looked for was something within the host culture that could be built on in ways that would advance what Kal called the "social value of nationalism" within the context of democracy as he had defined it.

After I graduated from Dartmouth and went off to Indiana, I saw Kal once at his home in Norwich, VT. He fixed us hot

dogs and graciously gave me permission to use in my own research the questionnaire he had developed for use in his studies of nationalism and developmental politics in Latin America. It was simply another example of his generosity in sharing all he had with colleagues and students—because I never ceased to be his student.

The last time I saw Kal was at LASA in San Francisco in 1974. I was giving a paper based on my research using his survey instrument in Peru, an aspect that had not made it into my dissertation. I was also in the queue to become the president of the North Central Council of Latin Americanists. One duty en route was to be program chair and to line up the principal speaker for the meetings. The 1976 meeting was to be held at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, where I was teaching, and I was sure Kal would be the perfect speaker. I discussed it with him and secured his tentative agreement.

As the meeting approached, I wrote to Kal to coordinate his visit to Wisconsin. By that time it was too late. I received a beautiful letter from Frieda, his wife, telling me that Kal had passed away. Yet, as far as I was concerned, he was still very much alive. I had not yet, and still have not, fully assimilated his thoughts. He remains after 50 years my intellectual mentor and sparring partner. ■

Silvert Reminiscences Project: Kalman Silvert as a Colleague at New York University

by CHRISTOPHER MITCHELL | New York University | chris.mitchell@nyu.edu

I was Kalman Silvert's colleague in the New York University Politics Department for five years, from my arrival at the university in the fall of 1971 until Kal's death in the summer of 1976. I was a junior assistant professor, and Kal was an academic star with 20 years' experience: full professor, author or editor of a half-dozen books, founding president of the Latin American Studies Association, and a leader in international social science. He directed NYU's federally funded Ibero-American Language and Area Center (IALAC), which granted an interdisciplinary master's degree in Latin American studies. For the first two years that we shared at NYU, I taught at NYU's University Heights campus in the Bronx. Nonetheless, I saw Kal quite often at the university's main Washington Square campus—at department and committee meetings, at events sponsored by IALAC, at graduate oral exams, and on social occasions. From 1973 until 1976, we both worked at Washington Square.

In the Politics Department and at the Latin American center, Kal was a formidable presence: attracting, teaching, and mentoring graduate students, organizing speakers' series and conferences on Latin America, debating university policies with colleagues, and linking the university with his international network of individual scholars, associations, journals, and foundations. I had known Kal only through his work before I came to NYU, but he welcomed me cordially and drew me quickly into the interdisciplinary work and the outreach activities of IALAC. I rapidly grasped the elements of his profile: gregarious, learned, opinionated, energetic, focused on broad social trends and consequences, and far more alert to moral and ethical concerns than most scholars (then or now). Kal never put on airs based on his rank or professional prominence. Instead, he focused on what colleagues at

any rank were planning and learning, and he was always ready to use his prestige as leverage to assist a junior colleague's grant application or fellowship request.

In New York, Kal Silvert had multiple professional responsibilities. At NYU, he was both professor of politics and director of IALAC, which received so-called Title VI government grant funds, based on peer-reviewed competitions. Simultaneously, Kal served as social science adviser at the Ford Foundation. In the years I knew him, Kal taught exclusively graduate students. To simplify his teaching schedule, he arranged for his two courses per semester to be scheduled back-to-back on a single evening each week. Kal's work at Ford required considerable travel, in addition to meetings and extensive paperwork at East 43rd Street. Beyond all this, Silvert maintained an active research agenda that led to several new books in the mid-1970s.

Most scholars and teachers would be fortunate to perform effectively in two or three of these roles; Kal excelled in four or five of them at a time. In addition, he tried to protect his time with his family, amid calls to attend research conferences and to make foundation-related site visits abroad. I recall how, in one of the first years that I knew him, he remarked that he had turned down an invitation to a symposium abroad that was slated to take place over Thanksgiving. "There just *have* to be limits," he observed.

As an adjunct to his diverse roles, Kal and Frieda Silvert and their sons maintained, in effect, a social and intellectual salon, combining the social and the intellectual with a strong focus on the Western Hemisphere. In what may have been an index of the university's interest in attracting Kal to Washington Square, he and his family enjoyed a double-sized

apartment in Silver Towers, an I. M. Pei-designed high-rise building on the NYU campus. Two (large) standard units had been connected to make a single apartment, providing panoramic views facing both east and west across lower Manhattan. On an evening, one was likely to meet visiting scholars or political leaders from Chile, Argentina, Europe, or Mexico. The varied elements in Kal's network thus strengthened and drew sustenance from one another. He also maintained a group of warm friendships within the Politics Department, including specialists in fields that were distant from his own.

Kal Silvert's relationship with students was especially in the foreground in New York in the early 1970s. He had attracted a dedicated circle of aspiring Latin Americanists, and his graduate teaching centered on sharpening their awareness of social theory and on preparing them for field research. When, occasionally, his travel schedule made him miss a teaching week in New York, Kal would often arrange for a major figure in political science or sociology as a guest leader in his seminars; I remember one week when Gabriel Almond was called on to fill that role. Kal also had a special gift for turning oral examinations into tutorials: the traditional semi-adversarial interface between candidate and committee was almost entirely replaced by a cordial, thoughtful, shared intellectual search, in which students came close to being treated as full colleagues.

The federal Title VI program began operations in 1966, two years before Kal came to NYU. During his years at the head of IALAC, he was helping to invent the role of international studies center director. In doing so, he created an academic and collegial legacy for his successors in IALAC (which was renamed the Center for Latin

American and Caribbean Studies, CLACS, in the mid-1970s). Within IALAC, as elsewhere, Kal espoused interdisciplinary and international scholarship and teaching, maintaining strong ties with the humanists at Washington Square as well as with researchers from diverse Western Hemisphere nations. This approach recruited allies for the center in varied academic units at NYU and in numerous U.S. universities, foundations, and research centers abroad. Though I never heard him articulate this view formally, Kal clearly understood that area studies centers are a structurally endangered species in the U.S. academy, since they usually lack tenure lines and large budgets. By forming strong links to a diverse transnational network, Title VI programs can both fulfill their missions and gain needed resources and prestige that assist them in competing for campus resources. In later years, many of us at CLACS found ourselves asking, “What would Kal have done in today’s circumstances?” and usually finding very constructive answers. The center today is a vibrant contributor both to NYU and to Latin American and Caribbean studies internationally.

Kal’s responsibilities as a colleague at New York University were particularly tested during the university’s financial crisis in 1972. NYU in the early 1970s was pressured by societal circumstances and by its own internal dynamics. Huge and sprawling, with more than 40,000 full- and part-time students, twelve schools, and five campuses in two city boroughs, the university was both tuition-driven and ambition-driven. A traditional ladder for social mobility that relied heavily on part-time students, even in PhD programs, the institution was also a member of the research-oriented Association of American Universities (AAU) and set its academic sights high. It borrowed to expand and

modernize its facilities, especially to build a flagship library covering a small city block in Greenwich Village.

Beginning in 1968, economic recession and reductions in draft deferments spurred a drop in NYU student enrollments, while inflation added to the university’s costs. These pressures, which brought on chronic deficits that lasted until 1974, painfully revealed the contradictions in NYU’s improvement-on-a-shoestring strategy. The institution’s countermeasures stressed budget cutbacks, posing dilemmas for many faculty members, including Kalman Silvert.

Academic year 1971–1972 was exceptionally stressful for Kal. IALAC’s federal funding was not renewed (this was reversed in later decades), and he determined to step down as center director. Early in the spring semester, the NYU administration announced plans to sell the University Heights campus in the Bronx to New York State in order to cut deficits and replenish the endowment; departments were soon asked to recommend deep cuts among junior faculty as well. Kal was a member of the Politics Department’s powerful Personnel and Planning (P&P) Committee, which spent many hours going over the résumés of instructors and assistant professors in political science.

This was a tense and taxing period for faculty members at all ranks: the dean of arts and sciences at University Heights, for example, wept openly at the meeting where the campus’s sale was revealed. Sometime in April or May, Kal circulated a letter to department members in which he resigned from P&P in protest against its assignment to single out many junior colleagues to lose their jobs. In a department meeting held soon after his letter was released, he decried the damage that would be done to

emerging careers, and referred to the university in notably harsh terms.

At an almost surreal meeting in July 1972, the P&P Committee recommended that five (unnamed) junior department members be terminated, as part of measures to achieve a staggering 24 percent reduction in the unit’s budget. Along with a minority of colleagues in Politics, Kal protested. His passion for effective civic participation was aroused, applied in this instance to the academic community. Kal stated that he would no longer vote in department meetings, since policy was being dictated by the administration in an atmosphere where faculty participation was lacking. The slate of firings (whose content was widely known informally) was reluctantly accepted by the department’s majority; ultimately a sixth colleague was also discharged when two early retirements could not be negotiated.

Possibly Kal’s severity was warranted at that juncture. His defiant refusal to conform did not prevent fully two-thirds of the Politics junior staff from losing their positions. However, the spirit of his bold stance may have helped to bolster a determination—which has been effective until now, in decades when NYU has both developed and prospered—that such an event must never happen again.

Though the financial emergency perhaps contributed to Kal’s decision to leave New York four years later, his critical attitude did not undercut his standing with departmental colleagues. His strong sense of departmental patriotism and his keen ambition for the university were amply on view a few years later, when the New York State Department of Education reviewed all New York doctoral programs in political science. The Education Department has the power to terminate any university degree

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program in New York, and the NYU administration was apprehensive about how the Politics Department would fare in the state evaluation. Kal would have none of it: “We must go in with our dukes up,” he argued, helping to energize a department that, as matters proved, scored very well in the official assessment.

Kal also helped to launch an effort at NYU that brought together his commitments to intellectual freedom, Latin American democracy, and human rights. Following Pinochet’s coup in Chile, Silvert assisted in setting up a network to obtain academic positions in the United States for Southern Cone scholars who had been forced into exile. New York was an ideal central location for such an undertaking. IALAC, under director Juan Corradi, provided office space and some staff, and Bryce Wood stepped in to administer the project.

Kalman Silvert, in summary, was an accomplished, memorable, and creative colleague at New York University. Avoiding any factional allegiance within departmental politics, he was modest, unselfish, energetic, and steadfast enough to censure the institution when he believed it was in the wrong. For colleagues at all ranks, but especially for younger ones, he provided an example to be emulated. Pressures that tend to erode collegiality have never been lacking, and revisiting Kal’s standard of academic conduct reminds us of what colleagues can and should achieve together. ■

Asia and the Americas

Adrian H. Hearn, Chair

On May 30, 2013, at 7 p.m., the Section for Asia and the Americas held its business meeting. This was the second meeting since the Section changed its name from “Latin America and the Pacific Rim” at the 2010 LASA Congress and the first since Adrian Hearn (University of Sydney) was elected Section Chair in 2012. During the meeting, Kathleen López (Rutgers University) and Adrian Hearn were elected to serve as Co-chairs for the period 2013–2014, and the following Executive Committee was elected: Vladimir Rouvinski, Treasurer (Universidad Icesi), Sean Burgess (Australian National University), Monica Dehart (University of Puget Sound), Enrique Dussel Peters (UNAM), R. Evan Ellis (National Defense University), Junyoung Verónica Kim (University of Iowa), and Zelideth Rivas (Marshall University). The chair informed the meeting’s attendees about the Section’s activities over the preceding 12 months:

On May 29 the Section hosted a pre-Congress workshop in partnership with the Inter-American Dialogue, entitled “China, Latin America, and the Changing Architecture of Transpacific Engagement.”

The Section website has been frequently updated with announcements of events related to Asia-Americas connections and information about members’ activities and publications. The Section has grown to 82 members, a satisfying outcome considering that many other sections have contracted in size.

In preparation for LASA2013, panel proposals were coordinated via e-mail for those interested in presenting on the topic of Asia and the Americas. Shortly before the Congress, e-mails were sent to the

member list with details of all such panels. The Section will continue to offer its members these services ahead of LASA2014.

Bolivia

Guillermo Delgado P., Chair

Este XXXI Congreso Internacional de LASA ha sido en general muy fructífero en cuanto a los paneles organizados por la sección. Se presentaron, a lo largo del congreso, más de cincuenta ponencias con temas bolivianos. La sección fue acreedora de seis becas de viaje lo que hizo posible la presentación de dos paneles, ambos apoyados por miembros de la Sección. LASA colaboró en diseminar la información correcta de la sección en el programa, así como efectivizar la presencia de los ponentes y becarios invitados. Otro panel organizado por Núria Vilanova, en la que uno de los becarios de la Sección contribuyó como panelista (Mauricio Souza) fue muy concurrido. La Sección acordó organizar un panel pre-congreso, realizado en la sede de la Universidad de California (UC-DC) cuya Directora la Prof. Melanie DuPuis (colega de Guillermo Delgado), nos ofreció un espacio para que muchos miembros de la sección pudieran conocerse, conocer a los panelistas, e intercambiar intereses comunes. LASA colaboró anunciando este evento en el programa general. La sesión pre-congreso se utilizó como un espacio para presentar a los becarios de la Sección quienes ofrecieron versiones cortas de sus ponencias al público en general. También se aprovechó ese momento para socializar e intercambiar saludos entre congresistas, y para ofrecer publicaciones que los panelistas trajeron a la reunión. Este evento fue útil ya que hubiera sido imposible que todos los congresistas asistieran a todos los paneles

simultáneamente. Las sesiones organizadas por la Sección estuvieron relativamente concurridas. Una, muy temprano (8:30 a.m.) no tuvo tanto público, pero las demás estuvieron mucho mejor.

Un tercer evento, post-congreso, organizado por la Sección para la comunidad de residentes bolivianos en Washington, ofreció una sesión con los panelistas-becarios. Este evento de servicio a la comunidad es alentada por LASA como organización, para crear una cercanía entre quienes estudiamos y analizamos temas bolivianos y el público en general. Después de este evento, coordinado por Chris Krueger y moderado por Isabel Scarborough, los panelistas invitados y otros miembros de la Sección que se unieron al evento, concluyeron el cónclave con la comunidad invitados por residentes y amigos de Bolivia que colaboraron en la organización del evento (hacer posters, distribuirlos en la comunidad, refrigerios, transporte, etc.). Varios factores contribuyeron a llevar a cabo un interesante congreso. La familiaridad de Chris Krueger con la ciudad, y los varios contactos de Guillermo Delgado con colegas (como la Sede de la U de California en Washington) que trabajan y viven allá fueron muy importantes. La Sección guió, con el apoyo de varios amigos en D.C. (especialmente Chris Krueger), la estadía de los panelistas becarios asegurando que no les faltara nada. Sin este particular hecho, no se hubiera podido organizar las varias instancias del congreso que forjó una comunidad de académicos que, esperamos, no pierdan el contacto.

La respectiva reunión de Sección sólo atrajo a una audiencia de veinticuatro personas y fue informada y produjo un diálogo animado entre los asistentes. Se aprovechó para informar de las tareas realizadas por la Sección, y compartiendo

los planes nos enfocamos en invitar a Virginia Aillón a presentar un informe preliminar, elaborado por el esfuerzo (pro-bono) de Chris Krueger y Virginia Aillón en Bolivia. Este documento es base de una futura propuesta para animar la consolidación de proyectos de intercomunicación e intercambio entre académicos y publicaciones tanto de norte como de sur. Siendo el documento de características exploratorias, la idea es expandirlo y utilizarlo como base para concretizar una propuesta que la sección lo puede adoptar como meta futura.

También se habló de colaborar en la repatriación de estudios sobre Bolivia que, muy frecuentemente, no llegan, no se traducen, ni se depositan en las bibliotecas bolivianas. Los estudios publicados en Bolivia (en español), no se citan tan frecuentemente como aquellos en inglés y la percepción, de norte dominando el sur, en vez de un diálogo entre iguales, suele terminar reforzando una visión de arriba a abajo.

Isabel Scarborough ha establecido contacto con la Sección del Ecuador con el propósito de coordinar algún panel bilateral. Continuamos también nuestra comunicación con la AEB (*Bolivian Research Review*) que tiene su congreso en Sucre (Julio 29–31, 2013), lo mismo que con Elizabeth Monasterios de Pittsburgh (*Bolivian Studies Journal*). El documento elaborado por Virginia Aillón y Chris Krueger puede servir de base para implementar un proyecto de intercomunicación, intercambio de estudios sobre Bolivia, y consolidar una red de varias instituciones sólidas que ya tienen recursos y/o programas académicos establecidos (el caso del PIEB, CESU, CIDES, varias universidades en Bolivia, Taller de Historia Oral Andina, IEB, Plural Editores, Archivo Nacional, etc.). Se

sugiere también crear un grupo virtual para materializar la base de estos proyectos. Entre las falencias de la sección, durante la sesión de business, tenemos que reconocer que no logramos elegir una nueva mesa directiva. Habiendo convocado a renovar la mesa, fracasamos en recibir nombres de candidatos para dirigir la sección con miras al Congreso de LASA Chicago 2014. Al cerrar este informe solicitamos, en consecuencia, voluntarios que se ofrezcan para liderar la sección. Mientras tanto, Chris Krueger, Isabel Scarborough (en colaboración con Guillermo) continúan informando a la sección hasta que logremos sustituir a Guillermo, Hernán Pruden, Miguel Buitrago y Victor Unda que terminaron su gestión.

Brazil

Desmond Arias, Co-chair

The Brazil Section held its business meeting on May 31, 2013, at the LASA Congress. Approximately 20 individuals attended. The meeting began with a report on the budget and the prizes awarded for best dissertation, best article, and best book. Best Dissertation was awarded to Felipe Amin Filomeno, "The Social Basis of Intellectual Property Regimes: Biotechnology in South American Soybean Agriculture" (PhD dissertation, John Hopkins University, 2012); Honorable Mention went to Rochele Fellini Fachinetto, "Quando eles as matam e quando elas os matam: Uma análise dos julgamentos de homicídio pelo Tribunal do Júri" (PhD dissertation, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, 2012). The prize for Best Article went to Yuko Miki, "Fleeing into Slavery: The Insurgent Geographies of Brazilian Quilombolas (Maroons), 1880–1881," *The Americas* 66, no. 4 (2012); Honorable Mention was awarded to Bryan Pitts, "The Audacity to

Strong-Arm the Generals: Paulo Maluf and the 1978 São Paulo Gubernatorial Contest,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 92, no. 3 (2012). The Best Book Prize was awarded to André Cicalo, *Urban Encounters: Affirmative Action and Black Identities in Brazil* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). The winners were chosen through the following process. An open call went out to the Section for nominations. The Executive Committee then formed the three subcommittees that deliberated on each of the prizes.

At its meeting, the Section held elections for co-chairs and for two members of the Executive Committee. The current Co-chairs, Desmond Arias (City University of New York, John Jay College) and Pedro Erber (Cornell University), were elected to new one-year terms. Joseph Marques (King’s College, London) and Angela Paiva (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro) were also reelected to two-year terms as members of the Executive Committee.

Treasurer Amy Chazkel (City University of New York, Queen’s College) continued in her current position. Executive Committee members John French (Duke University) and Ivani Vassoler-Froelich (State University of New York, Fredonia) also continued in their current positions. All three positions, which have a term of two years, are up for election in 2014.

After the election the attendees had an extended conversation about the role of the Section and how it could better achieve its goals. There were discussions regarding collaboration between groups of Brazilianists and methods for choosing panels for the upcoming conference.

Central America

Ellen Moodie, Co-chair

The Central America Section (CAS) held its business meeting on Thursday, May 30, during the LASA Congress. Twenty-nine Section members attended the meeting. Membership this year is 190, down from 225 in 2012. The matter of yearly meetings has likely caused the decline. Next year CAS can support three sessions. This year’s sessions were “The Art of the Central American Diasporas: A Roundtable Discussion” and “Race, Sex, and Spectacles of Power in Caribbean Central America.” Two people applied for the \$750 travel fellowship. Co-chairs José Juan Colín and Ellen Moodie chose Allen Cordero Ulate, profesor-investigador (Universidad de Costa Rica, FLACSO) after evaluating the applications according to a list of priorities: recipients should be from Central America, live in Central America, be students, and should explain their financial need in a short statement. For next year, all members present voted to have two \$750 travel fellowships.

We considered four more items: 1) prizes for student papers about Central America (this conversation will continue online); 2) inviting a Central American author or intellectual to speak at the meeting next year, a suggestion greeted enthusiastically and approved by all present (CAS officers will ask for nominations online); 3) whether to have a Facebook page (Yolany Martínez will set it up); and 4) new officers. Four advisory board members, self-nominated online, took office: William Clary (University of the Ozarks), Sonja Wolf (Instituto para la Seguridad y la Democracia, Mexico), Yansi Pérez (Carleton College), and Erin Finzer (University of Arkansas, Little Rock); Héctor Cruz Feliciano, in the end the only

candidate, has been declared Co-chair for a two-year term.

Colombia

Constanza López, Co-chair

The Colombia Section held its business meeting at LASA2013 with 33 members present. During the meeting it was proposed to change year-and-a-half terms for elected officers, and members voted unanimously to change terms to two years. Therefore for the period of 2013–2015 the following people were elected: Constanza López (University of North Florida), Chair; Alejandro Quin (University of Utah), Vice-Chair; Leah Carroll (University of California, Berkeley), Secretary-Treasurer; Joseph Avski (Texas A&M University), Communications Manager; and Ben Johnson (Columbia University) and Catalina Arango (New York University), Student Representatives. The Section’s advisors are Ginny Bouvier (United States Institute of Peace), Mauricio Romero (Universidad Javeriana), Mercedes Jaramillo (Fitchburg State University), and Juana Suárez (New York University).

It was decided that the Section will run one award competition each year, alternating years. In 2014 the Premio Montserrat Ordóñez will be given, and in 2015 the Premio Michael Jiménez will be awarded. Elvira Sánchez Blake (Michigan State University) was elected as the coordinator for the Premio Montserrat Ordóñez, and Anne Farnsworth Alvear (University of Pennsylvania) will be the coordinator for the Premio Michael Jiménez. The Section will sponsor three panels for LASA2014. The Section celebrated its reception at Rumba Café on May 31. The Section currently has 144 members and is publishing a monthly bulletin.

Colonial

Clayton McCarl, Chair

The new Colonial Section held its first elections electronically in April 2013. Clayton McCarl (University of North Florida) was elected Chair for the coming year, and the council members are Mónica Díaz (Georgia State University), Pablo García Loaeza (West Virginia University), Ann De León (University of Alberta), and Raúl Marrero-Fente (University of Minnesota). Patricia Tovar Rojas (CUNY, John Jay College) is Secretary-Treasurer. The Section held its first business meeting at LASA2013 with nineteen members present. Members discussed a proposal to award a prize for a dissertation in 2014, the organization of the section's two sponsored panels for LASA2014, and a succession plan for the group's leadership. The Section celebrated its inaugural reception at the Cosmos Club near Dupont Circle on May 31. The Colonial Section currently has approximately 90 members and is publishing a quarterly newsletter, titled *Colonial/Colônia*.

Cuba

Sheryl Lutjens, Co-chair

The Cuba Section was created in 1997. As LASA Congresses have become annual events, and with ongoing issues of visa denials, the Section's efforts in 2012–2013 focused squarely on the Washington, DC, International Congress. In all, 136 scholars from Cuba were accepted for the LASA program and 88 applied for visas. Of these, 11 applications were denied.

The Section organized four very diverse panels and workshops for the Washington Congress. One was cancelled, unfortunately, but the others had excellent attendance.

The Cuba Section business meeting had a full agenda and 125 in attendance. Items discussed included the Section's and LASA's executive efforts to prevent visa denials, coordinated by Jorge Domínguez; strategies to bring younger scholars and scholars from the provinces into the Section; and conducting a survey, including suggestions for panels and activities for LASA2014.

The Section's Premio a la Excelencia Académica en los Estudios sobre Cuba was awarded to Lars Schoultz (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill). The selection committee was composed of Carlos Alzugaray (Chair and representative of the Section Executive) and four previous recipients of the Section Award.

The hard work of the Section Election Committee—Lana Wylie (Chair), Elena Napoles, and Elaine Scheye—is much appreciated! Election results are Nancy Morejón (Casa de las Américas) and Lillian Manzor (University of Miami), Co-chairs; Omar Everleny Pérez Villanueva (Universidad de La Habana), Lana Wylie (McMaster University), Jorge Domínguez (Harvard University), and Milagros Martínez (Universidad de La Habana), members of the Executive Board. Section Treasurer is John Kirk (Dalhousie University).

Section activities for the coming year will include streamlining the membership application process for scholars from Cuba and reaching out to younger academics and artists, especially those residing in the provinces. Sincere thanks go to Mario Bronfman (Ford Foundation), Sarah Doty (Social Science Research Council), and Andrea Panaritis (Christopher Reynolds Foundation) for their contributions to the reception and to the participation of scholars from Cuba in LASA2013.

Culture, Power, and Politics

Jon Beasley-Murray, Co-chair

In line with decisions taken at the 2012 San Francisco Congress (for which see last year's report), the agenda for the Culture, Power, and Politics Section in 2012–2013 was to organize the Section sessions for LASA2013 in Washington DC, to update the Section's website, and to update the e-mail list. These last two items were completed early in the year, as the Section built up its presence on the website provided by LASA and transferred to new e-mail list software. As before, we used the list to circulate information among members (for instance about events and research grants), encourage communication and the sharing of research, and enable productive synergies. At the Washington Congress, the section organized three well-attended sessions on the diverse topics of food security, cultural politics, and inequality. The business meeting confirmed the continuing terms of the Section's Secretary-Treasurer, Justin Read, and council members Antonio Torres-Ruiz, Ana Wortman, and Silvia Kurlat Ares, as well as electing new Co-chairs Jon Beasley-Murray (University of British Columbia) and Juan Poblete (University of California, Santa Cruz), and new council member Maya Aguiluz-Ibargüen (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México). It was resolved that for the coming year, the Section's priorities would be 1) rewriting the Section's definition and charter, especially in the light of the existence of other, newer LASA sections whose areas now overlap with that of Culture, Power, and Politics, and 2) using the Section's accrued capital to invite one or more major figures to LASA2014, perhaps as part of a pre-Congress workshop or conference.

Decentralization and Subnational Governance

Laura Flamand, Co-chair

The Decentralization and Subnational Governance Section of LASA had a successful Congress in Washington, DC, in 2013, sponsoring one panel and organizing another. Attendance was very good in both cases. In both panels, the commentators did a superb job, and participation from the public was excellent. At the business meeting, with an attendance of 18 members, the Section elected Lorena Moscovich (Universidad de Buenos Aires, CONICET) as the new Section Chair. Lorena will be assisted by Laura Flamand (El Colegio de México). Also at the meeting, it was announced that the Section would select the best paper award for a student who is a Section member and had presented a paper at LASA2013 or will at LASA2014. The final item in the agenda was the announcement that the Section would organize and propose panels for other international conferences (International Political Science Association, American Political Science Association, Midwest Political Science Association) on the subjects of decentralization and subnational governance.

Our current Section membership is at 66 members, which means the Section is entitled to a single panel at LASA2014. Several current members, including those listed above, will be working to encourage new and former members to register.

The Decentralization and Subnational Governance Section sponsored the following panel at LASA2013: “Decentralization and Subnational Governance: Reconceptualizing and Measuring Decentralization.” Increasing numbers of scholars are becoming concerned with the conceptual framing and

measurement of decentralization. Divergent fields use diverse definitions and measures to answer questions related to the concept. These conflicting methods are thus creating assorted outcomes. This panel revisited the fundamental definitions of what we mean by decentralization and presented a review of how scholars are interpreting and measuring the concept. In addition to this official section-sponsored panel, the Decentralization and Subnational Governance Section organized a second panel through LASA’s regular channels on the related topic of electoral strategies and coalitions in federal countries.

Defense, Public Security, and Democracy

Marcos Robledo and Harold Trinkunas, Co-chairs

The business meeting for the Defense, Public Security, and Democracy Section was conducted on May 30, 2013. Approximately 25 members of the Section were present. The meeting was chaired by Co-chairs Marcos Robledo and Harold Trinkunas.

The meeting discussed the evolution of the Section during the 2012–2013 term. We noted that the Section has increased in membership and it was now eligible for two section-sponsored panels at LASA2014. The Section ended the term with a slight increase in available funds, even after a travel grant was made. We appealed to members to contribute information on recent research and publications to the Section website.

The Section unanimously elected Deborah Norden (Whittier College) and José Manuel Ugarte (Universidad de Buenos Aires) as the new Co-chairs of the Section. Rafael Martínez (Universidad de Barcelona) and Jaime Baeza (Universidad

de Chile) were unanimously elected to the Executive Committee. José Manuel Ugarte, David Pion-Berlin, Marcos Robledo, and Harold Trinkunas were thanked for their service to the Section during the 2013 term.

For the LASA2013 Congress, a travel grant in the amount of \$300 was made to Magdalena Defort (University of Miami). The selection was made by the Executive Committee of the Section, comprised of David Pion-Berlin, Deborah Norden, Maiah Jaskoski (Naval Postgraduate School), and Liza Zúñiga (Red de Seguridad y Defensa de América Latina). The selection was made from among submissions by Section members who were presenting papers at LASA2013. The Section agreed to sponsor two travel grants for LASA2014.

Economics and Politics

Mahrukh Doctor, Chair

The Economics and Politics Section aims to promote policy relevant dialogue as well as pure scholarship at the intersection of economics and politics. For the LASA Congress in Washington, DC, the Section had organized three panels to discuss 1) international financial institutions and their changing relations with Latin America (with senior officials from the Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, and United Nations Development Programme present); 2) issues related to the financial inclusion of the poor in Brazil; and 3) the domestic and external challenges to Brazil’s new development path.

The Section awarded an open prize and an early career prize for articles published in peer-reviewed journals in 2012. Our first winners were Barbara Hogenboom and Steven Samford, respectively. Many thanks go to our prize panel members: Kathryn

Hochstetler, Patrice Franko, Derrick Hodge, Matthew Taylor, Margaret Commins, and Ken Shadlen.

Section elections were organized to select new officers and a four-member council. The business meeting was attended by ten members, including the newly elected Section officers and committee, who will hold office for the next two years. Members discussed the activities of the previous year, award panel process, issues related to the Section's website, a proposal to award travel grants to Section members, and ideas for other initiatives going forward. The new officers are Gabriel Ondetti (Missouri State University), Chair; Tony Spanakos (Montclair State University), Treasurer; and Kathryn Hochstetler (University of Waterloo), Steven Samford (University of Notre Dame), Flavio Gaitán (IESP-UERJ), and Mahrukh Doctor, members of the Section Advisory Council.

Ecuadorian Studies Rut Román, Chair

On Thursday May 30, 2013, the Ecuadorian Studies Section business meeting took place with 26 members attending. During the meeting we discussed the following points: term report, elections and the renewal of the directorate, and questions and requests.

The chair reported that the Executive Committee—Rut Román (Universidad Laica “Eloy Alfaro” de Manabí), Julie Williams (Universidad San Francisco de Quito), Norman González (University of Maryland), Kathleen Fine (Fort Lewis College); Jennifer Collins (University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point); and Nick Rattray (University of Arizona)—has carried out the following tasks. Biannual

Ecuador meeting: During the last business meeting it was decided that our conference should be taken out of Quito and into the provinces to extend our visibility and encourage new membership. In view of the upcoming VI Encuentro de Ecuatorianistas, the Executive Committee secured sponsors in addition to the hosting city and institution, Universidad de Cuenca. We obtained financial support for the new design and upgrade of our Section website from the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar. The Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales agreed to finance promotional printouts for the VI Encuentro de Ecuatorianistas (Cuenca, June 27–29, 2013). Dr. Enrique Ayala-Mora (Chancellor of the Universidad Andina) will be the guest speaker during the VI Encuentro de Ecuatorianistas. We have accepted 140 papers from Ecuadorian and international scholars that will be organized in 46 panels. During the VI Encuentro we will have the assistance and support of professors and students of the Universidad de Cuenca. The municipality of Cuenca will be offering a special event and dinner party, “Noche cuencana,” in an old hacienda house in the outskirts of Cuenca. The Fulbright Commission will offer the closing luncheon.

In response to the request made during our last business meeting in San Francisco, the Executive Committee called for the first LASA-Ecuador Book Prize. The prize of \$1,000 was financed by the Universidad de Cuenca. The reviewing committee was formed by Carmen Fernández Salvador (Universidad San Francisco de Quito), Pablo Ospina (Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar), and Juan del Pozo (PUCE). The prize was awarded to Ketty Wong (University of Kansas) for her book *Whose National Music? Identity, Mestizaje, and Migration in Ecuador* (Temple University Press, 2012).

The Ecuador Studies Section has 99 active members. During LASA2013 our Section sponsored the panel entitled “Native Populations and Forced Labor in the Ecuadorian Amazon, 1890–2010.” We organized an event for our members at Lillies Restaurant and Bar in Washington, DC. The chair suggested we should offer travel funds for Ecuadorian students to attend the VI Encuentro in Cuenca; the attendees agreed with the proposal. All members are invited to post articles and papers in the different areas noted on our website, so as to broaden opportunities for collaboration and contact. The chair made a special mention of the continuous support and hard work of our webmaster, Carlos Reyes Ignatov, during the development of our website.

As per LASA regulations we proceeded to call for Executive Committee elections, with the following results: Rut Román (Universidad Laica “Eloy Alfaro” de Manabí), Chair; Julie Williams (Universidad San Francisco de Quito), Vice Chair; Francisco Sánchez (Universidad de Valencia), Secretary-Treasurer; and Jennifer Collins (University of Wisconsin), Kathleen Fine (Fort Lewis University), and Carolina Bown (Salisbury University), members of the Executive Committee. Rut Román highlighted the collaboration of the past Executive Committee, especially Norman González (University of Maryland).

John Walker proposed making a renewed effort to include sponsored panels in areas such as art and the humanities; after a few minutes of discussion this was accepted by the membership. A suggestion was made to expand our book award with a special award for best published article. The assembly approved the petition, and the leaders will investigate how to include this new section in the biannual prize.

Educación y Políticas Educativas

Javier Hermo, Executive Council Member

En el horario de las 19 hh previsto para la reunión de la sección, se dieron cita 20 miembros de la misma, variando el número a lo largo de las dos horas que insumió el encuentro, sin que nunca estuviera por debajo de los 10 miembros requeridos para el quórum, de acuerdo al Manual de Secciones de LASA. La sesión fue presidida por Cecilia Pittelli, co-chair de la sección, quien comenzó realizando un repaso de lo actuado durante el período, la situación actual con 76 miembros activos del área y que ello supone que se pueden presentar dos paneles específicos de la sección para LASA2014, lo que requiere comenzar a trabajar para definir los temas y panelistas. En tal sentido, se acordó en debatir a través de la lista de correo de la sección ambas cuestiones antes de la fecha tope para envío de propuestas. El debate giró en torno de la necesidad de estimular un crecimiento de las membresías de la sección, así como la posibilidad de redefinir el nombre y alcance de la misma. Se mencionó, en particular, la posibilidad de unificarse o bien trabajar en conjunto con la track de Niñez y Juventud, para lo que se decidió que el Consejo revise las posibilidades estatutarias y se realicen consultas al secretariado de LASA.

También se propuso volver a insistir en la idea de realizar publicaciones de la sección. En tal sentido, Felipe Pérez propuso comenzar por reunir trabajos presentados en este Congreso y convocar a otros posibles interesados para editar una o varias publicaciones colectivas y ofreció compilar una con posibilidades de ser publicada en Cuba para 2015 o 2016. Norberto Fernández Lamarra propuso, también, realizar una convocatoria abierta a los miembros de la sección, de LASA y otros posibles interesados para enviar artículos con miras a una publicación

colectiva cuyo tema central esté ligado al del Congreso 2014 “Democracia y Memoria”. Se ofreció, también, para organizar un Comité Académico de Evaluación para tal publicación. Javier Hermo se ofreció para compilar una publicación colectiva sobre educación superior y explorar la posibilidad de publicarlo con alguna editorial. Asimismo, se propuso para coordinar la tarea de publicaciones a emprender, con el objetivo de centralizar las iniciativas de publicaciones a elaborar y, en conjunto con los chair de la sección, hacer las presentaciones correspondientes a LASA para su aprobación. Por su parte, con respecto a los esfuerzos por integrar nuevos miembros, Cristian Cabalin se ofreció a difundir las actividades y tareas entre la Red de Investigadores Chilenos en Educación y otros foros similares. En idéntico sentido, Fernanda Saforcada, se comprometió a hacer lo propio en el espacio de CLACSO y, especialmente, el Grupo de Trabajo sobre Educación. Lo mismo plantearon Fernanda Astiz y Mauricio Horn con respecto a redes de ex-alumnos de posgrado de universidades norteamericanas interesados en la educación latinoamericana. También, Beatriz Calvo y Gladys Barreyro se comprometieron a lo mismo entre las comunidades académicas mexicana y brasileña, respectivamente. Todo ello con el fin de contribuir a generar espacios de sinergia con otras redes existentes que trabajen sobre temas ligados a la educación en América Latina. Con respecto a los fondos de la sección, se debatió el explorar la posibilidad de contar con fondos de sponsoring de editoriales académicas, una vez que se logre establecer una política continuada de publicaciones.

Respecto de la renovación de autoridades, habida cuenta de que no se habían cumplimentado debidamente los

procedimientos establecidos en el Manual de Secciones se resuelve elegir un nuevo Consejo completo. Se procede a ratificar a Cecilia Pittelli (Universidad de Buenos Aires) y Daniel Schugurensky (Arizona State University) como Co-chairs de la sección, nombrar a Mauricio Horn (Universidad de Buenos Aires) como Secretario-Tesorero, como vocales a Felipe Pérez (Unión Nacional de Historiadores de Cuba), María Fernanda Astiz (Canisius College) y Gladys Barreyro (Universidade de São Paulo), así como incorporar la figura de Editor en la persona de Javier Hermo (Universidad de Buenos Aires).

Environment

Jennifer Horan, Co-chair

The members of the Environment Section of LASA held their business meeting on May 30, 2013. At the meeting plans for LASA2014 were developed. These include the selection of the theme for the first of the Section's two sponsored panels: Citizen Participation in Environmental Conflict. In addition the membership decided to continue to hold a workshop session. The Section also created a Best Paper Award. This award is open to all LASA2013 participants who have presented papers on environmental topics and are also members of the Environment Section. The Best Paper Award (\$250) will be given at the Section business meeting during LASA2014 in Chicago, Illinois.

Ethnicity, Race, and Indigenous Peoples (ERIP)

Emiko Saldívar, Chair

Elections were held via e-mail prior to the annual meeting. Emiko Saldívar Tanaka (University of California, Santa Barbara) was reelected Chair, and Monica Moreno

Figuroa (Newcastle University, UK) was elected Secretary-Treasurer. New Executive Council members include Cristhian Teófilo da Silva (Universidade de Brasília) and Lorena Ojeda (Universidad Michoacana). Continuing members are Tracy Devine Guzmán (University of Miami) and Juliet Hooker (University of Texas at Austin). Outgoing members are Luis Cárcamo-Huechante (University of Texas at Austin), Margo Tamez (University of British Columbia, Okanagan), and Emilio del Valle Escalante (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).

The Section business meeting was held during the LASA Congress in Washington, DC. It was attended by 30 people. The agenda included a report on election results and new officers; a report on membership; a budget report; discussion of the upcoming ERIP conference in Oaxaca, October 2013, including that the Virginia Commonwealth University is interested in hosting the next ERIP Conference in fall 2015; discussion of the problem that the amount of travel grants for indigenous people is not enough to cover expenses; discussion of the Section e-mail list, website, and social media maintenance; discussion of the importance of creating a system that allows for continuity and institutional memory for the Section. Also, Marc Becker presented the two volumes of the proceedings of the second ERIP conference in San Diego. It was reported that the Section now has 230 members, sufficient to allow us to invite four panels for next year's LASA Congress in Chicago.

Decisions were made that a letter should be sent to LASA to address the issue of travel funds for indigenous people; and that if Virginia Commonwealth University was interested in hosting the next ERIP conference it would be accepted.

Activities during the 2012–2013 term included the call to host the third ERIP conference, the proposal presented by the Department of Anthropology, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Iztapalapa, and the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales de la Universidad Autónoma de Oaxaca “Benito Juárez,” and the organization of the upcoming conference.

Europe and Latin America

Erica Resende, Co-chair

At this year's Europe and Latin America Section business meeting, held on May 30, 2013, 27 members gathered to 1) receive a review of the activities conducted by the Section in the last year by the co-chairs (current membership, panels organized and sponsored, financial report, etc.); 2) elect new officials to the period of 2013–2014 (two co-chairs and four council members); and 3) propose ideas and themes for next year's Section panel.

Newly elected Section officials for the 2013–2014 term are Anna Ayuso (Fundación CIDOB, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona), Co-chair; Erica Resende (Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro), Co-chair; Miriam Saraiva (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro), Christian Ghymers (Institut Catholique des Hautes Études Commerciales), Lorena Ruano (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas), and Sebastián Santander (Universite de Liège), Executive Council members.

This year's travel award recipients were Miriam Saraiva, Joaquin Roy, Bert Hofman, Roberto Domínguez, and Sebastian Santander. They all presented papers in this year's Section panel.

Film Studies

Catherine Benamou, Chair

The LASA Film Studies Section is devoted to promoting scholarship, exhibitions, and critical public dialogue (through social media) concerning the production, distribution, and circulation of audiovisual texts by and about Latin Americans in various genres and media, from the analog to the digital and electronic. With an aim to addressing the current state of the field, as well as fostering scholarly exchange on issues that affect spheres of media practice as well as media studies, the Section hosted four sessions at this year's LASA Congress.

A guest keynote address was by Robert P. Stam (NYU): “Towards a Lexicon of Radical Aesthetics in Latin America.” Response was by Gilberto Blasini (University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee). An informal breakfast reception followed, cosponsored by the Brazil Section.

A panel entitled “The Role of the State and Media: Community Engagement and Audiovisual Representations of a New Social Contract” was also organized, with Chair Clara Garavelli (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) and panelists Tomás Crowder-Taraborrelli (Soka University), Álvaro Baquero-Piñero (University of Alabama), and Kristi M. Wilson (Soka University).

A workshop entitled “The Role of Film Festivals in Funding, Producing, and Distributing Latin American Film” was organized with Chair Tamara Falicov (University of Kansas) and participants Carlos Gutiérrez (Cinetropical, New York City), Claudia Ferman (Director, LASA Film Festival, University of Virginia), Beatriz Urraca (Widner University), and Julia Solomonoff (filmmaker, New York City). A second workshop entitled

“Latinoamerican Media Archives and the Social Contract” was also offered, chaired by Catherine L. Benamou (University of California, Irvine) and with participants Dona Kercher (Assumption College) and Rielle Navitski (University of California, Berkeley).

Food, Agriculture, and Rural Studies Kerry Preibisch, Chair

Food, Agriculture, and Rural Studies implemented many activities in 2013. Preceding the Congress, the Section organized a research trip to the United States Department of Agriculture that included discussions with various civil servants, including the Department’s chief economist. Twenty-two individuals participated. The Section thanks Steven Zahniser for planning this itinerary.

Fifteen members participated in the business meeting. New officers were elected: Clifford Welch (Universidade Federal de São Paulo), Chair; Nashieli Rangel Loera (Universidade Estadual Paulista), Chair-elect; Fina Carpena-Méndez (Oregon State University), Secretary-Treasurer; and Diego Piñeiro (Universidad de la República de Uruguay), Executive Council member. Diego joins council members Bernardo Mançano Fernandes, Eric Rendón Schneir, and Hannah Wittman.

The Section sponsored two sessions at the Congress: “Territórios do cotidiano: Lutas camponesas e indígenas, políticas públicas e desenvolvimento” and “Toward a New Social Contract in Bolivia and Brazil?” as well as a reception. Section membership stands at 89.

The Section discussed the fund created by generous member contributions to facilitate

the travel of a panelist who later was unable to attend. The fund will be used to subsidize the travel to Chicago of a new scholar in food, agriculture, and rural studies. The organization of our 2014 panels will reflect the Section’s new focus, possibly in the areas of global value chains, agrifood systems, or food justice/food deserts. We decided not to hold a reception in 2014 due to the prohibitive pricing of hotel catering. While receptions allow for socializing and enhancing membership, our field trip also fulfills these goals. In Chicago, field trip plans include touring Illinois’s packing houses or the city’s Mercantile Exchange. All Congress attendees are welcome to attend.

Gender and Feminist Studies Verónica Schild and Constanza Tabbush, Co-chairs

The business meeting of the Gender and Feminist Studies Section took place on Thursday, May 30, and was attended by about 40 members. It was coordinated by Constanza Tabbush and Verónica Schild, Co-chairs, and by Elisabeth Friedman, Secretary-Treasurer. We informed the members that we will once again be able to organize four Section panels for LASA2014. We also informed them about the four successful panels we organized for the LASA2013 meeting. The selection process for these panels was open, and as in previous years it was conducted through consultation with the entire membership. We received a healthy number of proposals, though smaller than in previous years, something we attributed to the change in the schedule of LASA Congresses. The members of the board, co-chairs, and treasurer participated in the final selection process using the Section’s established criteria. The following panels were selected: “Understanding and Combating

Gender Violence: Recent Advances in Latin America” (Carmen Diana Deere, organizer); “Transnational Parenting across the Americas” (Kerry Preibisch, organizer); “Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes: Widening the Dialogue” (Florence Babb, organizer); and “Explorando estrategias de investigación en torno a la autonomía reproductiva y de ciudadanía sexual” (Graciela Di Marco, organizer).

We also announced this year’s winners of the Elsa Chaney Essay Award. Following our established practice, we again directed our competition to junior scholars with PhDs completed since 2007 and to students completing their dissertations. The selection committee was comprised of Gabriela Arguedas, Pascha-Bueno Hansen, and Sara Poggio. The winners were First Place, Susan Ellison, for her essay “The Conflictual Life of an Industrial Sewing Machine”; and Honorary Mention, Abigail Andrews, for her essay “For the Love of My Pueblo: Re-thinking Women’s Political Engagement in Indigenous Migrant Communities.” Sara Poggio and María Amelia Viteri reported to the membership on the collection they are preparing with the remainder of funds donated by UNIFEM a few years ago. This collection will contain the works of earlier winners of the Elsa Chaney Award and is scheduled to be published in early 2014.

The Section conducted elections to renew the board and the two co-chairs. The results are as follows: Linda Stevenson (West Chester University) and Marta Zambrano (Universidad Nacional de Colombia), Co-chairs (elected for a one-year term); and Pascha Bueno-Hansen (University of Delaware), Gabriela Arguedas (Universidad de Costa Rica), Christina Wolff (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina), Lucía Saldaña (Universidad de Concepción), Executive

Council members. Cecilia Santos (University of San Francisco) was elected Treasurer. The option offered by LASA to help with electronic elections was discussed and will be pursued by the incoming co-chairs.

Finally, we reported on the successful daylong pre-LASA conference, organized with the Sexualities Section and sponsored by the Washington College of Law Impact Litigation Project and the American University Center for Latin American and Latino Studies, on legal activism as a tool for advancing gender and sexuality rights in the Americas. A region usually known for its Catholic religiosity and patriarchal institutions has expanded gender and sexual rights in an unprecedented manner, as we have seen the enactment of antiviolence and antidiscrimination legislation, gay marriage, and the world's most progressive gender identity law. The daylong conference "Gender, Sexuality and Struggles for Justice in Latin America: Legal, Political and Social Dimensions" held at American University's Washington College of Law on May 29, 2013, just prior to the 2013 LASA Congress, brought together 82 legal practitioners, scholars, and activists from the Americas, Europe, and the Washington area to discuss and assess the advances made through legal activism. This third collaboration between the Gender and Feminist Studies and the Sexualities Sections was a resounding success.

Haiti / Dominican Republic

Kiran Jayaram and April Mayes, Co-chairs

At the Haiti / Dominican Republic Section business meeting there were eight people present. Due to satisfaction with the performance of Co-chairs April Mayes and

Kiran Jayaram, they will continue as co-chairs for 2013–2014.

In the past year, the Section was made more visible through an e-mail list and Facebook page, and by establishing and awarding the award for best Congress paper as well as an honorable mention. In the coming term, the co-chairs hope to fuse the activities of the Section with the Transnational Hispaniola Collective's activities.

Kiran Jayaram received a 2013 LASA travel award. April Yoder received the first annual paper award and Mariana Past received honorable mention for her paper. April Mayes, Kiran Jayaram, and Maja Horn read and evaluated the papers according to preset criteria. The prize was announced at the joint reception with the Latino Studies and Sexualities Studies Sections.

Health, Science, and Society

By Alexandra Puerto

The Health, Science, and Society Section business meeting took place on Thursday, May 30, with six paid members in attendance. Council election nominations confirmed at the business meeting included Pablo Gómez (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Co-chair elect; Oscar Pérez (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Treasurer; and board members, Kate Centellas (University of Mississippi), Macarena Ibarra (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile), and Raúl Necochea (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill). Since we did not have a quorum at the business meeting, the election will be conducted online. The continuing officers are Rebecca Hester (University of Texas, Medical Branch), Co-chair; and José Amador (Miami University), board member. Outgoing officers include

Alexandra Puerto (Occidental College), Co-chair; Pablo Gómez (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Treasurer; and Nielan Barnes (California State University, Long Beach), Marcos Cueto (Instituto de Estudios Peruanos), and Tânia Salgado Pimenta (Fundação Oswaldo Cruz), board members. Beyond the election, discussion centered on membership recruitment, 2014 special session planning, and prioritizing action items for 2014–2015.

This year Health, Science, and Society sponsored a special session panel titled "Public Health, Hygiene and Modernization in Latin American Cities." Organized by Macarena Ibarra, the interdisciplinary panel offered historical, architectural, and economic perspectives on urban development in the Southern Cone and Brazil from the 1890s to 1960s. Thirty-two people attended the special session, which included excellent presentations and lively discussion on sanitary and hygienic administration as well as medicine, engineering, and street paving in Santiago; health and eviction programs in the shantytowns of Buenos Aires; and the economics of public health in São Paulo. Ultimately, the session underscored the intersection of public health, the built environment, and sociopolitical power.

As per the discussion at the business meeting, three key initiatives will guide the work of Section officers over the next year. In the coming term, the Section will revive the Section Prize Competition for Best Article and Best Book. The general board members will review nominees. Second, the co-chairs will begin compiling an online bibliography of scholarship by Section members. Finally, all council officers will develop a plan for member recruitment to continue growing the Section and raising

the profile of science studies and the medical humanities at LASA2014.

Historia Reciente y Memoria / Recent History and Memory

Hillary Hiner, Secretary-Treasurer

The recent change to the LASA Congress schedule has meant that Section activities are now programmed on an annual basis, including the preparation and presentation of a Section panel. For this reason, the principal activity of the Recent History and Memory Section in the last year has been the organization of the panel for the 2013 Congress, titled “Rethinking Testimonio and Memory in Latin America.” The panel includes six Section members from Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico and continues the tradition of presenting innovative, high-quality work at the LASA Congresses. During the 2013–2014 period, we will undertake two activities: 1) the selection of the Section panel for the 2014 LASA Congress; and 2) the Best Book Contest, last awarded in 2012. We hope that many of our Section members will participate in this contest, either as members of the judging panel or by submitting nominations. To participate, one must have published a book within the last three years (2011, 2012, or 2013) and the subject matter of the book must be relevant to recent history and memory in Latin America. As the Section has accumulated a certain amount of funds since its inception we also propose that the winner of 2014 Best Book Award be allotted a modest cash prize.

During the Section business meeting in Washington, DC, several topics were discussed. First, we discussed an area that continues to be of concern, which is our Section membership. Since changing over to the yearly Congress model, we have

noticed that membership revolves around participation in the Congress. There was a noted consensus among members questioning this yearly model, particularly on the part of our Latin American members who must obtain funding to attend LASA Congresses. For this reason, we decided that we would bring this matter up at the meeting of section chairs. Second, we also considered different possibilities to stimulate interest in the section and shore up membership. The Section will propose a workshop for the next LASA Congress in 2014 and will also apply for funding for this workshop. We also discussed the possibility of undertaking virtual activities periodically during the year, such as live-streaming conferences or talks by section members. Third, and finally, we began preparing the 2014 Best Book Contest, considering a few possible deadlines and jury members. From this meeting, three Section members presented themselves for the Best Book Contest jury: Cynthia Milton, Hillary Hiner, and Juan Hernández. We encourage our members to consider volunteering for this jury. The Executive Council and directorate will make the final decision concerning jury members.

In closing, at the Section business meeting it was also necessary to choose new members of the council and directorate. These new authorities were approved via e-mail by the Section in the two weeks following the Congress. The new Section officers are Alejandro Cerda (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Xochimilco, Mexico) and Aldo Marchesi (Universidad de la República, Uruguay), Co-chairs; Samantha Quadrato (Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil), Secretary; and Claudio Barrientos (Universidad Diego Portales, Chile), Emilio Crenzel (CONICET, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Instituto de Desarrollo Económico y Social), Vania

Markarian (Universidad de la República, Uruguay), Cynthia Milton (Université de Montréal), and Rodrigo Sá Motta (Brazil), Executive Council members.

International Migrations

Sara Poggio and María Amelia Viteri, Co-chairs

Members present at the business meeting included Sara Poggio, Alice Colón Warren, María Amelia Viteri, Michaela Reich, Beatriz Padilla, Liliana Suárez-Navaz, Alicia Girón, Gail Amient, Jennifer Burrell, Cristian Dona-Reveco, and Norma Chinchilla. The Executive Committee includes Sara Poggio (University of Maryland, Baltimore County) and María Amelia Viteri (FLACSO Ecuador), Co-chairs; Alice Colón Warren (University of Puerto Rico), Secretary-Treasurer; and Michaela Reich (Organization of American States), Alicia Girón (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), Liliana Suárez-Navaz (Stanford, Universidad Autónoma Madrid), and Beatriz Padilla (Universidade do Minho), Executive Committee members.

According to the bylaws, we selected four members to complete the Executive Committee and had an extensive discussion on the mission of the Section, including the ideas of geographic mobility and citizenship.

The participants in the meeting also decided that the Section would undertake at least the following activities in its work plan for 2013–2014: organization of a preconference in Chicago; a newsletter published three times a year; organization of the two panels that the Section is allowed, given its membership; and discussion online with the total membership; the organization of an award to be granted by the Section. The

discussion would address the criteria for the award, such as considering the best immigration paper in any panel presented to the LASA2014 Congress in Chicago in 2014.

The Section decided to organize a daylong or half-day preconference jointly or in collaboration with some universities or organizations in Chicago. The main preference was to combine academic issues and activism on international migration in the presentations and discussions. We discussed the idea of collaborating with any other LASA section that could enrich our work and theirs. Possible topics for the preconference include immigration and education, vulnerable populations that are affected by immigration in countries of origin and destination, employment policies in countries of origin and destination, politics and immigration policies in countries of origin and destination, effects of these policies in specific vulnerable populations, immigrants' health rights, struggles to have access to diverse health policies in countries of both origin and destination, and geographic mobility and citizenship.

The Section will publish a newsletter three times a year. The newsletter will be coordinated by Michaela Reich but will be the product of all members of the Section. We expect members to be involved in sending news about international migrations across countries (origin and destination) and news about jobs, conferences, books, and events related to international migrations as well as notes of interest. More details will follow.

It was decided to discuss with the members the possibility of at least one award to members of the Section. Among the possible awards would be one granted to the best paper on the topic of immigration

sent to LASA2014. More information will follow after discussion (online) with the members.

We informed the membership about the two panels sponsored by the Section. (Sponsored panels are assigned according to number of section members.) More information will follow. We decided that of the two sponsored panels, one should be a workshop or a roundtable in order to offer more possibilities for presenters and attendants to fully engage in active discussions.

Labor Studies

Maggie Gray, Secretary-Treasurer

The Labor Studies Section announced the election of Co-chairs Cecilia Senén González (CONICET, Universidad de Buenos Aires) and Roxanda Maurizio (Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, CONICET, Universidad de Buenos Aires); and Secretary-Treasurer Maggie Gray (Adelphi University). Our returning Executive Council member is Mariela Quiñones Montoro (Universidad de la República, Uruguay, Agencia Nacional de Investigación, and Comisión Nacional de Investigación Científica Udelar), and our newly elected council members are Marcos Lopez (Bowdoin College), Rodolfo Elbert (Universidad de Buenos Aires, University of Wisconsin), and Brian Finnegan (AFL-CIO). Our Graduate Student Council Co-chair Katherine Maich (University of California, Berkeley) has a new Co-chair, Pablo Pérez-Ahumada (University of California, San Diego) and one new member, Joe Balzer (Cornell University), as well as returning member Ricardo Nóbrega (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro).

The business meeting was animated, with 25 members attending. Brian Finnegan from the AFL-CIO was our guest to discuss the AFL-CIO International Section's work. He discussed possible collaborations and also described and distributed the recent report "Responsibility Outsourced" published by the AFL-CIO. We have continued to build our Graduate Student Advisory Board and one of our Section panels featured graduate student paper presenters. The Labor Section gave out one \$500 travel grant through a competitive process in which the co-chairs and secretary-treasurer choose a winner. The grant recipient was Pablo Pérez-Ahumada, a Chilean student doing his PhD in sociology at the University of California, San Diego. His research interests are class inequality and political change in Latin America, with a particular emphasis on Chile.

Latino Studies

Deb Vargas and Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, Co-chairs; Carmen Lamas, Secretary; and Isabel Porras, Graduate Student Representative

The Latino/a Studies Section of LASA continues to provide an important forum for scholars and activists. The Section sponsored three panels at the 2013 DC Congress and presented a total of three awards for best book, best article, and best dissertation. The Section concluded the year with 158 members, qualifying it for three sponsored sessions at LASA2014. We welcomed four new council members for the 2013–2014 academic year: Carlos Decena (Rutgers) and Kirstie Dorr (University of California, San Diego) are Co-chairs elect; Virginia Arreola (Indiana University), Secretary-elect; Alexandra Gonzenbach (University of Miami) is Graduate Student Representative-elect.

We had an impressive turnout with more than 90 scholars attending the Section reception arranged in collaboration with the Haiti / Dominican Republic and Sexualities Studies Sections.

The recipient of the Book Award was Ramón H. Rivera-Servera for *Performing Queer Latinidad: Dance, Sexuality, Politics* (University of Michigan Press, 2012). An Honorable Mention went to Mérida M. Rúa for *A Grounded Identity: Making New Lives in Chicago's Puerto Rican Neighborhoods* (Oxford University Press, 2012). Another Honorable Mention went to Deborah R. Vargas for *Dissonant Divas in Chicana Music: The Limits of La Onda* (University of Minnesota Press, 2012). The Book Award Committee consisted of Carlos Decena (Chair), Gina Pérez, and Laura Gutiérrez.

The winner for Best Article was "Legal Violence: Immigration Law and the Lives of Central American Immigrants," by Cecilia Menjivar and Leisy Abrego, published in *American Journal of Sociology* (2012). An Honorable Mention went to "Blacks May Be Second Class, but They Can't Make Them Leave: Mexican Racial Formation and Immigrant Status in Winston-Salem" by Jennifer A. Jones, published in *Latino Studies* (2012). The Article Award Committee consisted of Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof (Chair), Emir Estrada, and Israel Reyes.

The Dissertation Award winner was Johana Londoño (New York University) for "Aesthetic Belonging: The Latinization of Cities, Urban Design and the Limits of the Barrio." An Honorable Mention went to Lorena Alvarado (University of California, Riverside) for "Corporealities of Feeling: Mexican Sentimiento and Gender Politics." The Dissertation Award Committee

included Carmen Lamas (Chair), Laura Lomas, and Yolanda Padilla.

The Section panels included "Theorizing Latina/o Studies: Object, Method, and Field," organized by Carmen E. Lamas and chaired by Deb Vargas; and "Divergences/Traces/Convergences: Movements across Indigenous Studies and Latino Studies," chaired by Alicia Ivonne Estrada. There was also a roundtable entitled "Latina/o Coalitions" with Carmen Lamas as Chair.

Mass Media and Popular Culture

Silvia Kurlat Ares, Chair

The main activity of the Mass Media and Popular Culture Section this year was to organize the Section and to establish a council and a membership. In Washington the Section held its first business meeting and elections. The lineup of the current board is as follows: Silvia Kurlat Ares (independent researcher), Chair; Matthew Bush (Lehigh University), Treasurer; Pedro Pablo Porbén (Bowling Green State University), Google Group Communication Officer; Giancarlo Stagnaro (Tulane University), Facebook Communication Officer; and Pablo Alabarces (Universidad de Buenos Aires) and Hernán García (Wayne State University), members of the Executive Council.

At the first meeting it was agreed that for next year the Section's goals will be to generate a Google group and a Facebook page (under construction). Over the summer the section will send a call for papers in order to organize its activities for LASA2014. The Section is planning to organize at least one roundtable on current theoretical issues on popular culture and is exploring the possibility of organizing a one-day preconference.

Mexico

Nohemy Solórzano-Thompson and María Eugenia Valdés Vega, Co-chairs

Mexico Section officers present at the business meeting included Co-chairs Nohemy Solórzano-Thompson (Whitman College) and María Eugenia Valdés Vega (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Iztapalapa), and Executive Council members Wil Pansters (Utrecht University) and Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado (Washington University in Saint Louis). Section members in attendance numbered 25 so a quorum was not achieved.

Each Mexico Section Prize recipient was awarded US\$250 (in the case of the coauthored essay each author will receive \$125). The Best PhD Dissertation recipient was Steven Samford, "High-Road Development in Low-Tech Industry: Policymakers, Producer Networks, and the Co-production of Innovation in the Mexican Ceramics Sector" (University of New Mexico, 2012). The Prize Committee consisted of Kevin Middlebrook (University College London), Chair, Armando García (University of Pittsburgh), and Lucía Melgar (Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México). The Best Humanities Essay awardee was Carolina Castellanos Gonella, "El discurso poético en Noticias del imperio: El sujeto lírico y la historia," published in *Literatura Mexicana* (2012). The Prize Committee included Nohemy Solórzano-Thompson (Whitman College), Chair, Héctor Jaimes (North Carolina State University), Elvira Sánchez-Blake (Michigan State University), and María Socorro Tabuenca Córdoba (University of Texas, El Paso). The Best Social Science Essay awardees were Sarah Bowen and Marie Sarita Gaytán, "The Paradox of Protection: National Identity, Global Commodity Chains, and the Tequila Industry," published in *Social Problems*

(2012). The Prize Committee consisted of Ted Beatty (University of Notre Dame), Chair, Sandra Kuntz Ficker (El Colegio de México), Jaime Pensado (University of Notre Dame), and María Eugenia Valdés Vega (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Iztapalapa). The Best Humanities Book recipient was Steven Bunker, *Creating Mexican Consumer Culture in the Age of Porfirio Díaz* (University of New Mexico Press, 2012). The Prize Committee included Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado (Washington University in Saint Louis), Chair, Beth E. Jorgensen (University of Rochester), Andrew Paxman (Millsaps College), and Oswaldo Zavala (City University of New York). The Best Social Science Book author was Molly Doane, *Stealing Shining Rivers: Agrarian Conflict, Market Logic, and Conservation in a Mexican Forest* (University of Arizona Press, 2012). The Prize Committee included Nohemy Solórzano-Thompson (Whitman College), Chair, Robert W. Blake (Michigan State University), Leonardo Figueroa-Helland (Westminster College), and María Teresa Vázquez Castillo (Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez).

In June 2012, the membership of the Mexico Section, with approval of over two-thirds of the membership, resolved to endorse the following statement denouncing the continued violence and intimidation of journalists and public intellectuals. The letter was sent to several governmental entities, universities and other educational institutions, and members of the press. The letter was also posted on the Mexico Section website. The full text appears below.

5 de junio 2012

Carta abierta a los Gobiernos Estatales, al Gobierno Federal, y a los medios de comunicación

Los miembros de la Sección México de la Asociación de Estudios Latinoamericanos (LASA) apoyan el siguiente mensaje denunciando la violencia contra los periodistas e intelectuales públicos:

En México, la actividad de periodistas y de intelectuales públicos está en riesgo en varios estados del país. Los derechos de expresión y de información están siendo violentados sistemáticamente, sea por la presión de las autoridades locales, sea por el crimen organizado. El alarmante número de periodistas asesinados y desaparecidos en la última década, sin contar a los desplazados por amenazas, habla de una crisis sin precedentes en el acceso y uso de los medios de comunicación y de la violación sistemática de los derechos humanos de los comunicadores. Destacan por el alto riesgo para la seguridad de los periodistas los estados de Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Sinaloa y Chihuahua, a cuyas autoridades exigimos que garanticen la vida y el trabajo de los comunicadores y que se detengan las agresiones y amenazas que periodistas e intelectuales públicos están sufriendo en el ejercicio de su indispensable labor crítica. No puede haber una verdadera democracia sin respeto a los derechos fundamentales y sin garantías a la crítica y al debate público.

The Mexico Section sponsored four panels for the 2013 Congress: 1) “México en el Siglo XXI: Aproximaciones interdisciplinarias, teóricas, y pedagógicas en la investigación y enseñanza superior de los estudios mexicanos,” workshop organized and chaired by Nohemy Solórzano-Thompson; 2) “Modernidad priista: Culture and Citizenship in Mid-Century Mexico,” panel organized and

chaired by Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado; 3) “Mexican Indigenous Migrants: Experiences of Empowerment and Civic Engagement,” panel organized and chaired by Alexandra Delano; and 4) “The Intersections of Gender Violence in Mexico,” panel organized by Lynn M. Stephen and chaired by Shannon Speed.

At the Section business meeting a proposed section travel grant was discussed. At the 2012 business meeting, the membership of the Section suggested the creation of a travel grant for graduate students currently enrolled in a Mexican university that would assist them financially to present at LASA. A proposal was developed by the co-chairs and presented to the membership at the 2013 business meeting for discussion; it will be voted by the membership online after the Congress.

After the initial discussion of the proposal, the membership present amended the proposal to be for two travel grants (each US\$450) instead of the original three grants of US\$300 each. The Section members will be voting on the institution of this travel award electronically after the Congress as we did not have a quorum present at the business meeting.

Open council positions include the two chairs and six council members. We received only one slate for the co-chair positions, so this was approved by the membership present at the business meeting. As we also received six candidates for the three council memberships, we have asked LASA to help us set up the election. An update will be sent after the election is finished notifying the Section of its results.

Currently the two Mexico Section e-mail lists—one for official communication and another one for discussion and posting of relevant information (members can opt out

of being part of the discussion list)—are hosted at Whitman College, but as Nohemy Solórzano-Thompson has accepted a position at Westminster College effective July 1, the lists will relocate to another server. The membership at the business meeting discussed this issue and decided that the official Section list will be hosted via Gmail lists (in order to also allow for future transferability of the list to new council officers) and that a discussion list would also be set up (either via Facebook or via another platform, to be chosen by membership vote after the Congress); joining this discussion list would be optional for Section members. The members present discussed our impressions of the new LASA yearly cycle. The majority of those present expressed the desire to return to the original 18-month cycle for a variety of reasons, or to at least consider the possibility of hosting the conference in the fall so as to not conflict with fieldwork commitments and to avoid being scheduled at the end of the fiscal year for many U.S.-based institutions (which means that travel and conference funds are often exhausted by then). The membership also wished for more clarity from LASA about the organization's long-term planning, and if part of the reason for the change was to deliberately limit the size of the Congress. The 2013–2014 incoming Section co-chairs will report to LASA the membership's questions and comments at the section chairs meeting on Saturday afternoon.

We also discussed the drop in Section membership since last year (the current membership is 337; it was 519 in 2012 and 481 in 2011). We will continue our efforts to increase our membership, especially to recruit more members currently in Mexico.

We also discussed the experiences of several Section members based in Mexico whose

visa process was delayed by the U.S. Embassy because of the need (according to the embassy) for further investigations—a tactic that effectively barred members from coming to the Congress. We are particularly concerned as the next three LASA Congresses are to be held in the United States and we foresee the continuation of these practices that are targeting scholars, public intellectuals, and activists.

Peru

Elena Álvarez, Chair

The business meeting was called to order with 49 members in attendance. The first item in the agenda was to award the Life Achievement Award to prominent anthropologist Jose Matos Mar via Skype. Richard Webb read the speech prepared by Enrique Mayer in which many of Matos's professional achievements were highlighted, and Peter Klaren also read a statement about Matos's academic successes.

The main activities were selecting panels for the Washington Congress, choosing the Life Achievement awardee, managing the Book and Article Awards that were (chaired by Rosemary Thorp), developing a quarterly bulletin, creating content for the new website, activating a Friends of Peru Section Facebook account (Fabiola Bazo), and providing travel grants to three young professionals.

In the 2012 Congress, there was a discussion to organize a LASA Peru Section conference in Peru. Elena Álvarez met with several organizations in Lima, including Catholic University, San Martin de Porres University, and Instituto de Estudios Peruanos to discuss the alternatives available for this event. Unfortunately, due

to personal reasons Álvarez was unable to follow up with this process.

The Section had 188 members and was able to collect \$2017.42 from member donations to the Peru Travel Fund. The Section account was used to purchase an Internet portable device (Verizon 4GLTE mobile hotspot) and a one-month Internet account. This device made possible the Skype communications for several sessions at the Congress.

The Section received three applications for travel grants. The Selection Committee made up of Elena Álvarez, Enrique Mayer, and Elena Sabogal selected three grantees based on merit and the criteria agreed upon during the Peru Section business meeting at LASA2010. Each candidate was required to present a budget and each received a partial grant to cover travel and other expenses. Grantees included María del Rosario Rodríguez Jaime, Gabriel Ramón Joffré, and Erika Busse.

Richard Webb donated 15 copies of his recent book *Conexión y despegue rural* (2013), and the sale yielded \$300, which was allocated as \$150 to the travel fund and the rest for office materials, mailing, and photocopying.

The Flora Tristan Book Award was shared by Carlos Contreras, *La economía pública en el Perú después del guano y del salitre* (Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2012); and Rachel O'Toole, *Bound Lives: Africans, Indians, and the Making of Race in Colonial Peru* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

The José María Arguedas Essay Award went to Chuck Walker, "When Fear Rather Than Reason Dominates: Priests Behind the Lines in the Tupac Amaru Rebellion (1780–83)," in *Facing Fear: The History of*

an Emotion in Global Perspective, edited by Michael Laffan and Max Weiss (Princeton University Press, 2012). Highly Commended went to Anne Lambright, “Dead Body Politics: Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani at Peru’s Truth Commission,” in *Imagining Human Rights in Twenty-First Century Theater: Global Perspectives*, edited by Florian N. Becker, Paola S. Hernández, and Brenda Werth (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

The Peru Section organized three panels for LASA2013: “Ollanta Humala’s Peru, Parts I and II,” organized by Elena Álvarez, and “CVR+10: Truth, Justice and Memory in Post-conflict Peru,” organized by Jo Marie Burt.

There was a heated discussion about the replacement of the current officers. Jo Marie Burt was selected as one of the candidates to replace Elena Álvarez, and Tracy Devine Guzmán suggested that we contact all members to have more candidates available to replace all Section members and to ensure a democratic process. Elena Álvarez (Business and Professional Women, Inc.) will chair for an additional term; Co-chair Iliana M. Carrasco-Díaz (CIES, Consorcio de Investigación Económica y Social) was supposed to be replaced by Aldo Panfichi, who unfortunately was not a Peru Section member. Iliana will continue as Co-chair until a new person is elected through an online election to be performed during the fall of this year. Angelina Cotler (University of Illinois), Secretary, and Enrique Mayer (Yale University), Treasurer, will also continue until they are replaced by new officers in the upcoming online election. The only officer replaced at the business meeting was Laura Balbuena González (Butler University), replaced by Américo Mendoza Mori (University of Miami), who will continue to serve as a

technical advisor for the Section. Elena Sabogal (William Paterson University) and Tracy Devine Guzmán (University of Miami) are continuing. Once new elections are held, and to ensure continuity for the Section, they will work with Álvarez until the Chicago 2014 Congress.

David Scott Palmer (Boston University) and Isabelle Lausent-Herrera (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique/CNRS, Centre de Documentation sur les Amériques/CREDA), a French historian affiliated with CNRS-CREDA, will chair the Book and Article Awards of the Section and may revise the current guidelines.

Political Institutions

Tulia G. Falletti, Chair

The Political Institutions Section is closing the academic year with 126 members (a slight decrease over a year ago, when the Section had 132 members in July 2012).

The 2013 Donna Lee Van Cott Award for the best book on political institutions published in the year 2012 was earned by Edward L. Gibson of Northwestern University for his book *Boundary Control: Subnational Authoritarianism in Federal Democracies* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). The members of the book award committee were Benn R. Schneider (Chair), Jana Morgan, and Jennifer McCoy. The members of the committee wrote about the selected book:

In *Boundary Control*, Gibson conducts meticulous comparative analysis examining how a country’s territorial regime shapes the formation, maintenance, and collapse of subnational authoritarianism. In a surprising but fruitful analytical move, he explores these processes not only in late

twentieth-century Argentina and Mexico but also in the post-Civil War United States. The analysis is based on careful case studies of two separate periods in the U.S. “Solid South” in the late nineteenth century as well as several Argentine and Mexican states during these countries’ eras of democratization. Through these comparisons, Gibson demonstrates the ways in which the structure of the territorial regime either empowers “boundary closers” in the provincial hegemonic party who seek to maintain the autonomy of their authoritarian enclaves, or emboldens “boundary openers” like opposition parties and national actors who wish to dismantle provincial authoritarianism.

Using a wide variety of sources including author interviews, news reports, and secondary sources, Gibson builds a strong argument that subnational authoritarianism is possible when provincial hegemons successfully insulate themselves from democratizing pressures that might emanate from the central government, electoral competitors, or civic entities. Gibson’s empirical insights into the persistence of authoritarian enclaves shine a light on the places that frequently remain in the shadows, both within Latin America and in one of the world’s oldest democracies.

The LAPIS Best Paper Award for a paper presented at the 2012 Congress was earned by Brian Wampler and Mike Touchton, from Boise State University, for their paper: “Improving Social Well-Being through New Democratic Institutions.” The members of the Best Paper Award Committee were Jorge Gordin (Chair), Moira MacKinnon, and Noam Lupu. They wrote about the selected paper: “The quality of all nominated papers was very high and selecting a winner was not an easy choice.

We opted for this paper based on the authors attempt to wrestle with an important normative question through innovative institutional and empirical analysis.”

The Political Institutions Section awarded two travel grants to partially fund travel to participate in the 2013 LASA Congress. The travel grantees were Laura Suaznabar Terrazas (Observatorio del Racismo de Bolivia, Fundación de la Cordillera, La Paz, Bolivia) and Carlos Mascareño Quintana (Centro de Estudios del Desarrollo, Universidad Central de Venezuela). Tulia Falleti and Miguel Centellas formed the committee that evaluated the Section’s travel grant applications.

During the LASA2013 Section business meeting, former council member Felipe Botero (Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia) was elected as the new Section Chair of the Section. Former chair Tulia Falleti (University of Pennsylvania) will become the Secretary-Treasurer. Four members were elected to the Executive Council: Kirk Hawkins (Brigham Young University), Moira Mackinnon (Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, Argentina), Raúl Sánchez Urribarri (La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia), and Julieta Suárez-Cao (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile). The new officers assume their positions as of June 1, 2013.

Scholarly Research and Resources Sarah A. Buck Kachaluba, Chair

Seven people attended the business meeting on Thursday, May 30, 7:00 p.m.–8:45 p.m. Sarah Buck Kachaluba (Secretary-Treasurer, convening in the absence of Gayle Williams, Chair) shared that there were currently 34 members (less than the 50 required to constitute a section, putting the

Scholarly Research and Resources Section on probation) and also shared the status of the treasury, which those present decided to reserve for future initiatives to recruit more members and reinstate our presence in LASA.

Those present discussed several ways to assert our presence in LASA, including organizing panels for 2014 on open access in North American and Latin American contexts (an idea generated by Dominique Babini from CLACSO and Philip Oxhorn, Editor of *LARR*, during the 2013 Preconference Meeting on Journals and Monographs), digital humanities, and “democracy and memory” archives, and the possibility of organizing a THATCamp (The Humanities and Technology Camp) for LASA2015.

Section elections are currently going on, to be completed by the end of September.

Since the business meeting, Section members have been involved in submitting proposals for panels on open access and digital humanities projects in Latin American studies. The Section is currently strategizing about ways to recruit more members.

The Section did not award any prizes or travel awards.

Sexualities Studies

Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel and Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui, Co-chairs, and Guillermo de los Reyes, Secretary-Treasurer

This year the Sexualities Studies Section cosponsored with the Gender and Feminist Studies Section a daylong preconference entitled “Gender, Sexuality and Struggles for Justice in Latin America: Legal, Political and Social Dimensions” at the American

University Washington College of Law on May 29. Convened by both sections and sponsored by the American University Center for Latin American and Latino Studies and the Impact Litigation Project at American University Washington College of Law, this third co-organized preconference brought together scholars, activists, and legal practitioners from across the hemisphere to discuss questions raised by Latin America’s transformations of gender and sexuality rights. Particular attention was given to the possibilities and limitations of legal activism for the pursuit of social justice and equity issues. Attendance at the conference fluctuated between 45 and 60 persons throughout the day, and the conference concluded with a two-hour open session that allowed for discussions and conversations among participants and the audience.

The Sexualities Studies Section had two panels at the conference in Washington, DC: “Trans Studies: Interrogating Hetero- and Homonormativity,” and “Queer Generations: A Critical Dialogue.” Both panels were very well attended and excellent discussions took place. Aside from the Section-organized sessions, ten additional panels were devoted to Sexualities Studies. Attendance and discussions in all of these sessions were very engaging.

At the business meeting 20 members were present. They evaluated the preconference and decided that the Section would like to continue the tradition of organizing a preconference for next year. Given that LASA2014 will be held in Chicago, members thought that it would be quite productive to team up with other sections interested in questions of migration. Although at present we have 86 members (and have been guaranteed two Section panels for LASA2014), during the business

meeting members discussed the fact that the Section needs to recruit more members in order to have more panels. The Sexualities Studies Section has been very successful using its Facebook page to keep its 335 followers informed of activities. We will use our Facebook page to make regular calls to our followers to join LASA and become members of our Section.

Members elected the new Board of Directors for the next cycle: Guillermo de los Reyes (University of Houston) and Joseph Pierce (SUNY Stony Brook) were elected as Co-chairs. The position of secretary-treasurer remains vacant. In addition, members discussed the Section's two awards which recognize outstanding scholarship on gender, queer, and LGBT: the Sylvia Molloy Award for the Best Academic Essay in the Humanities and the Carlos Monsiváis Award for the Best Academic Essay in the Social Sciences. The award will be given out again next year in Chicago. Horacio Sivori and Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui will serve as the Awards Committee chairs.

Additionally, at the business meeting Section members discussed the problem of being members of multiple sections (Gender and Feminist Studies, Latino Studies, and many others), and asked if there was a way of having two separate time slots for business meetings, so that they may contribute more easily to the work of other sections and promote their interdisciplinary work.

Finally, the Sexualities Studies Section and Latino Studies Section cosponsored a cash bar. The Haiti / Dominican Republic Studies Section was invited. The Sexualities Studies Section got funding from *GLQ* and Duke University Press to pay for their share of expenses up to \$500. The cash bar was

a huge success, bringing together over 150 LASA participants.

Southern Cone Studies

Luis E. Cárcamo-Huechante, Chair, and Leila Gómez, Treasurer

At the 2013 LASA Congress in Washington, DC, the Southern Cone Studies Section held several panels which contributed to its growing visibility. The panel "Nuevos desafíos para los estudios indígenas en el Wallmapu/Cono Sur" brought together Mapuche researchers from Chile and colleagues from Chile and the United States. Three Mapuche panelists, members of the Comunidad de Historia Mapuche, participated: Susana Huenul Colicoy, Herson Huinca Piutrin, and Maribel Mora Curriao, along with Chilean scholar Magda Sepúlveda (Universidad Católica de Chile). A second part of the discussion then took place with the participation of scholars Charles Hale (University of Texas at Austin), Patricia Richards (University of Georgia), and Andrés Prieto (University of Colorado at Boulder). As a member of the Comunidad de Historia Mapuche, Luis Cárcamo-Huechante (University of Texas at Austin) joined this roundtable and also was in charge of moderating and coordinating both panels. In the first panel, around 35 people were in the audience, and approximately 45 people attended the afternoon session of discussion on the status of indigenous studies in the Southern Cone of Latin America.

The Section also sponsored a second successful event, a workshop on "El siglo XIX: Nuevas aproximaciones desde el Cono Sur." This panel featured presentations by Juan Poblete (University of California, Santa Cruz), William Acree (Washington University), Abril Trigo (Ohio

State University), Claudia Torre (Universidad de San Andrés), and Alejandra Laera (Universidad de Buenos Aires and CONICET). Leila Gómez (University of Colorado at Boulder) organized and conducted this workshop, which 30 people attended.

At the Section's business meeting, with 40 members in attendance, Chair Luis Cárcamo-Huechante and Treasurer Leila Gómez presented an account of the multiple initiatives that the Section has set in motion in 2012 and in the spring of 2013, such as the continuous enrollment of new members, the institutionalization of the website, and the establishment of the Southern Cone Studies Section Book Prize in both the Humanities and Social Sciences. As an important part of the business meeting, the chair and the treasurer conducted the award ceremony for the Southern Cone Studies Book Prizes. In the Humanities, the Book Prize was given to William Acree (Washington University) for *Everyday Reading: Print Culture and Collective Identity in the Río de la Plata, 1780–1910* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2011), with a Special Recognition to Marta Sierra (Kenyon College) for *Gendered Spaces in Argentine Women's Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). In the Social Sciences, the Book Prize was awarded to Eduardo Elena for *Dignifying Argentina: Peronism, Citizenship, and Mass Consumption* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011). The members of the Humanities jury were Graciela Montaldo, Gabriel Giorgi, and Mónica Szurmuk; the members of the Social Sciences jury were Silvio Waisbord, Alex Borucki, and Vania Markarian.

In spring 2013, the Section held the election of its new directors; this was organized by colleagues Angel Tuninetti (West Virginia University) and Marta Sierra. In this

context, as a transition into the second part of the business meeting in Washington, DC, the outgoing chair of the Section invited Leila Gómez to lead the final part of the meeting as the new chair. The new treasurer was also announced: Gloria Medina-Sancho (California State University, Fresno). For the upcoming period, Katherine Karr-Cornejo (Whitworth University) will continue serving as the webmaster of the Section.

The new chair and the attendees discussed the main goals and plans for the upcoming period: the creation of a *revista* for the Section; the establishment of a Facebook page; and a much more effective incorporation of graduate students, among many other new plans. The major goal is to continue expanding the dialogues and initiatives begun in this thriving period of the Section.

Venezuelan Studies

Alejandro Velasco, Secretary-Treasurer, and Margarita López Maya, Chair

The Section business meeting was held on Thursday, May 30, 2013. Thirty-seven members attended. Section Chair Margarita López Maya presided.

The meeting began with a reminder that in lieu of a reception, Section member Dr. Angelo Rivero Santos, chargé d'affaires at the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Washington, would host a formal function in honor of the Venezuelan Studies Section at the embassy grounds on Friday evening. All were invited. (Nearly 50 people attended the embassy reception on Friday, including some members not present at the business meeting. Venezuelan hors d'oeuvres and drinks were served in a friendly atmosphere.)

Chair López Maya proceeded with the formal agenda, first by announcing the three panels that won Section sponsorship: Robert Samet and Naomi Schiller, "Revisiting the Magical State with the Future in Question: In Memory of Fernando Coronil"; Paula Vásquez Lezama, "Construcciones de Venezuela: Intelligibilidad académica y discursos de la modernidad"; and Daniel Hellinger, "The Venezuelan 2012–2013 Elections: Context, Campaign, Conduct and Consequences." A committee comprised of Elizabeth Nichols, Tomás Straka, and Daniel Hellinger selected the three panels from nine proposals. The chair thanked the committee for their work.

López Maya informed the meeting that as of May 20 the Section had 159 members, 13 fewer than the previous year but still a good amount given financial difficulties facing Venezuela-based scholars and LASA's new annual model. The figure means that the Section will again be able to sponsor three panels for LASA2014. Members were encouraged to submit their panel proposals as soon as possible both to be considered for section sponsorship and to generate a larger, more diverse pool from which to select. A question was raised about why there were so few Venezuela-focused humanities panels at the conference, to which the chair replied that more proposals were needed and urged humanities scholars to submit more panel ideas.

The chair announced that the special fund created the previous year with monies from Open Society Foundations, and designed specifically to help Venezuela-based scholars defray the costs of attending LASA, would not continue. Six of ten of those who were awarded grants did not actually travel to LASA San Francisco, creating logistical problems for both LASA and Open Society that meant, eventually,

forfeiting those resources. Going forward, LASA will return to the normal procedure of awarding travel grants from the general fund, without formal preferences for Venezuela-based scholars. However, LASA agreed to offer some "priority" to Venezuelans, although whether that happened for LASA Washington is unknown. The chair will follow up with former chair David Smilde, who arranged the funds through Open Society, and will take up the issue again with LASA should financial pressures for Venezuela-based scholars grow more acute.

A question was raised about soliciting funds from Venezuelan government sources to help with the LASA Venezuela meeting; the chair expressed concern about what this would mean for editorial content. Another question was raised about joining other sections in calling for LASA to reconsider the move to an annual meeting schedule. Some argued that it was too soon to make a judgment. Others suggested that holding the meeting yearly, and mainly in the United States, negatively affected members based in Latin America. The chair agreed to ask about the issue at the section chairs' meeting and to follow up with the Venezuelan Studies Section.

Next, the chair asked Alejandro Velasco to announce the results of a yearlong project to create a Section Book Award. At LASA San Francisco Section members had agreed to name this award after Fernando Coronil. However, criteria, scope, and logistics remained pending. A committee consisting of Velasco, Daniel Hellinger, and Elizabeth Nichols designed the award description, and after distributing copies to members of the Section, the Fernando Coronil Book Award was approved as a biannual Section award given to "the most outstanding book on Venezuela, in English or Spanish, in the humanities or social sciences, published in

the previous two years.” The first Coronil Award will be announced at LASA2014.

The chair asked about eligibility criteria for the book award, and why edited collections were ineligible. How to disburse the monetary award (LASA membership) between editors and contributors, as well as double-dipping by chapter authors vying in both the book category and the article category, make edited collections difficult to consider for a book award. However, it was stressed that the Section could revisit criteria and eligibility in the future, but for now the award should proceed as drafted. Along with approving the Fernando Coronil Book Award, the Section also agreed to alternate between a book award and article awards every other year, both to increase the pool of nominated works by drawing on two years rather than one year of materials, and to make the eventual competition more selective.

The chair then called on representatives from the two award committees to honor the recipients of the Section awards for best article. Luis Duno-Gottberg presented the award for Best Article in the Humanities to Natalie Bouzaglo for her paper “Immaterial Discomforts: Antonieta Sosa, from the Body to the Void.” Alejandro Velasco, speaking on behalf of the Committee for Best Article in the Social Sciences, presented awards to two papers: to María Pilar García-Guadilla for “Poder popular y organizaciones comunitarias en Venezuela: Alcances y límites de la democracia directa en el ciclo comunal;” and José Manuel Puente for “Renta y revolución: La economía política de Venezuela durante el gobierno de Hugo Chávez.” All three authors were present and received applause from the audience.

Tomás Straka reported on the status of LASA Venezuela, now in its third session.

LASA members in Venezuela unable to attend the main LASA meeting, or scholars who presented papers on Venezuela at LASA Washington, are welcome to attend an encore conference in Caracas and present their work locally. This year’s event will be hosted at the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello. Straka reported that 43 papers, widely representative, are scheduled to be presented over two days in nonconcurrent panels, with the program already announced. Straka is leading a team of 12 people in organizing the conference logistics, including offering limited housing to panelists from the interior. Members stressed that the event is more than a conference and serves to bring to Venezuela knowledge about the country generated outside Venezuela, which often stays outside Venezuela. It is also an opportunity for students to meet in person Venezuelanists whose work they have read. The chair encouraged all members to attend and to help spread word of the event.

The chair announced the results of Section elections hosted by LASA. Thirty-six members voted, with the results listed below. For their dedicated service, the chair heartily thanked outgoing council members Daniel Hellinger, Elizabeth Nichols, Kim Morse, Jun Ishibashi, Angel Álvarez, and Sujatha Fernandes, and offered a special note of thanks to the Section founders present for passing the torch to a council entirely comprised of Venezuelans for the first time.

Open floor: María Pilar García-Guadilla voiced an ongoing grievance that Venezuela-themed panels not be scheduled concurrently in LASA meetings so as to avoid competition and promote greater attendance. She asked when would be a good time to review the program and solicit changes. The chair and secretary

noted they would follow up on this with LASA. Several members voiced a desire to make the Section’s online presence more robust, for instance by using social media tools. Iñaki Sagarzazu and José Manuel Puente volunteered to form part of an ad hoc committee to examine the issue and generate proposals to the Executive Council. The meeting ended with new members providing brief introductions of themselves and their work. The meeting then adjourned.

Nominations were solicited via the Section e-mail list. Elections were conducted online and hosted by LASA. Margarita López Maya was chosen as Chair for 2013–2014 and Alejandro Velasco as Secretary-Treasurer for 2013–2015. Newly elected members of council, through 2015, are María Pilar García-Guadilla, Iñaki Sagarzazu, Yorelis Acosta, Javier Guerrero, and Vicente Lecuna. Continuing members through 2014 are Tomás Straka, Iraida Casique, Raúl Sánchez Urribarri, and Tim Gill.

Visual Culture

Ernesto Capello, Chair

The Section Governing Council for 2013–2014 consists of Ernesto Capello, Chair; Kevin Coleman, Secretary-Treasurer; and members Lisa Blackmore (Birkbeck College, UK), Andrea Cerda (Leiden University), Jordana Dym (Skidmore College), Alison Fraunhar (Saint Xavier University), Miriam Haddu (University of London), Jessica Sites Mor (University of British Columbia, Okanagan), and Scott Weintraub (University of New Hampshire).

The Visual Culture Section held its inaugural meeting on May 30, 2013, in Washington, DC. Twenty members of the Section were present. Ernesto Capello

Voluntary Support

by Sandy Klinzing

announced the results of online council elections that month. Capello also reported that the Section had signed up 86 members during its first year of existence and would therefore be allotted two panels at the LASA2014 Congress in Chicago. A discussion followed concerning how to apportion these. The Acting Council submitted a recommendation that one should be a roundtable concerning the state of the field, perhaps answering the question, “What Is Latin American Visual Culture?” and one should be a panel proposed by the general membership. After discussion, it was agreed that in our inaugural year it would be preferable to have two roundtables devoted to theoretical concerns, with the council soliciting suggestions for speakers from the membership. We also resolved to set up a Planning Committee for the Chicago conference in order to help identify sites, exhibits, and galleries of interest to members and perhaps hold a preconference event. Finally, the Section established goals for continued outreach and a web presence in the coming year, and the long-term goals of establishing prizes for Latin American Visual Cultures Studies and partnering with local institutions to create curatorial possibilities at future conferences, perhaps beginning with Puerto Rico in 2015. ■

Since our last report to you in the Fall 2012 *LASA Forum*, nearly 800 individual gifts have been received in support of the various LASA funds. The Association is extremely grateful for the generous support of the members, foundations, and friends who make it possible for LASA to continue to advance its mission. Support for any of the LASA funds helps to ensure that more scholars will be able to participate in the annual Congress, regardless of financial constraints.

For the most recent Congress, LASA2013, 275 travel grantees benefitted from grants ranging from \$600 to \$1000. A total of \$269,822 was available, derived from **LASA Endowment** proceeds (\$139,007) plus \$10,000 from Operations, support contributed by several foundations (\$106,221), and direct contributions to the **LASA Travel Fund** (\$7284), the **Student Fund** (\$4,326), and the **Indigenous and Afro-descendant Fund** (\$3,984.) Thanks to a multiyear grant from the Fundación Avina, the 2013 recipient of the Kalman Silvert Award, Peter H. Smith, received a LASA Life Membership. The third grant to a Mexican graduate student in the final phase of his doctoral research in Mexican history was presented thanks to the donors to the Charles A. Hale Fund for Mexican History, an endowed fund. This Congress also saw the second presentation of the recently established Luciano Tomassini Award in International Relations, funded by an endowment created by the Ford Foundation. The Martin Diskin Lectureship is supported by both LASA and Oxfam America, the latter also instrumental in establishing an endowed fund for the Diskin Dissertation Fellowship Award.

LASA Life Memberships not only serve as tangible evidence of the value placed on membership in the Association, they

provide direct support for the LASA Endowment, helping to assure Congress travel grant support for generations of Latin Americanists to come. There are currently 94 Life Members; 81 of these made this major commitment to LASA, and 13 received Honorary Life Memberships as recipients of the Kalman Silvert Award. The two most recent are Peter H. Smith (2013 Kalman Silvert Award) and Elaine Carey (St. John's University). Our most sincere thanks to all Life Members for their generosity.

With grateful thanks we acknowledge the following donors for their contributions to any of the LASA funds since our last report. Note that in the interest of conserving space donor names are printed only once, regardless of the number of contributions or gifts to multiple funds. Many donors frequently designate more than one fund for their support and add a gift with each membership renewal or Congress registration. Thank you!

Would you like to discuss your own contribution, a LASA Life Membership, or perhaps the creation of a named fund? Please contact Sandy Klinzing at sklinz@pitt.edu or 412-648-1907 for more information.

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This project was developed by American University Professor of Government David Lublin with support from AU's Center for Latin American and Latino Studies and the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

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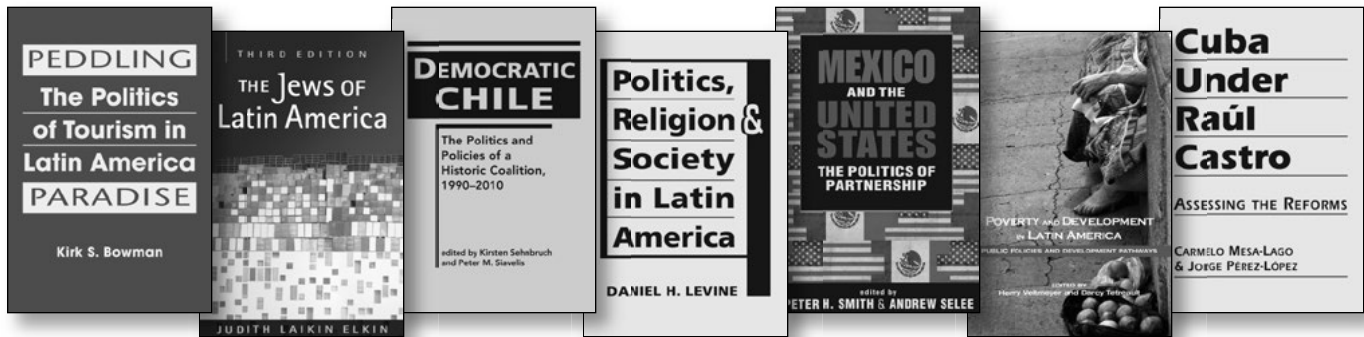
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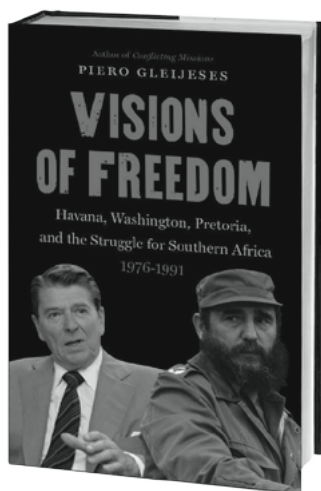
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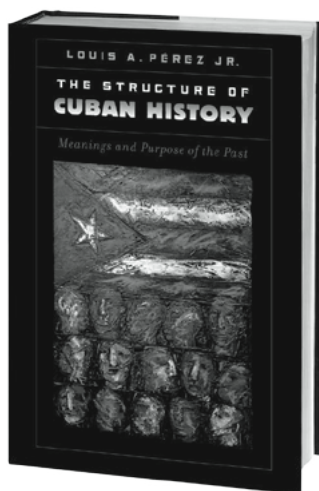
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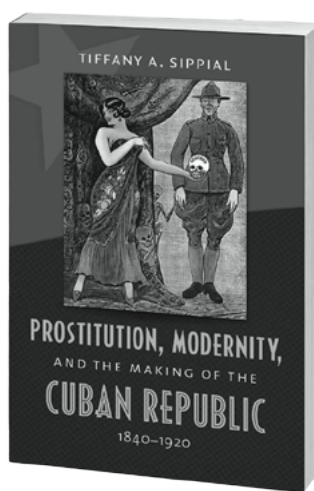
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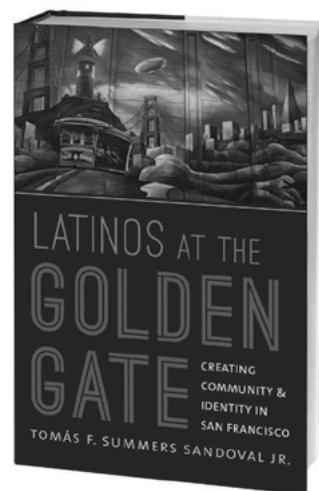
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