

LASA in Europe

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In May 2018, the annual conference of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) takes place for the first time in Europe—in Barcelona, to be precise.

LASA, the largest international academic organization for research about Latin America, has undergone a significant transformation. In the past few years, the number of members from Latin America has surpassed those from Canada and the United States. At the same time, the number of European members has increased from 350 to around 1,500 in 2017. The new memberships belong to a younger group, and the percentage of women today surpasses that of men.

The participation among Europeans has been very positive. Never before have there been so many panel proposals including both high-ranking European scientists and young researchers with new and creative research interests. The thematic focus of the international congress revolves around the changing role of Latin America amid globalization and offers the possibility to gather researchers from all over the world for a weeklong discussion about different aspects of “Latin American studies in a globalized world.”

Beyond the growing interest from individual academics, many European organizations have shown their support for LASA's activities in Barcelona. Among them, we find the European Union–Latin America and Caribbean Foundation (EU-LAC Foundation), created in 2010 by heads of state and governments of the European Union (EU) and CELAC (Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños); and OBREAL, the Observatory for European-Latin American Relations (Observatorio para las Relaciones Europa-América Latina), a network of universities and nonuniversity academic institutions. Both

the EU-LAC Foundation and OBREAL have generously contributed funding for some of the presidential panels.

To more deeply explore the general theme of LASA2018, “Latin America Studies in a Globalized World,” LASA president Aldo Panfichi Huamán, professor of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, and the two Congress program co-chairs, Charles F. Walker from the University of California, Davis, and Marianne Braig from Freie Universität Berlin, supported the organization of presidential panels that reflect on these changes from the vantage point of Latin American studies and that include various global and regional perspectives and debate about shared issues and concerns.

In the first panel, entitled “Rethinking the Relations between Latin America and Europe: Between Interdependent Inequalities and ‘Cooperations’ for Civilizational Transitions,” three highly regarded international researchers will explore aspects of European relations with Latin America. Relations between Europe and Latin America are maintained and reproduced by asymmetric relationships. These are reflected in several phenomena tied to global inequalities, such as transnational mobility between the two regions and the externalization of risk and human and ecological costs from Europe to Latin America. In this context of crisis of the dominant civilizational model and the emergence of alternatives to it, such as “Buen Vivir,” the discussion about cooperation between Latin America and Europe plays a fundamental role. Arturo Escobar, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, whose work in Colombian and American universities has focused for many years on development, the environment, and sustainability, considers the possibility of cooperation for civilizational transitions between

the two regions. Bolivian intellectual Xavier Alba, from CIPCA (Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado), introduces an indigenous peoples' perspective on these relations with his presentation "Desde los pueblos indígena y sus portavoces: Paradojas cotidianas del *vivir bien*." Gender expert Adriana Piscitelli, from Universidad de Campinas, examines the complex migration processes between both regions and focuses on the current migration of women from Latin America to Europe in her presentation "Migrants for Love, Sex, or Money? Readings about Mobility between Brazil and Europe."

A second panel, entitled "Migrations, Cold War, and Solidarity: Latin American Studies from Europe," will focus on research themes that have received significant attention over the last few decades in different European research centers interested in Latin America. The influence that these themes have had, not only in political relations but also in scientific research, will be discussed by four internationally respected scholars from European and Latin American institutions: Ludger Pries from Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Maxine Molyneux from University College London, Michiel Baud from University of Amsterdam, and Josef Opatrný from Charles University of Prague. In the long tradition of European studies of Latin America, it is very noticeable that when Europeans define their objects of study, they transfer their historical experiences and their current problems to spaces outside of Europe, thereby imposing their perspectives. This has included subjects like migrations, the Cold War, solidarity movements, or revolutions. This panel highlights the need to render visible the asymmetries related to these perspectives, but also to observe the incessant renovations in these approaches that have their origin not only in political or academic interests but in the impulses generated by civil society organizations and extremely diverse social movements (such as movements of women, workers, against immigration policies, against violence and precarization, or against racism, as well as solidarity movements). The panel will discuss how the Cold War and the East/West confrontation, as well as the solidarity and migration movements between societies from both regions, significantly promoted and shaped these processes.

Finally, a third presidential panel will highlight the student movements of 1968 as reference points in the Americas and Europe. May 1968 in Paris and the Tlatelolco Massacre in Mexico City, as well as other similar events in Argentina, Germany, Prague, and Berkeley, are part of the global history of 1968. Half a century later, the relevance of this shared anniversary will be discussed in this panel. We will also be able to reminisce on this period at the LASA Film Festival in Barcelona. //