

Latin American Studies in a Globalized World

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On May 23–26, 2018, the annual conference of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) takes place for the first time in Europe, in Barcelona, one of Europe’s most exciting cities. Barcelona is not only facing an intense struggle over Catalonia’s relationship with Spain, one with global implications for identity, autonomy, and the nation-state, but it also has been a center of experiments, debates, and controversies in recent decades over immigration, multilingualism, and public space. Debates about mass tourism and its costs and benefits currently engage much of the city. The number of visitors to Barcelona grows annually, a reflection not only of low-cost airlines but also the city’s many attractions, accessible cultural life, and proximity to Europe, the Mediterranean, and more. First-time visitors to Barcelona will quickly understand its allure and also notice the overwhelming presence of turistas.

With a focus on Latin America in a globalized world, LASA seeks to foster critical reflections on the historical asymmetric relationships between Latin America and Europe as well as the processes behind Latin America’s unequal entanglements with other world regions. Our keynote speaker, Verena Stolcke, Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology at the Departamento de Antropología Social y Cultural, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, will remind us about walls, not only between North and South in the Americas, but also those built in Europe against the other. She will focus on the profound relationship between walls and racism, and racism and sexism.

In recent times, interregional entanglements seem to be tearing down walls. Europe has struggled to keep up with the economic dynamics between Latin America and Asia, especially China. There is

increasing investment along with exceptionally rapidly growing trade relations, including in research and university education, and growing migration from China to Latin America. These exchanges are also changing work and life worlds directly, in particular through mass consumption by the majority of Latin Americans. But with even a cursory glance at history, Europeans could have learned that other world regions have been involved—it has never been solely Europe and Latin America. Perceptions of the relationship between the two world regions as special or of Spain as la madre patria are now too weak even for political rhetoric.

Latin American studies show that other world regions were involved in these relations, as demonstrated in colonial times by the concept of the Black Atlantic or the global galleon trade between Manila and Acapulco. Through these relations, complex interconnections arose which encompassed each world region, and in various periods different European states or their economic, political, and cultural centers were able to occupy a dominant role. At the same time, however, there were also processes of disentanglement between Latin America and Europe. LASA will provide many opportunities, in different tracks and special panels, to discuss these transformations of Latin America in a globalized world. One is the presidential panel entitled “Rethinking the Relations between Latin America and Europe: Between Interdependent Inequalities and ‘Cooperations’ for Civilizational Transitions,” which features Arturo Escobar, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Xavier Albó, from CIPCA (Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado); and Adriana Piscitelli, from Universidad de Campinas.

In another presidential panel, LASA invites reflection about the temporality and the context of topics within Latin American studies. European scholars have a long tradition of looking at and studying Latin America from their own perspectives and defining their research objects based on their own historical experiences and current problems, or on their own wishful thinking. "Migrations, Cold War and Solidarity: Latin American Studies from Europe" will provide a critical reexamination of these tendencies and shed light on new currents. The panel includes 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 recent times, Latin American studies has become a worldwide phenomenon.

Latin America has always been part of global history and recent cultural and political entanglements. In 2018, many places will commemorate the movements of 1968. The papers in the panel "1968: 50 Years After" will discuss Cuba (Carlos Aguirre, University of Oregon), the Mexican Left (Carlos Illades, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana), global intellectual currents (Gerald Martin, University of Pittsburgh), and the local and global and the question of returning (Diana Sorensen, Harvard University). Victoria Langland of the University of Michigan will comment. Another presidential panel examines "La prensa bajo fuego," the critical state of the press in the Americas. María Teresa Ronderos (semana.com) will discuss "A dónde va la prensa en América Latina," while Ilia Calderón examines the situation in the United States, and Ismael Bojorquez that of Mexico. Julia Preston of the Marshall Project will comment.

Outstanding scholars from other global contexts will form part of the presidential panel "Latin American Studies in Asia and Russia." This panel seeks to present diverse viewpoints on the development of this field in Japan, China, South Korea, and Russia. These countries were selected because they have significant Latin American studies communities about which many of us know very little. This panel features Kazuyasu Ochiai (University of Hitotsubashi), "¿Logros académicos incrustados en la sociedad? Relación oferta-

demanda de estudios latinoamericanos en Japon"; Gou Jie (University of Beijing), "Latin American Studies in China: Trends, Issues and Prospects"; Yun-Joo Park and So-Hye Jeong (Keimyung University), "Current Status of Latin American Studies in Korea: Challenges and Responses"; and Victor Kheifets (University of Saint Petersburg), "The Russian View of Latin America in the Post-Cold War Era: The Soviet-Time Legacy and the New Trends."

Two other presidential panels develop topics of broad interest and great relevance. "Memory Studies from the Americas and Spain in a Globalized World" features presentations by Elizabeth Jelin (Instituto de Desarrollo Económico y Social), Ricard Vinyes (Universidad de Barcelona), and Paloma Aguilar Fernández (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid). Katherine Hite of Vassar College will comment. The panel "Reflexiones sobre la producción cultural y conocimiento en el siglo XXI" should prompt wide debate. Néstor García Canclini and Rossana Reguillo will present, while Carles Feixa will comment.

Over 1,600 panels will make up the core of LASA. The diversity of the tracks themselves highlight the richness of the topics covered in Barcelona. The tracks range alphabetically from "Afro-Latin and Indigenous Peoples" to "Violence and Insecurity" and cover traditional disciplines and, to an even greater extent, interdisciplinary approaches. A rapid review of this program will indicate the incredible offerings at LASA 2018.

And, of course, LASA is much more than panels and presentations. Please review the program for the other activities, events, tours, book exhibits, films, excursions, and—last but not least—el gran baile. Barcelona has much to offer. We are certain that you do not need encouragement to explore this fantastic city and region. //