

# CALL FOR PAPERS



LATIN  
AMERICAN  
STUDIES  
ASSOCIATION

## LASA2024

### Reacción y resistencia: imaginar futuros posibles en las Américas

JUNE 12 – 15, 2024 • BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

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Countervailing trends of reaction and resistance are evident in the Americas today. Declining support for democratic values and institutions and resurging authoritarianism, the rise of extremist right-wing movements and parties, and economic inequality and insecurity, aggravated by the pandemic, are generating anxiety and fear. At the same time, grassroots efforts to strengthen rights, promote more inclusive political and economic systems, and roll back the legacies of colonialism, combined with the return of progressive governments in many countries in the region, spark hope that new futures are possible. Exploring these countervailing trends will be the focus of the next International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, which will take place June 12-15, 2024 in Bogota, Colombia. Academics, practitioners, and activists are encouraged to participate with their reflections and analyses of the forces of reaction that are generating apprehension about the future, and the collective forms of resistance and progressive social change that let us dare to dream of new futures based on equality, justice, and inclusion.

Regressive trends are evident across the Americas. We have seen the rise of right-wing populists such as Nayib Bukele in El Salvador and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil; democratic backsliding from Guatemala to Peru; and hardening authoritarian regimes such as that of Ortega-Murillo in Nicaragua. Right-wing

ideologies are on the rise as well, from proto-fascist movements to groups promoting “culture wars” tropes such as “gender ideology.” These movements, which are often transnational in nature, are fundamentally shaping the way local politics are playing out in many parts of the region. At the same time, the pandemic laid bare the deep inequalities, faltering public services, enduring racial hierarchies, and systemic violence that characterize the Americas. We are still evaluating the long-term impact of the devastation wrought by COVID-19 and how it is reshaping our way of thinking about work, well-being, and the organization of our social and political orders. The climate crisis and the ongoing exploitation of natural resources without regard for the impact on indigenous communities and the environment is also a cause of anxiety about the future of the Americas.

By contrast, several countries in the Americas have seen progressive governments come into office, and in others, broad-based social movements are demanding democratic deepening and the construction of more inclusive, just societies. Examples include Chile, where social movements have demanded changes in the political and economic system inherited from the Pinochet dictatorship and a leftist, “millennial” president is promising to implement sweeping reforms, and Brazil, where Lula’s return to the presidency raises hopes that the democratic backsliding and other

regressive policies, including the devastation of the Amazon, can be reverted. In Peru, mass social movements, with indigenous communities taking the lead, are challenging a system that has historically excluded their voices and interests; while in Colombia, after decades of civil conflict, a former guerrilla and an Afro-Colombian woman were elected to lead the nation on a platform of progressive social change and consolidation of the peace process. Across the region, women continue to demand bodily autonomy and reproductive rights, winning important gains in places such as Argentina and Mexico. Indigenous peoples from Chile to Brazil to Central America are organizing to protect their land, the environment, and their cultural autonomy. These collective forms of resistance, combined with progressive political movements at the national level in many countries in the region, are helping to articulate new ways of imagining possible paths toward progressive political, social and economic change and the construction of new models of governance that are more inclusive and representative, and that prioritize human dignity and well-being.

In this context of heightened anxiety about the state of our world and raised expectations for progressive change, we invite proposals from academics, practitioners and activists that reflect on these questions. How are collective forms of resistance and progressive forces for change imagining new futures for the Americas? How do we understand the countervailing trends in the region, including democratic backsliding, the rise of authoritarian populism, continued inequality and the climate crisis? How do we as academics, activists and practitioners contribute with knowledge production, collaborative research and other interventions towards challenging these regressive trends and building new, progressive futures in the region? We hope that this LASA Congress in Colombia, where a new government is trying to implement a progressive political platform with the backing of diverse social movements, will be a space for productive reflection about these countervailing trends and the challenges and hopes they present for imagining possible futures in the Americas.

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## NEW TRACKS FOR LASA2024

### The Alt-Right in Latin America and the World

Latin America's right-wing resurgence parallels dynamics playing out elsewhere in the world, from Turkey to Hungary to the United States. Ultra-conservative groups railing against "gender ideology" and "cultural Marxism" and promoting polarizing visions of "us" versus "them" have gained traction in institutional politics as well as at the societal level. While there are global inspirations for the rise of the Latin American alt-right, it is also very much a home-grown phenomenon, a response to recent historical developments such as the rise of "Pink Tide" governments and drawing from older colonial legacies of Christianity, patriarchy, and racialized concepts such as *hispanidad*.

Today's right-wing politics, embodied by El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele, former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, and also-rans in Colombia and Chile, Rodolfo Hernández and José Antonio Kast, have a marked populist and putatively anti-elitist rhetoric. These leaders are savvy about social media, engage in revanchist cultural politics, and are well-networked internationally. While these politicians participate in democratic elections and often succeed in them, they

generally lack a serious commitment to democratic norms and institutions, and once in power often use democratic institutions to concentrate power and weaken democracy from within, and are closely allied to the military, and sometimes paramilitary groups, to advance their agenda. The right has also promoted a "culture wars" approach to politics, for example through its embrace of so-called gender ideology, which claims that reforms benefiting women and LGBTQI people, such as reproductive rights and same-sex marriage, are the result of an imposed system of beliefs that threaten "Christian values" and corrupts society.

This special track invites proposals that address this "new" Latin American right from multiple disciplinary perspectives to help us better understand the nature, objectives, and impact of the contemporary right in its political, economic, social and cultural manifestations. What animates the rise in right-wing ideologies and political movements in the Americas? What types of threats does the alt-right pose to democracy and to broader understandings of rights in the region? What role do international ties play in supporting the right in the Americas and how do these ties drive right-wing politics? How does the right today express itself

in culture and to what extent is cultural and social activism important to the right? What role do ties to the military and paramilitary groups play in advancing the right's agenda?

## **Displacement and Dispossession: Violence, Extractivism and Illegal Economies in Rural and Indigenous Areas**

In contrast to the agrarian reforms that took place in several Latin American countries in the last century, one of the characteristics of late capitalism in the region today is the accumulation of land for agricultural use or for extractive industries through the displacement, often violent, of indigenous and rural communities from their territories. While indigenous people represent 4% of the world's population, they account for one-third of environmental defenders murdered worldwide. Conflicts over extractive industries and land dispossession are one of the main causes of violence against indigenous and rural communities. Between 2017 and 2021, 2,109 communities were affected by extractive industries and related activities in Peru, Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras. The situation is most critical in Colombia, where 117 indigenous leaders were assassinated between 2012 and 2020. In Mexico and Central America, indigenous and rural communities have been dispossessed of their lands by extractive industries and large hydroelectric and agro-industrial projects, while environmental activists and community leaders have been criminalized and murdered. There are important examples of resistance, such as that of Máxima Acuña, from Cajamarca, Peru, who is waging a valiant struggle against the Yanacocha mining project to prevent its encroachment into indigenous territories. Another example is that of Colombia, where the Victims and Land Restitution Law of 2011 offers comprehensive reparations to families who lost loved ones, were dispossessed of their lands and displaced from their communities.

At the same time, illicit economies are growing and also producing waves of displacement and dispossession of lands and territories throughout the Americas. Violence at the hands of timber, drug, and human traffickers is a daily reality that, while often hidden from view, is forcing indigenous communities in particular to leave their homelands. The expansion of these illegal economies exacerbates other problems, such as climate change, which provokes landslides, droughts, and contamination of soil and people that cause displacement and forced

migration. In Colombia, dispossession has also been caused by the advance of the guerrilla and the army, paramilitary groups and drug trafficking, as well as climate-related phenomena. In Peru, illegal mining has caused deforestation and dispossession, while hydrocarbon pollution has caused certain groups, especially indigenous peoples, to isolate themselves and organize to fight for their rights. The expansion of large-scale monoculture agriculture, such as palm oil plantations, is causing deforestation and land dispossession in Central America, Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico and Peru.

This special track invites proposals from scholars and activists researching and/or working on the problem of displacement and dispossession of indigenous and rural populations from their lands and territories, and the collective resistance that has emerged to counter this violence. What are the effects of late capitalism on indigenous and rural communities in the Americas today? How do we understand the network of actors who seek to control natural resources, including powerful transnational corporations, violent criminal groups, and corrupt authorities? How do we understand the dynamics of displacement and dispossession, of loss and ruined worlds that consolidate the hegemony of certain power groups, while subordinating and silencing others? How do communities organize themselves against such violence?

## **Impunity: Past and Present**

In systems based on rule of law, there are a set of rules and norms codified in law; all persons are subject to and equal before the law; and an independent judicial system exists to uphold the law and investigate and prosecute violations of the law. In systems based on impunity, there is no punishment—and no expectation of punishment—for grave crimes, including human rights violations, grand corruption, and arbitrary deployment of state power. Impunity is the exercise of power without accountability. With no accountability, arbitrary rule becomes the norm, the space for civil society shrivels, and corruption and criminal networks flourish.

This program track aims to draw attention to the persistent problem of impunity and weak rule of law in Latin America. Even as Latin America has made important strides in holding heads of state accountable for serious crimes, including grand corruption, abuse of authority, and crimes against humanity, impunity remains a central feature of life

in much of the region. In addition, in many countries the legal system is becoming a tool used by powerful reactionary elites to attack and immobilize individuals and groups working for progressive social change, a practice often referred to as “lawfare.” This includes environmental activists, indigenous and Afro-descendant leaders, journalists, and human rights defenders. In some countries, these tactics are being deployed against independent judicial operators as well.

The persistence of impunity also presents fundamental challenges for addressing present-day violence and organized crime in Latin America. Throughout the region, there is near-total impunity for gender-based violence and femicides; for police violence, especially against racialized indigenous and Afro-descendant populations; as well as organized crime, including white-collar crime, such as the massive Odebrecht corruption scandal. Impunity breeds more violence, more corruption, and more organized crime.

This track invites scholars, practitioners and activists to present proposals exploring both the enduring problem of impunity in the Americas as well as efforts to combat impunity and consolidate rule of law, past and present. We are particularly interested in proposals exploring the links between past and present crime and impunity.

### **Colombia: Current Challenges, Possible Futures**

The 2022 electoral victory of Gustavo Petro and Francia Márquez marks the first time Colombians have elected a leftist as president and an Afro-Colombian woman as vice president. Riding a wave of mass social discontent and protest over inequality and politics “as usual,” Petro and Márquez emphasized social justice, racial equality, environmental protection and consolidating the peace. Despite persisting and new challenges, their victory is encouraging Colombians to imagine a new future for their country.

With the policy of “total peace,” Petro and Márquez are seeking to fulfill the promises of the 2016 peace accord signed with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and to reach new agreements with other armed groups, such as the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the drug trafficking organization Clan del Golfo. Colombia, however, remains a country in conflict, with armed groups engaging in new forms of violence, ongoing massacres in the countryside, and targeted killing

of community leaders. In this fraught context, the country continues to debate how to redress the grievances of victims of the conflict, the question of whose memories matter, and how to write a history of decades of violence.

In this context of high expectations, Colombia confronts other old and new challenges. Profound socio-economic inequalities and racial and ethnic exclusion persist. Diverse armed groups and drug trafficking organizations continue to operate throughout the country. Colombia, like many other countries, is also struggling to address the profound environmental challenges of our time, including the transition to a non-carbon economy, threats to biodiversity, deforestation and water contamination. With 80 percent of the population living in urban areas, Colombia’s cities play a key role in tackling many of these challenges, from improvements to transportation and infrastructure, to specific policies dealing with crime and violence. Colombia is also vexed with a massive influx of people from neighboring Venezuela and from smuggling networks that move migrants from around the globe through northern Colombia on their path northward.

Amidst these challenges, Colombia’s social movements have remained vibrant despite years of entrenched state, paramilitary and insurgent violence. Human rights organizations, LGBTQI movements, peasant federations, and urban social movements are actively engaged in political life in Colombia. Especially notable are Colombia’s indigenous and Afro-Colombian social movements, which have played a key role in highlighting the ways violence has impacted their communities as well as historic patterns of marginalization and exclusion for which they are demanding redress. Another positive trend is the flourishing of cultural production in Colombia, which extends the country’s rich traditions in literature and visual arts. The visual arts and other forms of cultural production are making rich contributions to ongoing debates about the country’s recent past and efforts to consolidate peace. Historically underrepresented groups are increasingly visible in the country’s artistic and cultural production.

This track invites proposals from scholars, students, community leaders and activists, from any disciplinary or transdisciplinary perspective, that address the present challenges facing Colombia as well as contemporary debates in history, literature, and the arts. How is the Petro administration shaping Colombia? How are the center and right reacting to these changes? What are the prospects

for broadening and deepening the advances made with the FARC peace process? How do changes in the conflict and crime environment affect the life of Colombians? How are social movements and the government seeking to address the concerns of Afro-Colombians, indigenous communities, and other historically marginalized groups? What are the major environmental challenges facing Colombia and how are Colombians dealing with them? What are the major urban challenges facing Colombia and what policies are urban governments and communities adopting in response? What role do the social sciences and the humanities play in post-conflict Colombia, particularly in relation to the question of how to write the narrative of the recent past and how to teach the recent past in schools and universities? What is happening today with Colombia's social movements? What new directions are emerging in Colombia's cultural production? How is cultural production supported, and how do these different forms of support shape the content and meaning of the arts in Colombia?

## **Collective Resistance, Imagined Futures in the Americas**

From political history and postcolonial theory, authors such as James Scott, Ranajit Guha, and Gayatri Spivak have conceptualized and described forms of resistance against different systems of oppression and violence. These practices of resistance take many forms and are deployed by groups that do not belong to the centers and dynamics of power, but who construct their agency and agentivity as modes of action capable of imagining changes in the meaning of social and political life.

In recent years there have been a number of mass uprisings in several Latin American countries, especially in South America. These large protests have forced important issues on the agenda. The social uprising in Chile in 2019, for example, revealed the incomplete nature of the transition to democracy by questioning the political and economic system inherited from Pinochet, summarized in the slogan "it's not 30 pesos, it's 30 years". In Colombia, the social mobilizations that erupted in 2021 in response to economic reforms evolved into criticism of the government's failure to comply with the peace accords and of all the actors in the war who bear responsibility for 50 years of violence, as well as of a political system that excludes indigenous and Afro-descendant populations. In Peru, since December 2022, important demonstrations have taken place

in different regions demanding greater indigenous representation in national decision-making. In these and other cases, women, youth, students and indigenous peoples are imagining the possibility of changing the traditional ways of doing politics in order to achieve greater political representation, dignity and well-being for themselves and their communities.

Other forms of collective resistance are also evident in the Americas. Feminists have engaged in creative mobilizations to denounce femicide and sexual violence and to guarantee women's reproductive rights. In the face of crippling impunity in cases of enforced disappearance, mothers in Mexico ("las madres buscadoras") and those seeking truth about the false-positive scandal in Colombia have undertaken their own search efforts, developing knowledge and techniques to find their missing loved ones, and challenging the power of the State and hegemonic narratives denying this heinous criminal practice. In 2022, a series of strikes in Panama over the rising cost of the family basket of goods, medicines and gasoline, in which a number of important trade union and indigenous organizations joined together to push for dialogue, had important results for citizens. The Mapuche people of Argentina and Chile preserve and share their ancestral knowledge with new generations so they can learn about and preserve their territories and customs. How can we understand these practices? What do they tell us about political systems in Latin America? How do they help us to think collectively about other forms of governance?

This special track invites scholars and activists to submit proposals that can describe and analyze the different forms of collective resistance in Latin America, to help us understand how they relate to and challenge hegemonic power, and how they contribute to collective thinking, imagining—and building—shared futures.

# CALL FOR PAPERS LASA2024



You are invited to submit a paper or panel proposal addressing either the congress theme or any topic related to the program tracks. LASA also invites requests for travel grants from paper presenters who qualify. Visit the LASA website for eligibility criteria. All proposals for papers, panels, and travel grants must be submitted to the LASA Secretariat via the online proposal system by **September 15, 2023, at 5 p.m. (ET)**.

Proposal forms and instructions will be available on the LASA website: <https://lasaweb.org>. No submissions by regular mail will be accepted. A confirmation email will be immediately sent once the proposal is submitted successfully. Otherwise, contact the LASA Secretariat before the deadline for confirmation to [lasa@lasaweb.org](mailto:lasa@lasaweb.org).

## Permanent Tracks

The 2018-2019 Executive Council decided to work to ensure that each congress maintains a set of permanent tracks. To this end, an exhaustive analysis of the existing tracks since 1991 (221 in total) and the number of proposals received. The criterion has been to consolidate, homogenize and expand these tracks in order to offer a permanent space that represents the thematic diversity represented throughout the membership. The 221 tracks found were discussed in several stages by the full Executive Council and by a subcommittee appointed by the Executive Council. Initially, the 221 program tracks were reduced to 43, and finally to 32.

This year, the Executive Council decided to review and add new tracks, with particular attention to literature, which receives a large number of proposals each year. The Executive Council or a subcommittee appointed by the Executive Council will periodically evaluate new areas proposed by the program committee to determine their permanence in the list of core tracks.

## New Tracks for Each Congress

The Program Committee will have the opportunity to propose specific tracks that it deems relevant within the framework of its programming. For LASA2024, the theme chosen by the Committee invites us to reflect on the countervailing trends existing in the Americas today. On the one hand, the anxiety generated by the rise of repressive tendencies, social inequalities and the climate crisis, as well as the exploitation of natural resources. On the other hand, the hope for change with the coming to power of progressive governments in several countries, with social movements demanding more democratic, fair, and inclusive societies, and with indigenous communities fighting for their rights, their culture, and the protection of their lands and the environment.

## Session Creation Guidelines

One of the main goals for LASA's Congress is to enable the highest level of intellectual exchange from the social sciences and the humanities about Latin America and the Caribbean. An important condition to achieve this goal is ensuring that each of our congress sessions incorporates important degrees of **diversity** along several criteria. These include diverse institutional affiliations of panel participants, region where they are based, disciplinary, career stage, and gender diversity. Not all of these criteria can be present in each and all sessions but, where possible, they should be observed when organizing them.

A session constituted by presenters from the same institution is likely to get a low ranking or be rejected. A minimum of **two institutions** should be represented in each session, and preferably more. Even when a session is focused on a single country, it may be possible to find diversity among presenters in terms of the countries in which they are based. Such diversity could add a different perspective on the same country. Having in the same session scholars in different stages of their careers, from graduate students to junior and senior scholars, can promote productive intellectual networks and possibilities for mentorship.

## Program Agenda

Select the most appropriate topic for your proposal from the list below and enter it in the designated space in the submission system. You may submit only one topic. Send your correspondence to the LASA Secretariat only.

### PERMANENT TRACKS

Agrarian and Food Studies	International Relations / Global Studies
Archives, Libraries and Digital Scholarship	Labor Studies
Art, Music and Performance Studies	Language and Linguistics
Biopolitics and Biopower	Latinx Studies
Childhood and Youth Studies	Law and Justice
Civil Societies and Social Movements	Literature Studies: Colonial/19th century
Culture, Power and Political Subjectivities	Literature Studies: 20th/21st centuries
Democratization and Political Process	Literature and Culture
Economics and Political Economy	Mass Media and Popular Culture
Education	Migration and Refugees
Environment, Nature and Climate Change	Otros Saberes and Alternative Methods
Film Studies	Political Institutions
Feminism and Gender Studies	Public and Social Policies
Health and Well-being	Race and Ethnicities
History and Archaeology	Religion, Politics and Society
Human Rights and Memory	Sexualities and LGBTI Studies
Indigenous Languages and Literature	Urban Studies
Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants: Epistemologies and Knowledge	Security and Violence

### NEW FOR LASA2024

La extrema derecha en  
América Latina y el mundo

Despojos y desplazamientos:  
violencias, extractivismo  
y economías ilegales en  
zonas rurales e indígenas

Impunidades: pasados y  
presentes

Colombia: desafíos actuales y  
futuros posibles

Resistencias colectivas,  
futuros imaginados en las  
Américas

THE DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS IS  
**SEPTEMBER 15, 2023 AT 5 P.M. (ET)**

For more information go to [www.lasaweb.org](http://www.lasaweb.org)