

The Ibero-American Centre (IAC) at Metropolitan University Prague in cooperation with Lusio-Brazilian Studies Department and KREAS project at the Charles University in Prague are pleased to announce:

Call for Papers

for the upcoming conference

Multiple Modernities in Latin America

Discourse on modernity and antimodernity in the political and identification processes from the 19-21st century

Conference date and venue: 23 November 2018, Metropolitan University Prague, Czech Republic

Deadline for submission of abstracts: June 15, 2018

The theme of modernity in Latin America abounds in historical paradoxes, as Jorge Larraín reminds us: Latin America was born at the beginning of European modernity without being allowed to become modern by the colonial powers. With the process of independence, many Latin Americans embraced enthusiastically the Enlightenment ideas. It was, however, more in their formal and cultural discourse than in practice. When political and economic modernity began finally to be implemented in the 20th century, cultural doubts started to emerge as to whether Latin America could adequately modernize, or whether it was at all desirable to modernize by following European and North American patterns.

The region's distinctive search of what it could mean to be modern was shaped by its non-hegemonic, postcolonial position, in full consciousness of being both different from, yet partly constituted by Europe. While Carlos Fuentes described Latin America as a continent in desperate search of its modernity, the region was, according to Octavio Paz, installed in pseudo-modernity since the beginning of the 20th century.

The discourse on modernity has also given rise to a discourse of anti-modernity. Steven B. Smith pointed out that it was not the failures of modern regimes but the very success of Enlightenment ideas – individual rights, democracy, freedom and universal suffrage - that made modernity a continual site of discontent. In Latin America, ideas of modernity enjoyed prominence in periods of expansion, yet in times of crises, they came to be conceived as external and in opposition to the alleged essence of region's culture and its identity. Some do not hesitate to consider the conflict and oscillation between modernity and identity in Latin America – never entirely resolved - as ultimately the major feature of Latin American cultures.

Aims of the conference:

The aim of this interdisciplinary conference is to analyse the discourses on modernity and anti-modernity in Ibero- American cultural and political space, that is in Hispanic America, as well as Brazil, Spain and Portugal, in their complex cultural and political implications from the 19th century until this day. To this end, we shall examine first how the formal and cultural discourse of modernity has been historically constructed. What has been a specific Hispanic America's, Brazilian or Iberian trajectory to modernity? Can we speak of Latin America's distinctive version of modernity, one shaped by its peripheral position and colonial and postcolonial experience?

At the same time, the attention will be paid to the actual political practice and institutionalization of modernity in the societies of the region. How has the belief in the ideology of “order and progress” been actively incorporated in these societies and their political institutions? Who was promoting them? How the overwhelmingly unequal power relations influenced the discourse on modernity and its acceptance in Latin America?

Modernity has been variously conceptualized in terms of historical consciousness, a project imagining and shaping the future, an accumulation of economic or political experiences, or self-reflexive discourse. We are especially interested in what specific cultural and political responses - both positive and critical – have the discourse on modernity and its institutionalization in Latin America provoked until this day. What role have the history and historical consciousness, as well as the literature had in the discursive and practical implementation of modernity in Latin America?

Established scholars, as well as junior researchers from different fields of interest are cordially invited to submit abstracts of their proposed presentations. Discussed topics may include, but are not confined to the following thematic areas:

- Distinctive trajectories to modernity in Ibero-America: Hispanic America, Brazil, Spain and Portugal;
- History and historical consciousness in the discourse about modernity;
- Literature, culture and arts in the discourse about modernity;
- Postcolonial and non-hegemonic position of Latin America vis-a-vis its modernity;
- Political responses to modernity in Latin America – past and present;
- Dialectic between modernity and identity in Latin America;
- External and internal modernization projects in Latin America;
- Intellectuals as mediators of modernity in Latin America;
- Modernity as a globalizing phenomenon in Latin America;
- Discourse on modernity and anti-modernity in Latin America compared to other regions of the world;

Reflecting the fact that the social science research has become increasingly interdisciplinary, the contributions may combine various fields of expertise from political science to history and cultural and literary studies.

Abstracts:

We ask for abstracts (approx. 1000-2000 characters) for presentations with a length of 15-20 minutes on the topics mentioned above. Abstracts summarizing the conference presentation will be accompanied by a short author's bio and contact details and sent **no later than 15 June 2018** at: katerina.brezinova@mup.cz

The conference language is English, although abstracts can also be submitted in Spanish and Portuguese. All applicants will be contacted by the conference organizers with notification of acceptance by June 30, 2018.

Conference date and venue:

The conference will be held on **23 November 2018** at Metropolitan University Prague, Prokopova 16/100, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic. The conference is **free of charge**. A publication of conference proceedings is planned.

We look forward to receiving your abstracts!

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