

Seminar Report

International Workshop

Perspectives on Asian Studies in Latin America

November 9-11, 2016, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



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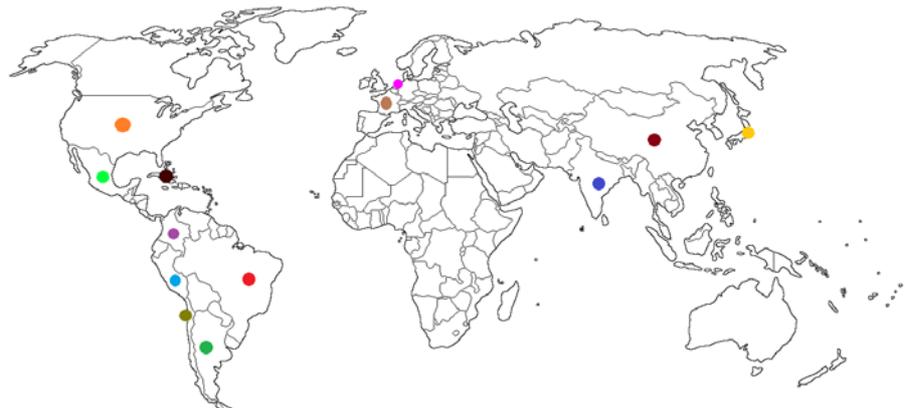
Convener

Introduction



From 9 to 11 November 2016, Sephis Programme and Rio de Janeiro Federal University hosted the International Workshop *Perspectives on Asian Studies in Latin America* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The event co-organized by **ICAS** (the International Convention of Asia Scholars), **IIAS** (the International Institute for Asian Studies) and **Sephis** (the Global South Exchange Programme for the Research on the History of Development), took place at **the School of Advanced Studies of the Rio de Janeiro Federal University**.

The workshop gathered almost 30 participants – scholars and representatives of academic and funding institutions – of 13 nationalities, from 8 disciplinary fields, representing 25 institutions of 11 countries, from Latin and North America, Europe and Asia.



Asia & Latin America

30 participants
13 nationalities
8 disciplinary fields
25 institutions
11 countries

Latin American traditions for studying Asia are historically associated to a correspondingly interest for Africa. Therefore, we had representatives of African Studies in Latin America, including ALADAA (Latin American Association for Asian and African Studies) and the Brazilian Association of African Studies.

the Rio Workshop

The groundwork of this initiative took more than one year with strategic discussions on the contents, scope, selecting the participants, and best setting possible for the event to take place; and has been anchored on previous successful experiences organized by both IIAS, Sephis and other institutions.

The preparation also involved the development, by Sephis Programme, of a survey mapping the history of Latin American intellectual curiosity on Asia as the efforts for institutionalizing it at a formal academic level, and finally identifying the existing scientific capacity of the continent concerning Asian Studies. As a strategy for mobilizing the interest of the widest audience possible, the initial results of this survey were published at IIAS Newsletter (n.72, Autumn 2015).

Moreover, the workshop covered topics of an agenda that circulated previously among participants. Some of them were invited to send specific contributions reacting to this agenda, and some of these contributions should integrate a special issue of an academic journal on Asian Studies.

Public Opening

On November 9, we had a public opening at the Forum of Science and Culture of Rio de Janeiro Federal University, inviting a wide audience largely interested on Asia within the Rio de Janeiro academic community. It counted on three presentations regarding: the orientalist memories of Asia in Argentina (presented by Axel Gasquet); the history of the Latin American scientific and intellectual interests on Asia (by Claudio Pinheiro); and, its inverse: the Asian research capacity concerning Latin America (by Jie Guo). The opening ceremony had the participation of the director of the Forum of Science and Culture (representing the Vice-Chancellor), the director of the Brazilian School of Advanced Studies, the Deputy Director of the Centre for Humanities of the University, the director of IIAS, the chairman of Sephis Programme, the Secretary of ICAS, the director and deputy director of Japan Foundation for South America, the program director of the SSRC for Africa, the Vice-Consul of Japan, besides all the participants of the workshop, and an audience of scholars and students (graduate and undergraduate) from public and private universities of Rio de Janeiro city and metropolitan area.



The participation of students (undergraduate onwards) was remarkable for several reasons. By their interventions, they show the vitality of the field of Asian Studies in the region, especially in the Rio de Janeiro metropolitan area – which counts on more than 20 universities. As the invitation for the opening panel circulated widely through Sephis network, we received a remarkable number of emails from all over Brazil and Latin America, asking for further information on how to participate, and on the further developments of our initiative.



At another dimension, the *Perspectives on Asian Studies in Latin America* workshop, displayed an extremely relevant aspect: the noticeable presence of undergraduate and graduate students of afro-descendant and underprivileged origin. Since 19th century, Asia was traditionally identified in Latin America with an elitist curiosity concerning an “Orient” approached by elitist themes: highly erudite literature, travel accounts, and religious philosophy. The recent promotion of politics of social inclusion through tertiary education in Latin America, particularly in Brazil, show that this picture has been changing, both in terms of research topics and on the profile of the scholars. This is not a manifesto for diversity for an *official photo* of our workshop, but a theme for further reflection. Normally, students from afro-descendant and underprivileged origin would expectedly be concerned with themes regarding Africa, racial relations, labour studies, slavery and so on. Their involvement with Asian Studies, otherwise helps to **de-ethnicize Social Sciences in Latin America**, contributing to promote democratization through inclusion, with the development of new scholarly trajectories and of a rather wider range of topics by which Asia have been reframed in recent years.



Asian Studies in Latin America: De-ethnicizing Social Sciences in the region

The presence of afro-descendent students and of underprivileged origin shows the potential of Asian Studies in Latin America to de-ethnicize Social Sciences in the continent, contributing to promote democratization through the development of new scholarly trajectories and themes concerning Asia in Latin America.

Encouraging Asian Studies in Latin America (and Africa) does not only mean reviewing the field of Asian Studies at large, by promoting Global views of Asia. As elsewhere, the field of Asian Studies in Latin America is characterized by a noticeable presence of Asian or Asian-descendent scholars, in many cases acting as gatekeepers. Supporting Asian Studies in the Global South comprises a yet more transformative dimension, throughout its potential for generating politics towards democratization and social inclusion in specific countries of the region. Correspondingly for helping to de-ethnicize Social Sciences at large, and for encouraging minorities from peripheral contexts to study other minorities likewise from the Global South.

The workshop



On November 10 – 11, the workshop took place at *Cinedia* – the private archives of the first Brazilian cinema company – an excellent environment for an intensive meeting.

The event trusted on previous experiences particularly the well succeeded **Africa-Asia Network** (an initiative inaugurated by IIAS-Sephis in 2012, and later integrated by a consortia of institutions), **East Asian Network of Latin American Studies** (an association involving Peking University, the Japanese Association of Latin American Studies and the Korean Association of Latin American Studies, started in 2016) and the experience of **ALADAA** (inaugurated in 1978, in Mexico). One great coincidence was having our Rio Workshop happening in the very same days that the International Roundtable “Asian Studies in Africa” occurred at the University of Zambia, Lusaka (Zambia), exactly four years before.



Development

The workshop had a twofold general goal: outlining the current state of Asian studies in Latin America (as well as the issues and challenges such field face); and identifying ways towards the future for encouraging an internationalization of Asian studies in our continent, at the institutional level, integrating universities and scholars from the region. The event was organized

around six main topics/vectors **covering:**

1. **An overview of the importance and relevance of Asian Studies for Latin America;**
2. **An assessment of the existing capacities: on teaching/dissemination/institutions;**
3. **An identification of the perceived gaps and needs: what misses to be done;**
4. **A debate on the role of institutions: Asian and Latin American, governmental or non-governmental;**
5. **A discussion on how to improve and move forward, providing a sustainable and inclusive environment for Asian Studies in Latin America, in terms of Internationalization, Networking, Dissemination;**
6. **A roundtable dialogue on possible action plans and pilot projects to integrate initiatives across Latin America and with Asia;**

Asian Studies in Latin America DAY 1

Asian Studies in Latin America: questions of importance and relevance

After a first round of self-introductions, an initial kick-off question has animated our seminar: **Is it important/relevant to encourage Asian Studies in Latin America? Why and for whom?** It was unanimously responded by all participants with a strong **yes! The relevance of studying Asia in Latin America is undeniable.**

Latin America & Asia are indisputably related through historical roots initiated in 16th century, when both regions were under European colonialism, influence and networks. It involved the flow of people, the constitution of migrant communities, religious diasporas, the circulation of literatures, political, economic and social theories. The ways in which Latin America and Asia were (dis)connected was particularly affected by the outcomes of 2nd World War, specially by the agenda on *Development*. Although Asia has been re-signified in nowadays Latin America – becoming integrated to daily-life, identified with the presence of Asian capitalism, basically visible through companies and products, and cultural outputs – *Development* continues to be the main approach for framing how Asia is made relevant to Latin America.

However, this historical background and vivid contemporary scene do not resonate a consistent and sustainable prospect for Asian Studies in LA, and the scene may look contradictory. Though there is a seduction for studying about Asia, in some parts of the continent, Asian Studies are still taken as “exotic”, what is also sustained by stereotypical views of the East at the public sphere. This can be additionally justified by the transformation produced by the post-1950s agenda when geopolitics of knowledge production and the



geographies of intellectual linkages have changed dramatically, rather reinforcing structural de-connections between regions as Asia, Latin America or Africa – thenceforth identified as “areas” (cultural areas and areas of study) to be scrutinized by the curiosity of central or hegemonic academies, rather than to produce understanding about one another. This has been paralleled by the assumption that the mandate of Human Sciences in peripheral academies, especially that of History, was to study their own Nation and society. This movement has constituted Latin America as a derivative effect of European history and made irrelevant most of the interest on Asia and Africa, except from what concerns Latin American historical connections to Africa (through slavery, for example) or the existence of Asiatic migrant communities.

One consequence is, as many participants have stressed, that **though the importance and relevance of Asian Studies to Latin America are undeniable, it is not self-evident and it is under a permanent demand for justification.** This is noticeable by the lack of continued politics for developing a consistent and sustainable scientific capacity in LA concerning Asia, particularly affecting most of the fields in Human Sciences, with an endless need to justify why Latin American should be interested to study Asia anyway. This picture is particularly true for fields that are not usually popular or appealing, such as History, Philosophy, Social Sciences and Humanities (as Elvira Ríos, emphasized). Furthermore, as some participants have stressed the recent eruption of International Relations as a field in Latin America (as in other peripheral countries) has contributed negatively to this scenario, by confining Asia to themes concerning ultra-Modernity (such as emergent capitalisms, BRICS countries, foreign policy, security, governance, etc) and for producing works largely structured by fast-tracked superficial investigations, mainly addressed to feed demands

of the media and of situation analysis approaches – what has shown threatening to Social Sciences otherwise rooted in deep investigations.

Additionally, Asia became a buzzword in Latin American academies, whereas any university allegedly relevant (especially private ones) should offer some sort of program on Asia. Within our region Asia has not only been perceived as a **capitalist good** (identified by Asian products), but also **Asia became an academic commodity in Latin America.**

Curiously, the consolidation of *Asia as a commodified academic good* seems not to have been decisive for reinforcing the relevance of a field of Asian Studies in Latin America. On contrary, it has been helping to confine Asia to specific representations or themes that tend to de-connect Asia from Asian Studies what, in short, has contributed for weakening of the field of Asian Studies in Latin America. Though there is a longstanding intellectual curiosity for Asia from 19th Century onwards and

Asia an academic commodity in Latin America

For many universities in the region, it is almost mandatory to offer some specialization on Asia, with the possibility of exchange programs for students (some sponsored by companies or banks and not extensive to faculty), the presence of a Confucius Institute representation, the circulation of Asian scholars, and translation of best seller self-help literature on economics and development in Asia. A scene comparable to 19th and early 20th century circulation of oriental Gurus (Asian or not), the translation books on orientalist “philosophies” or “religions”, the inauguration of Temples etc.

efforts to institutionalize it through academic initiatives from 1950s on, this is more structured in the form of an archipelago of isolated initiatives, insulated by priorities of the agenda of Latin American nation-states, rather than structured as a proper field, where journals, institutions, publications and scholars refer one another and exist through a continued dialogue. At best, there are small academic communities around specific themes like Japanese, Korean or, more recently, Chinese Studies that work for the structuration of regional groups and associations.

For one side, there have been initiatives like the Centre for Afro-Oriental Studies or the journal Afro-Asia (both from Bahia Federal University, Brazil, and inaugurated in 1959 and 1965, respectively), the Centre for the study of Africa and Asia (at El Colegio de Mexico, 1964) or associations like ALADAA (the Latin American Association for Asian and African Studies, started in 1976) existing for quite a remarkable time. Unfortunately, these important endeavours did not translate into the constitution of a proper field of Asian Studies as such in Latin America – with organic discussions, mutually referred publications, the circulation of scholars etc – but rather to academic/scientific imaginations of Asia somehow insulated within national or to regional spheres. Asian Studies in Latin America, resembles an archipelago of discontinued and isolated groups (some animated, some dormant), instead of a lively community in constant dialogue.

Then, **for whom should Asian Studies matter in Latin America?** – added Philippe Peycam

The very idea of the necessity of justifying the relevance of Asian Studies to Latin America should sound strange, but in fact it is not. Most of the participants replied that instead of asking ourselves “Why Latin Americans study Asia?”, the question should be “Why not?!” A vivid collective response has been made, suggesting that studying Asia should be considered as relevant as studying Africa, Europe and the US, as much as Urban Studies or Global Politics.

It was equally agreed that this is primarily relevant for Latin America to promote Asian Studies in the continent – not only for academic or scientific purposes, but to help reviewing wide misperceptions concerning Asia in Latin America. As Ignacio Villarán remembered, from early 20th century on, Asia was saw as a “threat” in different parts of Latin America – what was recently reinforced by the strong Chinese presence as a vector of an emergent capitalism. At another dimension, Asia has been confined to a limited agenda of themes and mostly identified by the

presence of migrant communities in Latin America. Narrow and stereotypical views of Latin America are also largely present in Asia. Hirota Matsuo gave us an interesting first-hand testimony about the Japanese misperceptions concerning Latin America, particularly considering non-specialized audiences, and how improving Latin American studies in Japan (and in Asia at large) could help to change this.

There is thus, as many participants have addressed, an urge for promoting fresher and wider views of Asia in Latin America and vice-versa. Studying Asia in Latin America is not only relevant for the later region, but for reframing views on Latin America in Asia. This does not refer politics of identity and representation, but attains how a direct intellectual dialogue could challenge normative views and hegemonic histories that considers Latin America as an undeniable (and derivative) part of the West and Asia as the representation of the East, the Orient.

A question was shared if it wouldn't it be strategically interesting for building the relevance of Asian Studies in Latin America to reach the wider scene of the public sphere – what could be done by emphasizing pragmatic approaches for addressing questions that affect Latin American economics. That is, as many of us have emphasized, somewhat the picture we already have, and is how Asia is mostly concerned in the region. As said, *development* has been one of the main topics by which Asia has been framed, whereas occasional “economic miracles” of “emergent markets” boosted the interest of Latin American academia. Such an approach did not show to be sustainable in the long term. One deleterious effect is that regions and countries become “relevant” if (and only if) they turn economically relevant, and tended to be vanish from out of the scope if they are not handy as examples of development and modernity anymore. That was the case for Japanese Studies in Latin America in regions not affected by Japanese migration or not hit by the interest on J-Pop culture. Another consequence, as some of us emphasized, is putting scholars and themes under a subservient position concerning economic flows. As Sheyla Zandonai reinforced (considering the Chinese academic/economic interests in the region), there are not few mismatches in terms of the language of and expectations of business and scientific sectors.

Furthermore, it has contributed to diminished the geographical size of Asia in Latin America; meaning that the Asia that concerns Latin America as framed by developmental priorities, refers to an extremely limited part of the region. This has also contributed to some sort of regional imperialism, whereas China, Korea, Japan, India or Russia (occasionally included and excluded from Asian Studies in Latin America) concentrate almost all Latin American interest on Asia. Yo Fuzakawa, reflecting the cases of Japan and India, also reinforced that Asia is an extremely varied continent, where we can find more differences than similarities on histories and present day scenarios. This also reflects on which Asia resonates in Latin America.

As Claudio Pinheiro has illustrated, in Latin America, if you mention you're dedicated to the study of China, people would next ask you **what** (concerning China) you are interested in? Conversely, if say you study Cambodia, Myanmar or Laos (after the initial difficulty to identify these places with Asia), people would next ask you **why**, studying it anyway? Apart of reflecting a structure of knowledge production, these boundaries of silence force scholars from peripheral countries to justify their intellectual interests (if they diverge from a very normative mainstream agenda), where the value of knowledge for knowledge's sake is not obvious.



The existing capacities of Asian Studies in Latin America

1. **Panoramic view of the history of Asian Studies in Latin America**
2. **The Latin American academic and scientific capacities concerning Asia**
3. **The picture for: teaching/dissemination/institutions**

The first session ended with the diagnostic that Asia matters (historically as much as presently) and that Asian Studies are way too relevant for Latin America, not only considering the transformative potential it has for encouraging to learn about Asia, but to know about Latin America itself.

At the second half of the day, participants stressed that at an institutional level, Latin America counts on a well-developed academic and scientific structure, including universities, journals and a vibrant academic community, where the interest for Asia/Asian Studies is not new, nor small. At another dimension, the role played by associations of migrant communities in some countries was remembered as responsible for structuring the first journals and archives where the memories of diasporas are preserved. These aspects reflect the continental interest and capacity on Asia, already made visible by the survey developed by Sepsis Programme, which helped to identify the longevity and wideness of Latin American scientific capacity concerning Asia.

It was pointed out that as for concerning a formal academic ground, Asian Studies in Latin America have also been very much framed by the specific interests of LA countries concerning Asia, what reflects in several different aspects: on the availability of resources and on the sustainability of the field in the region, on local teaching traditions concerning Asia, on research agendas, on the role played by language (for conducting investigation, teaching and publications) etc. This diagnosis made it easier to respond to the question of if it **makes sense to promote a pan-Latin American Association of Asian Studies?** All participants responded supportively for that, what made us to address to major points: on prior continental initiatives and if they were truly helping Latin America to share a real academic community on Asian Studies.

Undoubtedly, the major and most relevant initiative that include Asian Studies in our continent is ALADAA (the Latin American Association for Asian and African Studies). It has been initiated in 1976 during the 30th International Congress of Human Sciences on Asia and North Africa (*XXX Congreso Internacional de Ciencias Humanas de Asia y Africa del Norte*), in Paris, and officially established in 1978, in Mexico. ALADAA has recently completed forty years of existence with a congress in Santiago (Chile), organized by the Chilean colleagues present at our workshop. It was stressed that although with a long trajectory and fundamental role for promoting Asian and African studies in the continent, ALADAA has structural problems of continuity, related to its financial sustainability and specially to its governance. All participants agreed that ALADAA should be supported as an intellectual legacy of the continent but that it has its limitations to promote both a full-fledged integration of Asian Studies within Latin America and the internationalization of Latin America within a global arena of Asian Studies. The Latin American interest on Asia has also recently been present LASA (the Latin American Studies Association), but the possibility of resonance has shown limited than would be the participation of Latin American scholars in Asian associations.

We have equally discussed the role played by teaching traditions, funding, publication and language for Asian Studies in LA, as correlated aspects of this agenda. As Jie Guo emphasized, most of the reading material concerning Latin America available in Asia, comes only through English language, meaning a mediated and secondhanded perception of Latin America. The same is true for the opposite, as Alexandre Uehara commented, where most of what is consumed in Latin America as Asia or Asian Studies depends on the mediation of US or European academies, media or publishing industry. In most of the cases, what arrives to Asia concerning Latin America corresponds to Latino-Americanist readings produced in the US and Europe, and very rarely to fresh works produced on the ground in our continent – the same is true for the opposite. It has a specifically hard impact on

teaching traditions, as most of the undergraduate and considerable part of graduate students have severe limitations with reading languages other than their mother language.

This circumstance has consequences on the ways in which Latin America and Asia share stereotypical views of one another. It has also impacted how Latin America has been made available for non-academic audiences in Asia (and vice-versa) and, most importantly, impacted teaching traditions crystalize around non-autonomous understandings of Asia in LA (and the contrary). Accordingly, we have debated on the challenges to provide direct intellectual linkages and free access to research and bibliographic resources concerning both regions – connecting academic journals, associations, archives and libraries in direct dialogue through an electronic platform.

As history shows, funding among the main obstacles for promoting a sustainable field of Asian Studies in Latin America. For one side, resources are primarily restricted to a national base – so Brazil sponsors for investigations pursued by Brazilian scholars, and henceforth. Equally, in places like Mexico, Argentina or Brazil are heavily dependent on State priorities as for defining what and how much it matters to be invested – meaning Brazil funding investigations pursued by Brazilian scholars on what Asia concerns to Brazil. On contrary, funding for pan-national, regional or continental initiatives are normally made available by resources from outside the continent (Asian, European or North-American foundations), what produces a curious scenario that, again reinforce continental initiatives of a nation-based agenda – so Chileans, Argentineans and Colombians researching on China; trusting on resources coming from China and framed by topics that are relevant to that agenda.

What misses (has/should) to be done? Perceived gaps and needs

Changing the way Asia is approached as theme for research and teaching, requires not only a shift at the structural base of it (concerning politics of funding or publication, for example), but reviewing methodological procedures and theoretical approaches, as Miriam Oliveira suggested. Among the main challenges for improving this scenario would be investing on direct dialogues between the two regions, in a way that the encompassing presence of the *West* could be challenged, not just at the level of mediator for global knowledge circulation, but as references for producing knowledge outside a certain methodological and theoretical framework. To what Paul van der Velde added the interrogation, **what kind of Asian Studies do we foresee for the region?**

The transformative potential of a more fluid and vivid connection between Asia and Latin America, is remarkable also for helping scholars of both regions to discuss the heuristic relevance of insisting that these “areas” correspond to historical derivations of the world conceived by Western Modernity. “Is Latin America really the West?” confronted us Dilip Loundo. We must consider – he continued – that looking at Asia is a good opportunity to review trajectories of thinking about ourselves in Latin America (and vice-versa). Studying Asia helps Latin America to rethink and deconstruct self-imposed views of the region as West. Ricardo Sulamavia insisted on the same direction by stressing on how ontological (dis)connections were produced among those spaces.

The benefits of an Asia-Latin America intellectual encounter are those of producing transformation at our local intellectual grounds by reconsidering “History” as a derivative effect of the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world, organizing perceptions of the past as much as of the present, as Claudio Pinheiro suggested. There are worlds that exist (and existed) “despite Europe”, and which would benefit from producing spaces of autonomous dialogue, for encouraging new methodologies and theories to emerge. A Latin America-Asia intellectual connection is not only heuristically relevant for producing autonomous views on Asian and Latin American Studies that could avoid the encompassing presence of the West. It is equally important for producing pluralistic views of “global”, stretching the vocabularies referring to non-hegemonic experiences and for re-habilitating World History as seen from more pluralistic approaches.

Asian Studies in Latin America DAY 2

Fostering Strategies to move forward How to improve, internationalize and disseminate? Conclusions, Preliminary achievements & Next Steps

The second day saw very vivid debates on the urgency of improving the visibility and connectivity of initiatives dedicated to Asian studies in Latin America in two directions: encouraging and consolidating Latin American capacity and initiatives on Asia, and making these better connected to the scene of Asian Studies at large. This was one of the mentioned gaps was on how to encourage continental collaborative projects and initiatives and, to organize the existing capacity (institutional and individual) through a platform that could work for simultaneously connecting Asian Studies within Latin America and with the broader international field of Asian Studies.

At the internal continental dimension, we debated on the challenges to produce continuity and sustainability for Asian Studies, referring to the memories of previous initiatives (successful or not) and to present existing capacities. Within this, we considered the relevance of promoting a pan-Latin American graduate program on Asian Studies, that could work for the circulation of scholars and publications within the region and from outside of it. This should be encouraged, but we still must consider the regional/national limitations for reshaping curricula. As some of us have emphasized, promoting graduate programs exclusive on Asian Studies in the region is also risky for considering how employable those professionals would be afterwards. The present academic scenario of Latin America has difficulties to absorb classic *Asiantists*. There are few job positions for Asian studies in Latin America, and scholars would, at best find places as regular historians or social scientists despite their specialities. On contrary, we shared thoughts on other formats of collaborations that could help reinforcing our agenda, like on-line collaboration and the consolidation of Asian History into an obligatory discipline at undergraduate level. Though as individual scholars or representatives of research institutes and universities, most of us followed and worked for developing numerous MoUs, exploratory visits and bilateral agreements between institutions and governments in Latin America and Asia, there is still a great need for a continental initiative, in the form of an association, that could centralize and voice the needs of Latin American scientific community concerning Asia.

Another debated idea was on the relevance of building a continental platform as a strategy for consolidating new forms of collaboration with institutions and associations in Asia and concerning Asia elsewhere. As Axel Gasquet put it, we should fill the lack of a ALADAA international. This platform should not only be seen only as a resourceful institution for those in Latin America interested on Asian Studies, but particularly, as a platform through what Latin American intellectuals can gather with other parts of the Global South in an autonomous way. This inspired us into the direction of a **Latin American Knowledge Platform on Asia**, that could promote initiatives and later evolve into the form of an Association.

One suggestion that animated the debate was to encourage communication strategies, through newsletters, social media and by the development of an electronic platform – a site or blog. This site should work as a collective platform for organizing the continental capacity (institutional and individual) for studying Asia, but also as a repository for identifying what has been done, in terms of a comprehensive history of Latin American publications, journals, institutions etc along the lines already developed by Sephis' survey on Latin American capacity on Asia. One major achievement should be to identify libraries and archives (public or private) that store material concerning Asia (publications and, most specially, primary sources) and to share the references about the existence of these specific collections. This shall be pursued as a collective project, organized around local commissions for identifying these resources concerning the history and present state of Latin American studies on Asia.

The virtual platform will be a resourceful tool for professionals at different stages of their careers, and as a virtual community where especially young students could engage in different projects, and on uploading the most updated initiatives, while simultaneously working as the kick-off collective project of our **Latin American Knowledge Platform on Asia**.

Additionally, Paul van der Velde suggested the organization of the Latin American edition of ICAS book prize. The idea was very well received and Carlos Vainer (director of the Forum of Science and Culture of Rio de Janeiro Federal University), suggested to include not only books but unpublished thesis and dissertations, for encouraging a next generation of Latin American scholars to engage on Asian Studies at large, which was also well-received.

We have also found occasion for debating on next steps and plans. As has been suggested by Sephis, the importance of having the Workshop *Perspectives on Asian Studies in Latin America* organized in November 2016, intended to mobilize LA continental intellectual capacity on Asia and to immediately propose initiatives. One suggestion was to have our **Latin American Knowledge Platform on Asia** present at meetings on Asian Studies, in our region and abroad.

Sephis, the IIAS and ICAS suggested the possibility of a special panel or roundtable organized around our platform for next **ICAS 10 (Chiang Mai, Thailand, 20-23 of July 2017)** an opportunity when we could reinforce our institutional ties, consolidate the dialogue and decide for a five years' plan. The suggestion was enthusiastically welcomed and many of our participants suggested inputs to the format of the roundtable, the contents to be debated and an agenda for planning shared initiatives.

The strategic meeting of the **Latin American Knowledge Platform on Asia** should discuss an agenda for one, three and five years plans, including practical and academic issues:

- The establishment of a secretariat.
- A calendar for bi-annual conferences – complementary with the schedule of other Associations as ICAS, East Asian Network of Latin American Studies, A-Asia, AAS.
- To define the roles of individual faculty members and research agendas of Asia in LA;
- Organizing a committee for ICAS Book Prize in Portuguese and Spanish languages – for including all books published on themes concerning Asia in Latin America and Europe (in Spanish and Portuguese);
- The construction of an on-line platform for
 - Gathering academics, institutions, journals and newsletters;
 - Improving the continental knowledge about the history and present capacity of Asian studies in LA (taking for grant the survey organized by Sephis);
 - Register archives and libraries with special collections on Asia in Latin America
 - Constituting a privileged space for students and young scholars from Latin America and Asia to find room for interaction and sharing news, engaging on publication tracking and reviewing
 - Tom Asher gave the successful example of “**Jadaliyya.com**”, a virtual community sponsored by the SSRC with similar vision and mission.

Amaury Garcia and Ricardo Sulamavia also mentioned next ALADAA meeting happening in Lima (Peru), on October 2017, where the **Latin American Knowledge Platform on Asia** could have a presence. Not only for taking the opportunity for further consolidating our platform, but specially for promoting an integrative agenda with ALADAA and other institutions and associations within Latin America.

Note: I am thankful for the comments and inputs of all participants, most specially to Sheyla Zandonai and Luz Hincapié, who kindly shared their personal notes, and to our assistants who produced reports of the sessions: Jacques Pinto, Livi Gerbase and Daniela Mazur – those were all very helpful for producing this report.

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