Led by a Franco-Brazilian team of scholars in the humanities, social sciences, arts and literatures, this joint research project is developing a digital platform for Transatlantic Cultural History to be published in four languages. In a series of essays exploring cultural relations between Europe, Africa, and the Americas, it presents a connected history of the Atlantic space since the 18th century, highlighting the cultural dynamics of the Atlantic region and its crucial role in the contemporary process of globalization.

Pan Americanism

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North America - South America - Caribbean

The Atlantic Space Within Globalization - The Consolidation of Mass Cultures - The Steam Atlantic

The US-led Pan American Union, created in 1890, is generally understood as a form of soft power serving Washington’s interests abroad. Until the end of WWII, it also meant educating US citizens about their new hemispheric responsibilities by promoting Latin American culture, through scientific cooperation, language teaching, art and literature.

The Pan American Union, founded in 1890, was the first institutional expression of a new vision of global organization that the United States promoted through the next century. Sixty-five years previously, Simón Bolívar had proposed that Spain's former colonies secure their independence with a pan-American federation. Bolívar's plan failed as the old Spanish empire split into twenty sovereign nations, united by language, but divided by competing political and economic interests. The pan-American idea returned in the 1880s, expanded to include the United States, Haiti, and Brazil, as competition between European powers for control of Africa and Asia extended into the Americas. Germany in particular sent naval forces to seize control of customs offices in American countries defaulting on loans to German nationals, part of a broader strategy for challenging British domination of Latin American markets. In 1887, Venezuela faced a German squadron off its coast, and its leaders appealed to the United States for assistance. The U.S. government responded with an invitation for a pan-American congress to meet in Washington and consider forms of collective action. All American nations were concerned about deepening inequalities in European-American relations and responded positively. The Pan American Union appealed to many across the western hemisphere, even if there was no material basis for equality between the United States and any of the other member nations, because pan-Americanism seemed to promise that international relations could be reformed around enforceable principles of equality, mutuality, and community-enforceable because the United States was a global economic power. From the beginning, the Pan-American Union, even though it mobilized the idealistic rhetoric of the revolutionary era, was about rebalancing the global political order. In both the United States and Latin American countries, the vision was triangular-Europe constrained by the unity of the Americas would be forced to change how it operated in the world, all to be done while preserving if not expanding existing trans-Atlantic commerce. From this perspective, pan-Americanism was a prelude to the "globalism/globalization" of the late twentieth century. The incoherencies of pan-Americanism in practice, in part grounded in contradictory aspects of U.S. strategies and U.S. politics, foretold the problems of what happened after the Cold War ended.

Elihu Root (undated)

Source : Bain News Service (Library of Congress)

The guiding figure behind early twentieth-century pan-Americanism was Elihu Root (1845-1937), a Wall Street lawyer who served as U.S. Secretary of War from 1899 to 1904 and Secretary of State from 1905 to 1909. Root shaped the development of the Pan American Union as a model for a liberal conception of international order based on rule of law, individual rights, and private enterprise. He advocated a move away from "balance of power" to more formalized global institutions relying on codified international law with clear procedures for dispute arbitration. Root also advocated expanding intellectual and cultural exchange between nations in order to promote formation of a global "public opinion," a goal he actively pursued between 1910 and 1929, when Root served as founding president of the Carnegie Corporation, a group of twenty philanthropies that steel magnate Andrew Carnegie established to direct his vast personal wealth into public causes. Root's vision of how to achieve what he believed would be a more peaceful and prosperous world than that created by the European powers since the seventeenth century rested on an arbitrary generalization of positive elements central to U.S. internal governance, such as an independent judiciary or a strong civil society organized around a free press and many active voluntary associations. In practical terms, the new global order Root worked to construct would be an informal empire whose structure echoed the historical experience of the United States. As Argentinean historian Tulio Halperín Donghi noted, a distinctive feature of U.S. dominance has been reliance on cultural conversion.[1] Private citizens involved in pan-American activities were being seduced into taking for granted that U.S. ways of doing things were always the most effective.

In forming the Pan American Union, the member states pledged to promote a trans-national pan-American identity through regular exchange of intellectual and cultural work. "Cultural exchange," like pan-Americanism, involves a contradictory combination of idealism and power. Culture that becomes an instrument of propaganda for "liberty," "civilization," or whatever abstraction a world power chooses to invoke, cannot, by definition, offer critical frameworks for experiencing the complexities of the world. Nonetheless, many writers and artists participated in cultural exchange programs, enthusiastic to reach new publics while contributing to the cause of international understanding. "Exchange" is a word that suggests two-way interaction, but historians and international relations scholars, concerned with how effectively "soft power" served U.S. foreign policy objectives, have typically focused on the use of cultural programs to influence foreign public opinion and secure consent to U.S. priorities. There is however another dimension: how U.S. society changed as its global role grew. Elihu Root's conception of the U.S. international role required a citizenry capable of understanding debates in other countries, whether they were allies or potential enemies. If the United States as a society were concerned only with itself, the nation could not provide responsible, authoritative international leadership—a situation Root viewed as particularly dangerous because he knew from practical experience the tendency within the executive branch to act unilaterally, while U.S. businesses operating abroad sought

every advantage that they could, often colluding with corrupt foreign leaders. The deeper purposes of cultural exchange within Root's framework for global governance were to develop a domestic public opinion with the inclination and the power to make the executive branch and U.S. business more democratically accountable for their overseas dealings. An admirable, perhaps utopian ideal in the abstract, but public interest in international affairs was an essential foundation for successful expansionary and interventionist policies.

In responding to U.S. plans, Americans from all nations had to consider seriously what united the nations of the western hemisphere but also what divided them. They debated how they could take advantage of what the United States offered in terms of investment, markets, security, and resources for a variety of potentially beneficial educational and cultural programs. Every country in the Pan American Union, including the United States, was deeply divided about developing closer inter-American ties, particularly whether the benefits could be enjoyed without surrendering either national independence or cultural identities. Pan-Americanism was inherently a liberal enterprise, invoking ideas of free exchange, personal development, and rule of law. As a liberal project, it faced challenges from both Marxists and conservatives, as well as movements defending ethnic, racial, or religious identity. Developing intellectual and cultural community in America required trans-national institutions that did not exist in any form in 1900 when pan-Americanism was in its formative stages. Cooperation between governments, universities, and other not-for-profit public institutions over the following decades helped to create a more regular interchange between intellectuals and artists from different countries. In the 1930s, mass media markets emerged and spread across the western hemisphere. Whether the product was books, magazines, motion pictures, radio, or phonograph records, exchange between producers in different countries helped establish a cultural market where profits were more reliable for Latin American producers if cultural goods crossed national boundaries. The cultural networks and markets that developed as a result of pan-American exchange promoted Latin American identity as a basic requirement of cultural markets spanning the continent, but it was a process that made it difficult to separate from Anglo American cultural hegemony.

Conversations: translating science and literature

The cultural agenda of the Pan American Union began with an ambitious program of conferences. Given the university training of the primary participants in pan-American cultural exchange, academic dialogue across national boundaries was an extension within the Americas of the kinds of conversations that American scholars and intellectuals had had with their European counterparts throughout the nineteenth century, discussion typically normative and rationalist, organized around efforts to define basic principles. The first Pan American Scientific Congress convened in Santiago, Chile, in 1908, with 400 delegates attending. The Second Scientific Congress, meeting in Washington at the end of 1915, had over 2500 participants. Ten more general conferences were held until 1948, when participation shifted to global meetings sponsored by the newly formed United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In addition to general academic conferences, the Pan American Union organized hundreds of conferences in the following officially recognized topic area rubrics: agriculture, archeology, architecture, aviation, bibliography, botany, child development, coffee, commerce, communications, conflict resolution, consular procedures, customs, economic expansion, education, eugenics, finance, geography, health, highways, history, housing, Indian life and languages, intellectual cooperation, journalism, jurists, labor unions, law, literature, medicine, municipalities, music, nutrition, postal services, radio, sanitation, standardization of weights and measures, sciences physical and natural, social organizations, student exchange, trademarks, travel, universities, and women. Funding from conferences came primarily from U.S. philanthropies, such as the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation, or from corporations with investments directly connected with the topic under discussion. Given that the budget for the Pan American Union was small, with the United States as the wealthiest member providing approximately two-thirds of operating costs, activities were only as robust as gifts from individuals, corporations, and philanthropies allowed. The guiding principle shaping pan-American activities was that private initiative best determined which inter-American connections were beneficial.

The Costa-Rican delegation at the 1915 Pan American Scientifc Congress was lead by Eduardo J. Pinto, (left) a physician trained at Columbia University, New York.

Source : Harris & Ewing Inc. Library of Congress

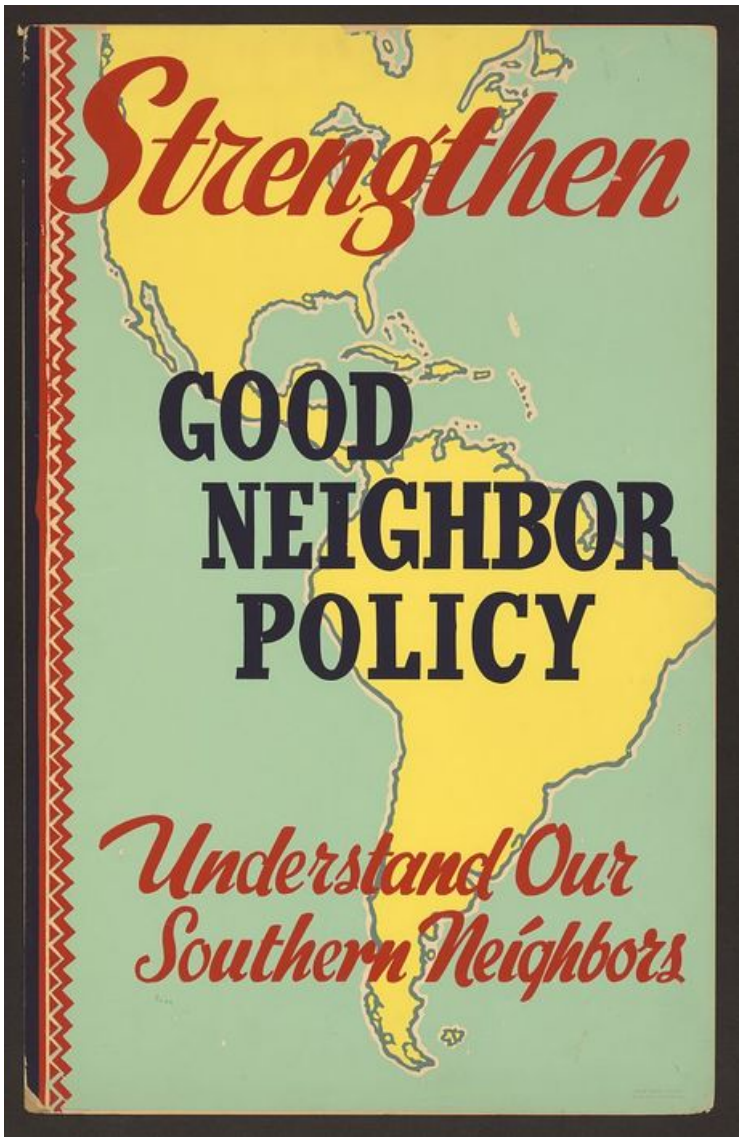
One on-going priority of pan-American meetings was developing a common curriculum for the schools of the member states. The 1915 scientific congress recommended that "achievements and influences of the founders of the independence of the American Republics" be studied at every grade level throughout the hemisphere, along with classes on geography, history, and cultural values. In 1931, the Pan American Union commissioned Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral to write a Pan-American Pledge for students to recite in classrooms across the Americas. The pledge opened with the simple declaration: "We Americans of North and South America have accepted with our heritage of geographic unity a certain common destiny that should find a threefold fulfillment on our continent in an adequate standard of living, perfect democracy, and ample liberty." The pledge continued with the claim that North Americans and South Americans, despite superficial differences, were united by a common Christian heritage, while their efforts to create new societies meant that they had been fated to give "a new democratic interpretation" to the culture, customs, art, education, and science all Americans had inherited from Europe, "blending them all into a harmony of greater beauty and greater sweetness." The conclusion promised that unlike Europe, the American peoples sought to solve their differences without violence or the desire to take away the independence of any people.

Increased language instruction quickly emerged as the single highest priority. Centers for the study of English, funded by private foundations, opened in major cities across Latin America. The Carnegie Corporation, for instance, which had funded development of a robust public library system within the United States, shifted its attention after 1915 to building "Pan American libraries" across the Americas. Each location received packages of 10,000 to 20,000 books in English, as well as magazine and journal subscriptions, plus funding for basic staff. Adopting the promotion of language instruction as its top priority, the Women's Auxiliary of the Pan American Union pledged that women's clubs across the Americas would "encourage the study of Spanish and Portuguese and English in the high schools of their respective countries"; "encourage the development of the art, music, and literature of the Americas"; and help expand educational exchange programs by raising money for students to spend a year studying in another PAU country.[2] Since English was the primary language of international business in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many Latin Americans, at least among elites and the middle class, had some knowledge of the language. In the United States, however, at the beginning of the twentieth century, instruction in Spanish was minimal at all school levels and Portuguese programs did not yet exist. By 1925 the number of students taking Spanish had grown larger than either French and German, with Spanish becoming and remaining to this day the most studied foreign language in the United States. Portuguese instruction remained largely confined to colleges and universities, but the number of schools offering courses grew from 3 to over 700 in a single decade. The remarkable growth in students studying the languages of the hemisphere was not the result of random changes in their priorities, but the product of

a concerted and well-funded effort to promote a larger, continental American consciousness within the United States, in which it became "natural" for Americans to learn the main languages of the region.

PAU conferences regularly identified the need for translation programs and recommended that the PAU start by publishing the most historically important books produced in the region in all four official languages. The Pan American Library, finally launched by the PAU in 1940, issued new editions of classic works, many out of print and difficult to find, but the program never had funding for a complete series of translations. In 1919 the PAU launched four monthly magazines, *Pan-American Magazine*, *Pan American Review,* and *Inter-America*, all of which offered English translations of articles published in leading Latin American newspapers and magazines, while *Inter-América* offered Spanish translations of articles published in the U.S. press. The *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* reprinted essays, short stories, and poetry in the four official languages of the union. Later, the PAU began publishing the *Boletín de artes visuales*, a quarterly publication released in Spanish only that surveyed important exhibitions in the visual arts.

PAU publications aimed to expose authors whose work would otherwise be difficult to locate. As with other PAU cultural programs, translation was to expand as publishing firms identified books they believed would be of interest to their readers. PAU programs led to modest increases in translation of Latin American books into English, although not of U.S. books into Spanish or Portuguese. Between 1800 and 1915, only 34 Latin American books had been translated into English, published either in the United States or Britain. Between 1916 and 1940, 88 books were translated into English, all but two of them published by U.S. presses. Nonfiction work proved difficult to translate because books about another country usually required considerable contextualization, with substantial additions and/or footnoting to make an author's commentary comprehensible, particularly when discussing regions about which little previously had been written for general readers. As a consequence, a large majority of books translated into English were fiction or poetry rather than in-depth analyses of another society. Waldo Frank, a popular novelist and author of several books on U.S.-Latin American cultural relations, edited a series that introduced writers such as Ricardo Güiraldes, José Eustasio Rivera, Rómulo Gallegos, and Victoria Ocampo to English-language readers. Novels on the Mexican Revolution proved to be the most popular with U.S. readers, particularly Mariano Azuela's *Los de abajo* released in English as *The Underdogs*, and Martín Luis Guzmán's *El Águila y la serpiente* (released as *The Eagle and the Serpent*). During World War II, translation into English tripled, as the Division of Cultural Affairs in the U.S. State Department began introducing publishers to authors State Department staff believed would be interesting to U.S. readers while offering subsidies to defray extra costs required for preparing a translation. The first book by a Latin American author that was commercially successful in the highly competitive U.S. book market appeared in 1943, *Crossroads*, a novel of contemporary urban life by the Brazilian author Érico Veríssimo. Macmillan, among the giants of U.S. publishing at the time, issued a number of translations by Latin American authors, taking advantage of subsidies the U.S. government offered. Veríssimo's novel sold well, and eight more books by Veríssimo appeared in English between 1945 and 1967 even though subsidies for translations ended after World War II. Chilean poet Pablo Neruda also developed a large following in the United States during the same years. Ciro Alegria's novels on indigenous communities in Peru struggling to retain their autonomy were also popular in English translation. Germán Arciniegas's anthology of contemporary Latin American writing, *Green Continent: A Comprehensive View of Latin America by Its Leading Writers*, released in 1944, became a staple assigned reading in U.S. schools and remained in print for over thirty years.



"Good Neighbor Policy" poster (between 1935 and1943) commissioned by the Federal Art Project.

Source : Library of Congress

Painted walls make good neighbors

The first Latin American cultural figures to capture the attention of the U.S. public were the Mexican muralists. At the end of the 1920s, exhibitions of contemporary art from Mexico opened in museums in New York City, Detroit, Chicago, and San Francisco, with attendance comparable to, at times exceeding, shows featuring European masters. Growing fascination with the Mexican mural movement led to commissions north of the border, with dozens of artists invited to work in virtually every part of the United States. Their work in Mexico celebrated the recent revolution and the power of a mobilized citizenry to reconcile democracy and industrial organization. Their message, even if at times critical of modern capitalism, was both dramatic and positive. In his memoirs, Diego Rivera observed that, when he received his first invitation to work in California, he was excited to go because, "the United States was a truly industrial country such as I had originally envisioned as the ideal place for modern mural art." Rivera's biggest and most successfully realized project in the United States was for the Detroit Institute of Arts, where, with funding from the Ford family, he was given a large hall to create his *Detroit Industry* (1932) using all four walls to illustrate assembly-line production of automobiles and the roots of industry in modern science. Nelson Rockefeller then commissioned Rivera to paint a mural for the main lobby of the new Rockefeller Center in New York City. *Man at the Crossroads* was to be a celebration of the scientific, industrial, and social possibilities of modern life. Rockefeller fired Rivera after the painter refused to remove a portrait of Lenin, the revered/reviled leader of the communist revolution in Russia, whom Rivera had paired with Abraham Lincoln in the artist's pantheon of modern great heroes. The management company in charge of renting office space in the building ordered the mural destroyed. Returning home,

Rivera created a smaller version with the title *Man, Controller of the Universe*, for permanent display at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Mexico City.

A mural in Los Angeles by David Alfaro Siqueiros, América Tropical (1932), was also destroyed. Developers creating a Mexican-themed shopping plaza commissioned the painter to create a large mural overlooking the space. Siqueiros placed the crucified body of an Indian at the center of his mural, surrounded by ruins of pre-Columbian buildings and sculptures. From the sidelines, snipers (identified with revolutionary movements in Mexico and Peru) took aim at an eagle hovering over the scene. When the unveiling of the mural occurred, critics in both the United States and Mexico hailed *América Tropical* as among the most important works yet produced in the Mexican mural movement. For the developers who commissioned the work, however, Siqueiros had ignored their commercial purposes. They had the mural whitewashed so its disturbing imagery no longer conflicted with festive promotion of shops and restaurants. Still, the fates of Rivera's Rockefeller Center and Siqueiros's Olvera Plaza murals were untypical of the dozens of murals that Mexican artists created across the United States in the 1930s. José Clemente Orozco's The Epic of American Civilization (1932-1934) at Dartmouth College in the state of New Hampshire, with its difficult treatments of the dehumanizing effects of modern war and industry, quickly became one of the most visited public art sites in the country.[3]

Candido Portinari's "Discovery of Gold" (1941). Mural painting in the Hispanic Reading room of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Source : Photograph by Carol M. Highsmith / Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

In 1937, U.S. curators and critics discovered Brazilian painter Candido Portinari. Portinari's success coincided with the U.S. federal government's assuming a greater role in coordinating and promoting cultural exchange. Building a strategic alliance with Brazil was central to Roosevelt administration plans to turn the Pan American Union into an alliance against Nazi Germany, and the State Department spent considerable effort promoting Brazilian culture within the United States. Yet global politics alone cannot explain Portinari's stunning, if temporary U.S. fame. His technical but

experimental sophistication in warmly sympathetic presentations of Brazilian workers established him as an artist of special interest. Portinari, like Rivera and Siqueiros, was a communist, but when he visited the United States, he downplayed his political ideas. "Politics is always changing," he told reporters, "but art remains the same. If we build our ties on art, we build on a firm foundation." In 1940, shortly after the German occupation of France, the Library of Congress in Washington invited Portinari to do four murals on the European invasion and colonization of the Americas. The murals opened to the public in January 1942, a month after the Japanese attack on Hawaii, and the press discussed Portinari's work in the context of a common American heritage uniting Brazil and the United States. Much as ten years before when the U.S. public embraced Diego Rivera's murals as a celebration of national industry, Portinari's very Brazilian imagery, featuring the contributions of blacks and native peoples to the creation of his country, functioned inside the United States as patriotic symbols of national determination to unite the peoples of the world in a war against racism and militarism.

Diego Rivera returned in the United States in 1940 commissioned by the San Francisco World's Fair to create a new mural, popularly referred to as *Pan-American Unity*, although the formal title was *The Marriage of the Artistic Expression of the North and of the South on This Continent*. "My mural," Rivera said, "will picture the fusion between the great past of the Latin American lands, as it is deeply rooted in the soil, and the high mechanical developments of the United States." The basis for pan-American unity was a "marriage of artistic expression" that would culminate with the "blending of Indian, the Mexican, the Eskimo, with the kind of urge which makes the machine, the invention in the material side of life, which is also an artistic urge, the same urge primarily but in a different form of expression." The technological wonders of contemporary California blend into scenes from the Valley of Mexico before the Spanish conquest. In both settings, large groups work together to erect massive structures. In the center is a figure made of machinery merging into the Mexican goddess Coatlicue, deity of death and the earth. Rivera explained: "On one side of this figure there is the northern culture, on the other the southern art. People are working on this figure, artists of the North and South, Mexican and North American. I have also [Robert] Fulton and [Samuel] Morse, artists who, as well as being painters, invented the tools for the industrial revolution, the telegraph and the steamboat, the means of transporting ideas and materials. From the South comes the plumed serpent, from the North the conveyor belt.[4]"

Ford Motor Company film showing Diego Rivera working on the Detroit Industry Murals at the Detroit Institute of Arts (1932).

Source : Archive.org

In 1943, Rivera published an article in Mexico, "El arte, base del Panamericanismo"[5] ("Art, the Foundation of Pan-Americanism"), in which he defended his continuing commitment to pan-Americanism. According to Rivera, European civilization since its earliest days had been based on slavery. The dictatorships in Germany and Italy manifested the contemporary form of slave societies. The only part of Europe that had escaped slavery was the Soviet Union. The redemption of European culture could come only through merger with the Soviet Union once it had been purified of Stalinism and returned to democratic socialism. Like the Soviet Union, the United States had had a democratic revolution, the basis for the country's exceptional productivity. U.S. democracy, however, remained incomplete because slavery endured in racial segregation. Latin American democracy, on the other hand, had failed entirely. Elites established police dictatorships to suppress the popular majority and turned to European and North American capitalists to provide the economic development that would come naturally once a people is unleashed from slavery. The dialectical relationship of the American revolutions revealed how to exit the impasse of deformed democracy in the United States and aborted democracy in Latin America. The initial step toward unification of the American nations was to end racial prejudice and discrimination, overt in North America, but equally present in Latin America even if denied. The war against fascism required Americans to embrace the principle of racial equality, and the Pan American Union, Rivera claimed, had been from its beginning initiated a return to democracy because countries of diverse racial backgrounds had agreed to work together on the basis of formal, if not actual, equality. Once the political process became truly democratic, Rivera predicted, the peoples of America would cease thinking in terms of national citizenship, race, or ancestral homelands. Divisions and debate would continue, but as people spoke from experience and hopes, instead of privileges and fears, they would find allies in every nation and in every social group. From the distance, Rivera's stance seems naive, but at the time, he was one of many foreign commentators observing that the United States, once committed to pan-

Americanism, unwittingly began the difficult process of dismantling the racial segregation embedded in every aspect of daily life.

Rethinking race relations

In 1941, as race hatred motivated the murder of millions around the globe, Brazilian psychiatrist Arthur Ramos, coined the term "racial democracy" to distinguish Brazil's special contribution to the international struggle against fascism. "Negroes and mulattoes are integral elements of the national life," Ramos declared in an article written to summarize his major arguments to readers in the United States. He continued, "Their opportunities are the same as the other racial groups in the participation in social and cultural activities. This tradition in the treatment of races is a matter of pride in Brazil. The social status of the Negro in Portuguese America appears, therefore, to be the best in all America." Ramos asked his readers whether the British, given a long history of colonialism and vicious treatment of non-Europeans, could honestly be said to be fighting for any principle beyond preservation of their empire. Brazilians would have no stake in the war between Britain and Germany were it not that the Nazis had taken imperialism to a new level by fighting to impose the rule of a "master race" on the rest of the world. Racial prejudice diminished the practice of democracy in the United States as well, Ramos added, but as long as the United States remained committed to pan-Americanism and the equality of all nations, the country had taken a path leading towards "racial democracy."[6]

Ramos was one of several Brazilian writers who during the interwar years developed the proposition that Brazilian culture formed in supposedly peaceful interaction of the country's native peoples with Portuguese settlers and African slaves. The cultures of "the three races" belonged equally to all Brazilians, regardless of race, national origins, or social class. Ramos's term "racial democracy" spread widely in the United States, publicized in newspaper and magazine articles, best-selling books like Vera Kelsey's *Seven Keys to Brazil* (1940) and Stefan Zweig's *Brazil, Land of the Future* (1942), as well as in-depth research into Brazilian race relations that both the U.S. government and philanthropies funded. "Racial democracy" poorly described the complexity of social relations in Brazil, but the myth served the interests of civil rights advocates in the United States. More generally, Latin American race relations offered a basis for rethinking U.S. practices. Frank Tannenbaum's short book *Slave and Citizen* (1946) examined the history of African-descent populations across the Americas, sketching diverging histories of slavery and emancipation in order to argue for the superiority of racial affairs in Latin America. For the next two decades, *Slave and Citizen* remained one of the most widely read and cited books in the United States on race relations, rivaling Gunnar Myrdal's much longer *An American Dilemma* (1944). The most insistent message coming from research into race relations in Brazil and other countries in the Americas was that inequalities that people in the United States typically understood as a product of fundamental racial differences grounded in biology and culture, Latin Americans were more likely to view as a result of widespread poverty and lack of access to education.

The segregation system in the U.S. South was the most visible contradiction in the U.S. position as leader of a global coalition fighting racism, but racial discrimination and conflict were present in every part of the country. As black workers moved to urban centers to take jobs in war industries, the government faced defiant resistance to modest measures to guarantee equal treatment at work or access to decent housing. In the course of the war, race riots broke out in more than a dozen U.S. cities, including Chicago, Detroit, New York, and Los Angeles with white mobs rampaging through the streets attacking blacks and Mexicans. The actual state of race relations in the country undermined the U.S. ability to exercise global leadership, a challenge that government officials working with allies in the Pan American Union could not evade. Spruille Braden, while ambassador to Cuba in 1943, acknowledged that neither the United States nor the United Kingdom had good records on racial matters. "On the contrary," he continued in a public address, "we have many things to be ashamed of and to regret; but, at least, it is something that we are ashamed and do regret, for that proves we are progressing. It would be to no avail now to enumerate the injustices and tragedies of the past. The point is to make sure that these errors will not be repeated." U.S. diplomats in fact remained timid about what they said. The administration needed the support of segregationist southern Democrats in Congress for a variety of domestic and international initiatives, and white voters in the North and West who typically voted Democratic could easily shift their allegiances if the government pursued racial equality seriously. Global leadership demanded that the United States make a clean, dramatic break with white supremacy, but domestic politics limited government action to tepid

symbolic statements. Even those limited steps were too much for many in Congress. Before the war came to an end, an alliance of southern Democrats and midwestern Republicans took shape to replace cultural exchange programs that assumed that the citizens of the United States needed to learn about other countries with programs in the newly created Office of Public Information (renamed the United States Information Agency in 1953) focused primarily on providing information about the United States to foreigners. To the degree that pan-Americanism functioned to promote ideals of either social or economic equality, conservatives decried pan-American cultural exchange as foreign interference in domestic institutions.

Despite the linkage to the cause of racial equality, pan-Americanism held little interest to U.S. African Americans, for whom pan-Africanism and Négritude offered alternative imaginations of trans-national connections. Langston Hughes translated Spanish-language and Haitian poets for U.S. journals. He lived for periods of his life in Mexico (where his father worked), Cuba, and Haiti, but his writings, even *I Wonder as I Wander*, his book on international affairs in the 1930s, touched on pan-Americanism only briefly to bring up yet another noble-sounding ideal that white Americans invoked without understanding how it demanded substantial changes in how the United States operated. Langston Hughes's work was frequently translated into Spanish and Portuguese, particularly his poem "I Too Sing America" (1926), a short lyric that predicted that "the darker brother" was surviving in his American sojourn and growing strong despite exclusion everywhere he turned. Eventually, the poem concludes, all will take for granted that blacks are part of the national family. For many, the poem succinctly posed the fraud of American independence: how could the continent be a "land of Liberty" if no one wanted to acknowledge that its wealth had been built on slavery? Haiti had been a founding member of the Pan American Union, and pan-American cultural programs offered funding and support for research into the country's history and culture while also promoting comparative study of African diasporic cultures across the western hemisphere. Dancer and choreographer Katherine Dunham took advantage of these opportunities for years of research into Haitian folk culture, work that then led her to study of African cultural forms thriving in Cuba, Brazil, and other American countries. The U.S. State Department frequently sent her and her dance company on tours of Latin America, where she presented programs showing the variety of African-descent culture in the western hemisphere. Interest in "racial democracy" led to funding for African American sociologist E. Franklin Frazier to conduct in-depth studies of racial attitudes and practices in different parts of Brazil. Frazier confirmed that Brazilians had, from a U.S. perspective, more open attitudes towards racial difference, but he warned that he found evidence that as Brazilians became more familiar with life in the United States, some were adopting U.S. ideas about racial difference. Pan-Americanism might lead to "racial democracy" spreading to the United States, but it could also result in segregation spreading from the world's wealthiest nation to other countries. Frazier's warning found confirmation in a well-publicized incident in 1950 when a hotel in São Paulo refused to honor the room reservations Katherine Dunham had made for her and her dance company. The management explained that they no longer accepted "Negro" guests, whose presence offended many business travelers from the United States. Similar incidents occurred in Cuba, where hotels and restaurants depending on customers from the United States routinely violated Cuban laws by refusing to serve blacks.

From exchange to information

In 1945, in response to congressional threats to eliminate funding for cultural programs, the State Department made "public information," that is, providing citizens of other countries with information about the United States, the official priority of its cultural and educational activities. Congress eliminated U.S. funding for Pan American Union programs developing shared curricular materials, while plans to expand instruction of Spanish and Portuguese in U.S. elementary schools collapsed after Congress eliminated funding from the budget of the Office of Education in 1947. With the formation of the United Nations as a formal union of the world's sovereign nations based on republican principles, the rationale for the Pan American Union vanished. As the United States shifted its attention to the reconstruction of Europe and East Asia, U.S. funding for economic development in the Americas declined. The Cold War provided a new context for inter-American relations. In 1947, the Pan American Union reorganized into a collective security pact, the Organization of American States, in which military and police cooperation superseded cultural interaction.

Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy touring the First Biennale of Latin American Art at the Organization of American States, Washington DC, 1962. Courtesy Organization of American States Visual Arts Unit, Museum of Americas, Washington DC. The painting on the left, entitled "Los que vieron la luna," is by Raquel Forner (1902-1988, Argentina), who won the grand prize of the biennial. In spite of limited funds, the Visual Arts Units of the OAS continued to actively promote Latin-American culture after WWII under the direction of Cuban curator and critic José Gómez Sicre (1916-1991).

In many countries in the Americas, the international conflict between capitalist and Marxist-Leninist states overlapped with internal conflicts. Elites clinging to inherited privilege treated demands for democratic accountability and greater economic equality as communist "subversion" meriting U.S.-funded repression. The decay of pan-Americanism was marked by the outlawing of the Communist Party and left-wing labor unions in Brazil and Chile in 1947, the assassination of the Liberal Party candidate for president in Colombia in 1948 and the decline of the country into a decade-long civil war with hundreds of thousands of deaths, the U.S. overthrow of the elected government of Guatemala in 1954, the failed U.S.-organized invasion of Cuba in 1961, the Washington-blessed military takeover of Brazil in 1964, followed by the spread of U.S.-approved dictatorships across Latin America, and indeed in every part of the world, including southern Europe. In 1965, the U.S. government invaded and occupied the Dominican Republic, over the objections of other American governments. The same year, the U.S. Congress imposed quotas for the first time on immigration from OAS states, beginning the process of turning many Latin Americans in the United States into "illegals," devoid of the most basic political and economic rights while performing jobs vital for many important industries, a transformation occurring simultaneously with the spread of dictatorship and war across the continent pushing many north in search of safety.

To the degree that U.S. citizens could grasp the complex factors behind the violence spreading across the western hemisphere, they might, were liberal conceptions of responsible government accountable to the citizenry to prevail, bring pressure to modify government policies. The increased and regular exchange of opinion that the member states had embraced in forming the Pan American Union should have meant that Latin American voices would have been heard with frequency within the United States as U.S. citizens debated their government's policies. Instead, during the Cold

War, the U.S. government adopted policies to marginalize contrary voices. The government aggressively used its visa authority to prevent foreign writers and artists who disagreed with U.S. policies from entering the country. In 1947 when Candido Portinari wished to visit, the State Department refused to give him a visa. Five years earlier, the U.S. government celebrated him as an icon of inter-American dialogue, now he was banned, presumably because he was a member of the Communist Party of Brazil. Officials never provided an explanation to him nor to any of the thousands of other cultural figures from around the world that they banned. In 1954, the State Department again refused Portinari entry when he needed to supervise installation of *War and Peace*, murals he painted for the entryway to the General Assembly hall at the United Nations. Art critics in the United States continued to speak of Portinari as one of the most important artists of the mid-twentieth century. Nonetheless, given his inability to enter the United States, Portinari's relations with critics and dealers necessarily were sporadic and increasingly at the fringes of attention. In 1964, the State Department banned Carlos Fuentes from entering the country when he had a novel soaring on the best-seller charts and his publisher had arranged for Fuentes to do a national book tour. For Fuentes, the stakes were considerable, both financially and in terms of global recognition: success in the U.S. book market led to translations into dozens of languages. State Department officials suggested to Fuentes, that, to receive a visa, he needed to publicly criticize Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution.

Philanthropies increased funding for translation, and liberal groups like the Council on Inter-American Relations, funded by the Rockefeller family and involving many prominent retired government officials, fought to end the visa ban policy. The idea that foreign policy should be subject to democratic oversight also withered. Consider that the Reagan administration fought three wars in Central America even though not only did a majority of the U.S. public disapprove, but so did a majority of the U.S. Congress. After Congress cut funding for Reagan's military adventures, the administration engineered an illegal scheme to fund counterrevolutionary insurgents in Nicaragua through secret weapon sales to Iran, an outcome indicating how little value policymakers placed on public opinion, domestic or foreign. Court intrigue and factional division, the staples of balance of power, ultimately eclipsed efforts to make global governance democratically accountable.

The end of the Cold War in 1989 seemed to ratify liberal conceptions of governance, global and domestic, though not necessarily its practice. If liberalism was transcendent, perhaps only temporarily, the struggles with fascism and socialism defining the twentieth century had exposed that pan-Americanism was as bankrupt an ideal as that of democratic accountability. The quest of U.S. leaders for global power overwhelmed the minimal limits on their freedom of action in their own proposals for inter-American cooperation. The culmination of pan-Americanism was "globalization," which like its predecessor is marked by uneasy linkage of liberal ideals and a will to power cunning in its ability to play on the hopes and aspirations of people around the world for a more prosperous and secure life. The success of liberal institutions grew from an openness to recognize and work with the many differences within society, while the left liberals combatted typically saw difference as a threat to popular unity. To the degree that decision making shifted from political contests to market exchanges, differences, inherently unequal, replaced equality as the basis of social life at the end of the twentieth century and reproduced inequalities that had long plagued most countries. Transnational consumer markets, Néstor García Canclini noted in 2002, unites millions of people around the world with "shared attitudes, life-styles, and personal appearances" marked by preferred brand names and logos.[7] Globally organized media inform an emergent "global middle class" of crises in every part of the world, at the same time offering a manufactured collective heroic mythos in popular motion pictures.

As a historical moment, pan-Americanism contributed to the nations of the western hemisphere separating from Europe as the indispensable cultural homeland, a belief that for centuries had rendered the Americas as inherently savage or barbarian, a series of "wild wests" where fortunes could be made but no stable, civilized order could take root. Imaginary connection to other nations in the western hemisphere facilitated new forces within each country working to develop robust national cultures without simultaneously falling into isolation. In principle, pan-Americanism celebrated symmetric difference as the foundation for a utopian vision of the world. In practice, it hardened asymmetric differences and shaped the process by which media markets developed to favor particular results, those most consistent with U.S. practices. These could be imagined by its proponents, who could be Mexican or Brazilian as well from the United States, as the time-tested, most efficient way of organizing national life. The asymmetrical relationships within the Pan American Union were never hidden. Always in plain sight, they demanded response, and some responses involved acting to defend

local and national interests.

Even if pan-Americanism became a bankrupt ideal, the Organization of American States continues to function as an important international organization. Its purposes have been reduced to practical and procedural matters, and as such, remain useful to the member states. The balance of power within the OAS began to change in 1972, when Canada joined in OAS activities, finally becoming a full member in 1990. Former British and Dutch colonies in the West Indies also joined the OAS after gaining their independence. As a more diverse body more fully representing the western hemisphere, the organization expanded its activities in many areas that were controversial. In 1979, for example, the OAS created the Inter-American Court for Human Rights. The new body, consisting of judges nominated by the member nations, including the United States, provided a forum for formal review of claims that human rights protected in both the OAS and UN charters had been violated. Decisions determined when abuses had occurred and whether governments were cooperating with or obstructing remediation efforts. The court's powers to sanction violators have been weak, but publicity can have powerful consequences. Publicity given to abuses led to a series of conventions that the OAS adopted banning torture (1985), banning kidnappings for political purposes (1994), and protecting the right to free expression (2000). The Inter-American Court also assumed jurisdiction to investigate violence against women (1994) and discrimination against people with disabilities (1999). The OAS gained in losing its idealistic and ideological edge, for the hopes it inspired were what most made the organization an appendage of U.S. foreign policy. Instead, the OAS has become a place for practical activities. It has become in effect what its founders hoped: a quiet, unobtrusive model for liberal governance flowing from codified rules and procedures that encourage whenever possible routine to prevail over passion.

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1. Tulio Halperin Donghi, *Historia contemporánea de América latina* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2013), 283-288.

2. C.E. Mason, "The Solidarity of the World's Womanhood as an International Asset" *in* Mrs. Glen Levin Swiggett, *Report on the Women's Auxiliary Conference Held in the City of Washington, U.S.A. in Connection with the Second Pan American Scientific Congress* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), 42.

3. George Biddle (1885-1973) was among several U.S. painters invited to create murals for public spaces in other American countries. His work includes murals for the Supreme Court building in Mexico City (1940) and at the National Library in Rio de Janeiro (1942).

4. Diego Rivera and Dorothy Puccinelli, *Diego Rivera: The Story of His Mural at the 1940 Golden Gate International Exposition* (San Francisco: Golden Gate International Exposition, 1940), n. p.

5. Diego Rivera, "El arte, base del Panamericanismo", *Así* (Mexico City: 14 August 1943), 8.

6. Arthur Ramos, "The Negro in Brazil",*Journal of Negro Education* 10 (1941), 522.

7. Néstor García Canclini, *Latinoamericanos buscando lugar en este siglo* (Buenos Aires Paidós: 2002), 25.

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See on Zotero

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