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Introduction to the ALAHPE 2023 Symposium

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As a new chapter begins to unfold for *Review of the History of Economic Thought and Methodology*, we are delighted that the journal's first issue with the Open Library of Humanities will also provide the occasion for renewing the cherished partnership between RHETM and the Latin American Society for the History of Economic Thought (ALAHPE). The coming-of-age scholarly community represented by ALAHPE shares many of the same values that have long defined RHETM's editorial policy and identity, such as the commitment to pluralism and interdisciplinarity. Moreover, as scholars working in the Global South, most ALAHPE members have experienced firsthand the challenges and asymmetries created by the fees and paywalls of commercial academic publishing. They are thus in an excellent position to appreciate the fairness and accessibility gains made possible by open access. These and other elective affinities allow us to envisage a long future of continued fruitful collaboration between RHETM and ALAHPE.

This symposium comprises a selection of papers presented during the 9th Latin American Conference on the History of Economic Thought, held on November 16–18, 2023, at the Universidad de Antioquia, in Medellín, Colombia. The conference was framed around the following theme: “Research and Teaching in the History of Economic Thought in the Face of Changes in Economy and Society”. The meeting gathered close to 100 scholars from across Latin America, Europe, and North America, who presented their works over the course of 19 ordinary sessions. It also featured four roundtables dedicated to the following topics: The role of Thorstein Veblen's ideas in Ibero-American political economy; Think tanks and the constitution of the Mexican state, 1980–2021; Current trends in the teaching of the history of economic thought; International experts, political regimes and resource-use programs in Latin America: from land reforms to commodity trade, 1955–75.

Besides the papers presented as part of ordinary sessions and roundtables, the program for the Medellín conference likewise included four plenary talks. The two invited keynote lectures were given by Prof. Edith Kuiper, from the State University of New York at New Paltz (United States), who spoke about “Bringing Women's Voices and Perspectives into the History of Economics”; and by Prof. Juan Flores Zendejas, from the University of Geneva (Switzerland), on “Latin American Central Banks as Agents of Economic Development”. The other two plenary addresses are now published as part of this symposium. Named after the pioneering Chilean economist Guillermo Subercaseaux, the Subercaseaux Lecture is an honor conferred by ALAHPE in recognition of outstanding scholarship about Latin American economics and exceptional contributions to the teaching, research and dissemination of knowledge related to the history of economic thought in Latin America. “Adam Smith on America” was the title chosen for his lecture by Prof. Mauricio Coutinho (Universidade Estadual de Campinas,

Brazil), who discussed the place occupied by the American continent in the political economy and broader philosophical imagination of Adam Smith, covering topics such as slavery, precious metals, and the nature of metropolitan-colonial relations. Finally, the Medellín conference also hosted the first ever ALAHPE Presidential Address, a direct result of the Society's continuing institutional consolidation. In her "Women Economists in the Global South: The Case of Two Venezuelan Women Ministers of the Economy in 1968 and 1969", Prof. Rebeca Gomez Betancourt (Université Lumière Lyon 2, France) reconstructed the trajectory of two pioneering women economists from Venezuela – Aura Celina Casanova and Haydée Castillo de López Acosta – to explore the challenges and opportunities for the participation of Latin American women in the economics profession, as well as for scholars interested in writing the history of women economists in the region.

The remaining three papers that complete this symposium reflect another trademark of ALAHPE: the space given to early-career researchers who are in the process of establishing their scholarly voice. Analyzing ideas about economic and social development in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay during the 1960s and early 1970s, Nicolás Dvoskin identifies a significant shift in the diagnosis of Latin American economic backwardness around the mid-1960s: from the underdevelopment hypothesis to the structural heterogeneity hypothesis. Applying the latter to development policies, however, proved to be a conflict-ridden endeavor, thus highlighting the challenges inherent in translating theoretical concepts into government action. Similarly tackling the history of developmental ideas in Latin America, Marcos Taroco Resende examines the emergence of an interinstitutional and interpersonal network connecting CEPAL and the Corporación de Estudios para Latinoamérica (CIEPLAN), in Chile, during the years of Augusto Pinochet's authoritarian regime. Such connections proved instrumental to promote an alternative approach to development strategies later known as "neo-structuralism", which synthesized elements of both neoliberalism and classical structuralism. Finally, the symposium closes with a historiographical contribution by Alberto Tena Camporesi, who suggests the dichotomy between 'rational reconstruction' and 'historical reconstruction' can be subsumed into the broader scope of an intellectual history of economics. Using robust historiographical tools to study the evolution of economic ideas, concepts, languages, narratives, and metaphors, as well as their interactions with other fields, this intellectual history of economics promises to facilitate understanding of past and present economic knowledge while simultaneously preserving disciplinary autonomy.

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Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

