

SLAS 2013: Annual Conference

University of Manchester

11th-12th April 2013

Report from Parvathi Kumaraswami and Peter Wade

1. Introduction

The organisation process began in about June 2012. We decided on a 1.5-day structure for the event, in order to keep costs down for delegates. For convenience, we decided not to encroach on the weekend with the panels.

It soon became apparent in negotiations with the University of Manchester that we would have to hold the conference as an “external event”. This meant that, for a competitive price, the University of Manchester Conference Office (UMCO) did a lot of the organisational work around venues and catering.

To handle registrations and financial transfers, we chose NomadIT, whose services included the Cocoa on-line panel/paper organisation system. NomadIT offered an excellent service and took care of many of the logistics of the whole event.

After some negotiations and false starts, the chosen plenary speaker was Walter Mignolo, whose travel costs were shared with a research centre in Cambridge.

2. Funding

a) The bulk of the money came from registration fees (see below), with a total of about 250 delegates.

b) We negotiated external funding as follows:

- Visiting Manchester (basically the city council tourist office) gave us £2000 towards the plenary speaker costs. In return, they asked to be the official accommodation provider for the event.
- The FCO provide £1500 towards the plenary speaker costs.
- The full costs of the plenary speaker were partly shared with CRASSH, a research centre in Cambridge, which paid £1300 towards the costs, as the speaker was going on to Cambridge to speak at an event there.
- Wiley gave us £900 for a wine reception.
- The University gave us £1780 for a wine reception and buffet dinner (£880 from the School of Arts Languages and Cultures; £500 from the School for Social Sciences; £400 from the dept of Social Anthropology)
- Publishers paid £2165 for displays (see below)

c) Some delegates received funding from SLAS. The timing of this created problems for delegates, as they received news about their grants rather late (in early-mid March for the LA scholars - 27 applications for 7 awards; and late March for the twenty PG bursaries). In future this whole process should be done earlier.

3. Registration

We opted for a fairly simple set of options, based on the estimated costs of the event, estimated delegate numbers and levels charged at previous conferences:

- Non-member: £185 full conference; £102/day
- Member: £160 full conference; £87/day
- Student: £117 full conference; £67/day
- Student member: £105 full conference; £62/day
- Friday dinner: £25
- (Early-bird rates were £15 lower (£7 for day rates) but that ended on 8/02/13.)

Registration included access to all sessions, conference handbook, tea/coffee during the morning and afternoon breaks, one lunch, two wine receptions, and one buffet dinner. Friday night dinner at Bem Brasil was not included as part of registration, but was an extra, booked when registering. Dinner cost £25 per person for dinner and complimentary drink.

Registrations were as follows:

Option	Count
Day rate: member	8
Day rate: non-member	11
Day rate: student (member)	15
Day rate: student (non-member)	16
Member rate	75
Non-attending presenter	1
Non-member rate	29
Student rate (member)	77
Student rate (non-member)	34
Total	266

136 people attended the Friday dinner.

Points to note:

- More than half the delegates were students (n=142, 53%)
- Non-membership rates were roughly the same: 35% for students and 33% for non-students
- Day-delegate rates were reasonably popular (50 delegates or 19% opted for this), and were more popular among students, who formed 62% of day-delegates

4. Panels

The conference website went live in early September 2012 and the call for panels went out at this time, with a deadline of 5 October (later extended to 14 October). In the end we received 56 proposals, of which we selected 36. The call for papers went live on 24 October, with a deadline of (about) 20 November. 342 papers were proposed and panel convenors had to make decisions about what to include. This process was effectively accomplished by about 12 December, after which Par and Pete made decisions about papers that had been recommended for “transfer” by convenors. Many of these were fitted into a few new ad hoc panels, bringing the total number of panels to 43, with some 280 papers.

Timetabling was mainly done by NomadIT and was complete by mid/late-January 2013.

The Handbook was generated in draft form in mid-March by NomadIT. The timing of this was a balance between having it ready for the conference and having an accurate list of papers, given last-minute withdrawals.

5. Programme

- We opted for the plenary on Thursday, guessing that quite a few people might leave on Friday afternoon. We got a very good turn-out.
- Only about half the delegates chose to attend the Friday dinner; it is not clear if this was due to cost or because many had left by then.
- The BLAR/SLAS Committee meetings were held on Thursday a.m. This seemed to work well.
- A PILAS meet-and-greet lunch was organised for Thursday and to coincide with the BLAR/SLAS committee lunch.
- The AGM was scheduled for lunch time Friday and placed right next to the lunch catering. It is not obvious that this worked to increase attendance, which was sparse.

6. Venues

The panels' numbers meant we needed 13 breakout rooms, with parallel streams running over 1.5 days in 6 sessions. These rooms spread between the Alan Turing Building (11) and University Place (4).

We used the atrium of the Alan Turing Building for catering and publishers' displays. A room in University Place was used to provide tea/coffee for delegates with panels in that building to ease congestion and reduce movement between the buildings.

We also had a theatre for the plenary lecture, changed at the last minute to accommodate delegate numbers.

The Cervantes Institute offered us a venue for the Friday night wine reception (free of charge). Catering was supplied by a local firm, Kro Bar. The dinner took place at a local restaurant, Bem Brasil.

7. Publishers

The following publishers bought stand-space and/or an advert in the Handbook.

- AMDigital
- Combined Academic Publishers Ltd
- Combined Academic Publishers Ltd
- CUP
- Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru - University of Wales Press
- Hispanic Research Journal
- MUP
- Pathfinder Books
- Routledge
- Wiley Blackwell
- Zed Books

Charges to publishers were as follows and included abstract book and full access to panels & events:

- Single display table - Charge: £170.
- Double display table - Charge: £280.

- Triple display table - Charge: £320.
- Full page portrait advert in abstract book. Charge: £130

8. PG assistants

We contracted nine PG helpers, who got a fee waiver and a free dinner (and a free T-shirt!)

Conference Timetable

Thursday 11 April		Friday 12 April	
08:00		08:00	Registration
09:00		09:00	Panel session 3
10:30		10:30	Tea/coffee break
11:00	BLAR Editorial Meeting	11:00	Panel session 4
12:00	Registration		
12:00	SLAS Committee Meeting (end 13:00)		
12:30	PILAS 'Meet'n'greet Lunch' (ends 13:30)	12:30	Buffet Lunch
13:00	Lunch for Committee members (end 13:30)	13:00	SLAS AGM
13:30	Panel session 1	14:00	Panel session 5
15:00	Tea/coffee break		
15:30	Panel session 2	15:30	Tea/coffee break
		15:30	Book launch
		16:00	Panel session 6
17:00	BREAK (hotel check-in, pub etc)		
17:30	Keynote Lecture: Walter Mignolo "Four pillars of moveable memories: Abya Yala, Europe and Africa in the imperial invention of América and Latino-a América in the US"		
		18:00	BLAR Wine Reception (Instituto Cervantes)
19:00	Wine Reception and Buffet dinner	19:30	Arrival/welcome drink at Bem Brasil, Deansgate
20:15	END	20:00	Conference Dinner (Bem Brasil), with entertainment
			END