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International workshop ‘Global Latin America’ (Compte rendu).

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Eventos

International workshop 'Global Latin America'¹

Advocating a global reading of Latin America is not the result of a whim or the need to assert disciplinary legitimacy. It is a theoretical necessity in accordance with the recent evolution of the Social sciences.

For Latin Americanists, it's clear that for several decades a history based on national sources, chronologies and categories has made difficult to tackle certain themes and to study the history of this part of the world in relation to others. The absence of views that transcend national, even continental borders has led to misunderstandings and false declarations that isolate Latin Americans from phenomena which they are part of. To this extent, thinking Latin American history in the light of recent historiographical developments is a necessary challenge.

But can Global history integrate Latin America into its explanatory paradigms? How can Global History contribute to transform the traditional vision and periodization of Latin American history? How can a transdisciplinary approach favour the dialogue between Global history and Latin American history? A group of Latin American, American & European scholars met in Paris on April 14th and 15th 2016 to answer this questions. The main objective of the meeting was to present works in progress in global, international and connected history of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, to then exchange experiences of historical research, writing and teaching.

In fact, most of the recent production in Global history continues to be concentrated in Euro-Asia and the United States, while Latin America and Africa remain marginalized of the horizon of global historians. At least three reasons would explain why Latin America has not become an object of Global history. First, its almost exclusive distribution in English and the absence of plans to translate books and journals to other languages make it possible to understand why so many Latin Americans have not been interested in this approach. Secondly, the fact that this field would justify international hierarchies and a geopolitic of knowledge, which continually reproduces the cleavages between the southern and northern hemispheres must be taken seriously to understand the prejudices of so many Latin american scholars regarding Global history. Finally, it should be added that in Latin American historiography the analysis of world circulations, networks and connections has emerged through other approaches like Imperial and economic history.

The results of the symposium were very positive, as evidenced by the closing debate. The latter allowed the speakers to come back to the challenges that the Global history and the Latin

1 Paris III University Sorbonne-Nouvelle, 14th & 15th April 2016.

American history launch each other, first through a discussion on the concepts and the methodologies; secondly, through an exchange based on the content of the papers presented during the two days of work; and, finally, by discussing the problems which lead to the teaching of history in secondary and higher education in mixed and multicultural societies.

Beyond the pedagogical problems, one of the most interesting points of this debate was related to the historical relevance and operability of the concept of «Latin America». If Global history seeks to extract research from a segmented paradigm of cultural areas, what would it be like to integrate Latin America as an independent field in a study of intercontinental connections? One of the ways to overcome this contradiction would come from a replanting of the traditional geographical categories, which in turn would imply a reflection on the historicity of the geographical spaces, and what is more revealing, on the epistemological bases of the Physical and Human geography.

The event gave rise to the volume *Amérique Latine Globale. Histoire connectée, globale et internationale*, financed by the Francophone University Association and published by L'Harmattan in april 2017. The first part, entitled «Knowing, Communicating and Exchanging in the 18th and 19th centuries», brings together the works of Susana García and Irina Podgorny on the exploitation of marine fauna in the South Atlantic; That of Marino Martín Schlez on the Atlantic trade of Buenos Aires before and after the Independences, and that of Rocio Moreno Cabanillas on the functioning of the post inside the Spanish Empire in the Enlightenment. «The Factory of the Global in the 19th century: Migrations and International Relations», part two of the volume, presents three papers: first that of Bruno Evans, on the material connections between Latin America and the Country of Olmes in the transition between the 19th and 20th centuries; Secondly, that of Alvaro Mayagoitia on the impact that the French intervention in Mexico had on international relations at the end of the 19th century; And finally, that of Isabelle Rispler, on the colonial practice of the German-speakers who settled on both sides of the South Atlantic in the 19th century.

It is not a time of quarrels between the different fields of knowledge, but to establish an open dialogue that enriches Social sciences in order to build a more humane and more equitable vision of history. A global approach to our past can help us to fight against national and religious prejudices based on hatred and intolerance, at a time when stupidity and extremism seem to destroy tolerance and coexistence.

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