

Philosophy of History and Globalisation of Knowledge. Cultural Bridges Between Europe and Latin America: WORLDBRIDGES (F7-PEOPLE-2013-IRSES: PIRSES-GA-2013-612644)

Objective and relevance of the joint exchange programme

Responding to the announcement of ‘the end of the history’ more than two decades ago, the research teams that constitute the exchange programme WORLDBRIDGES have put forward, through several research projects and publications, the importance of a new philosophy of history that leaves aside the Enlightenment’s idyllic and misguided dreams of making philosophy a science advancing irrevocably and inevitably towards the uninterrupted and inexorable progress of mankind. As the Frankfurt School argued, the two world wars as well as their related genocides constitute eloquent examples of how a reflection about history has to be based on the firm ground of ethics and politics, without discarding the healthy role of contingency that presides over history and serves to theoreticians of history as a point of departure in their search for balance between pure randomness and undesirable determinism. This perspective has become more complex in recent decades due to the imperceptible, gradual and successful implementation of economic globalisation that has radically challenged the intellectual, ethical and cultural values that seemed so embedded in so-called Western civilisation, while, at the same time, making brutally apparent the limits of justice conceived in a Eurocentric way. As Concha Roldán and Günther Lottes have recently pointed out, “it is equally clear that for Europe or, for that matter, the West, the process of globalization and the making of global history go together...and... there can be no doubt that Europa has lost its former precedence in the global order and needs to redefine its position in the World.” (New Perspectives in Global History, Introduction, 9)

The main contribution of this project is to examine and stress the fundamental role knowledge has played and should continue to play in globalisation, in the so-called “society of knowledge”, supported by contemporary theories of the epistemic justification to the study of history. Similar phenomena have been studied “on the other side of the pond”, by scholars and researchers in Latin America. While their work has stressed other aspects and perspectives, they have maintained a dialogue with the work done by their European colleagues and obtained similar results. Thus, the Argentinian research team has stressed that recent crises – in terms of the economy, the attacks in New York and Washington and the processes of social and political fragmentation that have taken place in different parts of the world – have led many theoreticians to give up their expectations regarding the process of globalisation. Thus, some have begun to refer to a period of “de-globalisation”, of a “post-globalist turn”. Niall Ferguson, for example, refers to a “sinking globalization”, John Ralston Saul and Justin Rosenberg to “the end of

globalisation”, and John Gray maintains that “the globalisation era has come to its end”. If we reduce globalisation to its techno-economic aspects, we may, perhaps, share this disenchantment and the criticisms put forward by the above-mentioned theoreticians.

Nevertheless, we understand that there exists another stratum of the globalisation process, a deeper and less studied one that preserves its strength and importance and deserves another evaluation. It is globalisation as a process of secularisation, as a process that would lead towards the articulation of what Anthony Giddens calls a “post-traditional society.” Traditional societies do not differentiate the past from the present. Traditions and mechanically repeated rites structure the life of communities, connecting its different generations. Individuals, attached to specific geographic settings, perform and repeat customs and traditions in a routine way. The globalising process dilutes this scheme: as it advances, it shatters traditional structures.

Globalisation cuts the roots of the tradition. Thus, traditional structures lose the links to their place of origin, the consequence being not the elimination of the tradition but their fragmentation and their combination with other traditions.

Where can this “other” globalisation be found? Would it be possible to trace parallels between the categories of the “post-traditional society” and the “cosmopolitan society”? Could we think of a link between the project of Enlightenment (the “other” Enlightenment, the one that does not represent the “triumphant line”, as Concha Roldán has outlined in her work) and globalisation? The research of the Mexican team has also focused on cosmopolitanism. How to live together in an infinitely complex social and natural world is undoubtedly one of the most urgent questions for contemporary societies. More than two hundred years ago, Immanuel Kant established the basic platform on which theoretical and practical reflection on such question has taken place for over two centuries. The concept of cosmopolitanism at stake in this research project stems from Kant's philosophy of history, particularly, from his well-known, seminal work, *Zum ewigen Frieden* (1795). With remarkable insight, the Prussian philosopher anticipated many of our contemporary needs, in particular the urgency of creating a new political order that supersedes both parochialism and spurious universalism. Many authors have seen in Kant's work the ideological roots of the present European Union. From many cultural and political regions of the world, notably from Latin America, the Western European process of so-called integration during the past twenty five years has been observed with a mixture of expectation, awe, scepticism, and sometimes a degree of covetousness. It is obvious that the most recent capitalist crisis in Europe has posed anew the question the mantra of “cultural and political unity in diversity.” We must examine the claim that the construction of a community-based cosmopolitanism, such as the one that Kant thought would lead to perpetual peace, is an antidote

to certain forms of societal violence, among them terrorism. Two Kantian thoughts are milestones in this path: the concept of publicity, understood as the political counterpart of the categorical imperative, and the right of hospitality— one of the definitive articles of the cosmopolitan juridical order that Kant devised.

Are there any links between “techno-economic” and “ethical-political” globalisation? Can we think that one of them is a condition of the possibility of the other? And if there were a connection between these two globalisations; would it be a simple and unilateral one?

Finally, we will deal with the question of global justice, emphasising the issues of inequality and exclusion that exist on both sides of the Atlantic and taking into consideration the fact that the phenomenon of globalisation has also included a process of localisation, an interplay some have called "glocalisation". Due to the globalisation, the relationships and the tensions between justice, equality and inclusion acquire new forms and traits that require defining. The phenomenon of globalisation is characterised by a growing interdependence between nations and, in this sense, by a strong impulse towards homogenization, but it has also encompassed a process of localisation, and, together with it the claim and celebration of differences. These latter aspects form the analytical category of “glocalisation”. At our current moment, the reformulation

of justice requires pondering it at the global level (as Thomas Pogge and Luigi Ferrojoli, among others, have pointed out), stressing issues such as inequality and exclusion at both international and domestic (local) levels (as Amartya Sen has rightly argued). The redefinition justice must get beyond the narrow framework of the state and consider it at different scales or levels (to use the expression of Nancy Fraser), an understanding that allows for the acknowledgement of a diversity of agents and powers.

The bridges built by globalisation do not only enable the interchanging of goods, but also knowledge, received historical heritage and ethical-political projects that can complement one another. International cooperation can be fruitful only if based on real dialogue, interaction and engagement. In our specific case, this concerns that of Europe, Euro-Mediterranean and Latin America.

The exchange scheme **WORLDBRIDGES** will facilitate the exchange of ideas amongst philosophers and historians who deal with different aspects of globalisation and explore the possibilities of using the tools of history and philosophy to actively shape globalising processes. To facilitate the joint production of knowledge, **WORLDBRIDGES** aims at deepening existing cooperation as well as connecting new partners and integrating new approaches and research areas. For that purpose, the exchange scheme is designed to facilitate and foment the following

scientific activities: networking, joint research and publication, training and dissemination.

To encourage an efficient sharing of ideas and joint research, WORLDBRIDGES is divided into four Thematic Work Groups (TWGs). The members of WORLDBRIDGES participate in one to three TWGs, according to their possibilities and interests. The groups are balanced in terms of participating institutions, gender and ER/ESR.

Thematic Work Group 1: Philosophy of History

TWG 1 is an interdisciplinary group composed of historians and philosophers who are experts on the Enlightenment and Modernity. This research group argues for the restoration of the Philosophy of History, deriving from a new conception of the Philosophy of History as based on strong ethical grounds rather than empty narratives of contingency. The second objective is to analyse and develop descriptive categories and axiological, normative and epistemic concepts that could contribute to transforming the traditional Philosophy of History into a useful tool for tackling current problems. The group's overall aims include: first, the rehabilitation of a space for the philosophy of history, based on in-depth knowledge of its Enlightenment roots; second, the search for a balance between historical memory and experience; and third, as a more specific objective, an in-depth reflection and elaboration of concepts such as globalisation, universality, or humanity/humankind; in other words: issues concerning global society and its historical dimensions.

We shall focus our research in the next four years on examining and discussing the descriptive, axiological, normative and epistemological categories that are necessary for the transformation of the traditional philosophy of history. This transformation should contribute to tackling pressing issues such as citizen education, the critical elaboration of historical collective memory, the construction of political and social identity, and human rights; in sum, ethical, political and cultural aspects that determine the evolution of societies at present. The contributions of our collective research should help uncover solutions to socio-political conflicts within Europe and Latin America that are motivated, in the end, by value conflicts. This reexamination of images and concepts of the past (theory of history) should further the redefinition of the State and of collective identities in the framework of an unavoidable globalization. Concha Roldán (CSIC), TWG 1's coordinator (with Rohbeck and Brauer), has argued for "a philosophy of history spoken through ethics" (*Entre Casandra y Clío. Una historia de la filosofía de la historia*, 2005 2^a). Such understanding establishes a link between the aims of TWG1 and those of TWG 3. Therefore, several members of this group will also participate in TWG 3.

Thematic Work Group 2: Production and Circulation of Knowledge

TWG 2, coordinated by Meltem Akbas (IU), is an interdisciplinary group composed of historians of science and technology, general historians and philosophers. It aims at exploring different dimensions of knowledge production linked to intercultural dialogue and cultural transfer, encompassing the Euro-Mediterranean and the Americas in the Early Modern and Modern eras. There is a strong historical justification for such a geographical framework, as network analyses and biographic studies have confirmed the interconnectedness – across political, cultural and religious borders - of the two geographic areas since the time of European discovery and colonisation of America, and intensified since the Enlightenment. First of all, the group will examine and question cultural frontiers and their relevance in knowledge production and circulation. Second, the group will discuss how encounters produce new knowledge in fields ranging from sciences and technology to philosophy and political thought. This includes identifying local factors and agendas that shaped knowledge, but also considering misunderstandings, lapses of communication and failures as the means of the production of new knowledge and the emergence of new practices, or the adjustments and reconsideration of existing ones. Third, spatial dimensions of knowledge production and circulation will be analysed from global and comparative perspectives. The group will identify the emergence and reproduction of global hubs and their connections with one other and with other areas, determine how spatial settings shaped knowledge production and circulation, and examine and question the divides that have been taken for granted, such as urban – rural, centre – periphery, metropolis – colony as well as the West - the rest.

In general, the group will use the specific expertise of its members to deepen our understanding of the production and circulation as of knowledge, ideas, know-how and practices as overlapping, interwoven processes. The element of power, often either taken for granted in or missing from the analysis of knowledge production and circulation, will be at the core the group's interests. The researchers will strive to understand the emergence and reproduction of asymmetries of power and analyse the shifts and changes in power dynamics at the discursive and material levels.

Thematic Work Group 3: Ethics and Politics

TWG 3, coordinated by Griselda Gutiérrez (UNAM), is composed of philosophical, ethical-political philosophers, historians and sociologists. In accordance with the aims of TWG 1, TWG 3 argues that the values of the Enlightenment ought to be revisited. Such reconsideration took place during other periods of crisis when the return to the classics of philosophy proved to be a mighty tool in undermining ideologies tending towards the singularity of thought (Aramayo,

“Crisis y revoluciones” in Claves de razón práctica). The crisis of the moment is an economic one only in part. Thus, we need to analyse its other levels if we wish to de-activate it and neutralise its negative consequences. One of the axes of this project consists in arguing for the continuing validity and utility of the ideals of the Enlightenment in moral philosophy and in politics. We maintain that a social pedagogy is needed, one that would recover the Enlightened principle of independent thought and dissolve reigning fatalist stereotypes. This methodological strategy would be, of course, accompanied by new theories of justice as well as gender analysis, organised around the legal-political axis. Within the phenomenon of globalization, political power has been displaced from its historical centres and the sovereignty of states has become more limited. This contributes to broadening the gap between citizens and their representatives, a gap that puts in jeopardy the prevailing “rules of play,” where citizens seem to have become mere tools of achieving objectives defined in strictly economic terms. A trend towards complexity and globalization implies great challenges to existing social systems as well as to our theoretical-conceptual repertoires:

We seek the development of new models of social organisation, following the Kantian distinction between political moralist and moral politician. To paraphrase Max Weber, politics ought to be a mission, not a profession. We argue for an ethical turn in the present cultural paradigm. For this purpose we consider revisiting the classics of thought useful, in order to shape the irrepressible process of globalisation and its pernicious “economistic” drift using the ideals of the cosmopolitanism that emerged from the Enlightenment.

Thematic Work Group 4: Historical Reasoning and Theories of Epistemic Justification in the Study of History

The goal of TWG 4, (initially coordinated by Günther Lottes, UP, dann by Iwan D’Aprile), is to answer a double question: in what sense is history a form of knowledge? And is it possible to recover the collective memory of our cognitive past in a reasonable and justified way? The state of the art in human and social sciences (philosophy of history, evolutionary history of cognition, cognitive linguistics, etc.) shows that these two questions are and will remain a scientific challenge in the coming decades.

The attempt to answer these two questions has led to frontier research in disciplines such as Artificial Intelligence, social epistemology, the psychology of reasoning or the sociology of science. It is important to remember that these two questions are traditionally part of the philosophy of history. In the last decade, basic research in the philosophy of history in conjunction with the development of theoretical and empirical research on historical reasoning has led to a wealth of knowledge-transfer case studies, and in some occasions, with clear

technological transfer implications. Some research areas would be unthinkable if there had been no strong development of basic research on the study of reasoning leading to interest defeasible reasoning, inductive reasoning, counterfactual reasoning, contemporary theories of epistemic justification or the study of the different heuristics and cognitive biases. This is the case of computational narrative within the discipline of Artificial Intelligence, the hypothesis of situating epistemology in time within social epistemology, and recognition heuristic's discovery within disciplines such as cognitive psychology and ecological conceptions of rationality. It is a notorious fact that societies advance as far as they produce knowledge. But the cognitive processes related to the transmission, retrieval, justification and history of knowledge remain a challenge for basic research. It seems reasonable to think that future technological developments will be based on this basic research.

TWG 4 will lead these knowledge transfer processes by focusing exclusively on the study of those theoretical and conceptual problems with a clear metric potential. Why is it so important to design a research strategy in which not only comparative and qualitative concepts are analysed but also metric? According to Mosterín (1984), Moulines (1997) and Echeverría (2012), metric concepts are characteristic of the most advanced stages of science because they allow us to compare them with each other with precision, normally in relation to a unit of measurement. One aim of this project is to establish the necessary theoretical and empirical conditions for the metrisation of the empirical domain of historical epistemology. The great advantage of the metrisation of an empirical domain lies in the fact that it is practicable to use mathematical and statistical tools. There is a reason to justify this approach, and that is that concepts and epistemic components of historical reasoning can have a clear metric dimension as they relate to the empirical domain: knowledge production and circulation in global and comparative perspectives.

Scientific activities of the exchange programme consist of activities during the secondments such as networking, sharing knowledge with other experts and participating in training activities in host institutions. Furthermore, the WORLDBRIDGES members will meet every year at a joint Annual Conference that will include work meetings and a thematic conference designed by the local organiser with help of guest researchers. Each TWG will organise one workshop during the duration of the project. The Coordinator will organise a Summer School to present the results of joint research to PhD and Master students. Besides strictly scientific activities, WORLDBRIDGES members are encouraged to create platforms for dialogue with the general public, collaborating with the press, NGOs, associations and public institutions.