



# Global History and International Relations: Possible Disciplinary Encounters and an Initial Review of Contributions from Latin American Research

*História Global e as Relações Internacionais:  
possíveis encontros disciplinares e uma revisão  
inicial das contribuições da pesquisa  
latino-americana*

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## Abstract

The Post-Cold War world order fueled discussions in the field of Humanities on theoretical and methodological resources in the very attempt to understand and explain the increasingly multi-polarized and complex international system. While considering the field of History — especially in its attempt to theoretically and methodologically cross borders — and while being active in the field of International Relations, we see possibilities of fruitful encounters between both areas of research, particularly when it comes to recent discussions on what came to be called in the 1990s “global history”. The article initially presents a conceptual definition of global history; then moves on to underpin its claim that History and IR are entangled disciplines that, despite different theoretical points of departure, not only share similar basic assumptions (state-centrism and the Western intellectual framework of thought)

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but also have been sharing similar intellectual preoccupations. In the third part, we explore possibilities of writing global history from the Latin-American perspective by discussing three recent contributions to the field. Finally, the text briefly enunciates possibilities of mutual enlightenment between the disciplinary fields of History and IR based on the idea of Global IR.

**Keywords:** Global History; Theory of International Relations; Latin America.

## Resumo

A ordem mundial pós-guerra fria fomentou diversos debates no campo das Humanidades acerca de recursos teóricos e metodológicos que abrangessem formas de compreensão e explicação do sistema internacional cada vez mais multipolar e complexo. Considerando a área da História — especialmente em sua tentativa de cruzar fronteiras tanto teóricas quanto metodológicas — e pesquisando ativamente no campo das Relações Internacionais, vemos possibilidades de encontros frutíferos entre ambas as áreas de pesquisa particularmente no tocante aos debates mais recentes em torno do que passou a ser chamado a partir dos anos Noventa de ‘história global’. O artigo, com isso, apresentará inicialmente uma definição conceitual de história global, em seguida justificará a ideia de que História e das RI são disciplinas inter-relacionadas — ainda que partindo de pontos de partida teóricos distintos, não apenas compartilham pressupostos semelhantes (o estadocentrismo e o arcabouço intelectual ocidental), mas também têm partilhado preocupações intelectuais semelhantes. Na terceira parte, exploramos possibilidades de escrita de histórias globais a partir de uma perspectiva latino-americana através da apresentação de três contribuições de especialistas ao campo. Por fim, o texto enuncia brevemente as possibilidades de iluminação mútua entre os campos disciplinares da História e das RI a partir da ideia de ‘global IR’.

**Palavras-chave:** História Global; Teoria das Relações Internacionais; América Latina.

## Introduction

### History and International Relations: two entangled disciplines

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close, major (geo-) transformations in the European political landscape were brought about not only by the largely unpredictable fall of the Berlin wall, but also by conflicts on European soil in the 1990s. Those fuelled again major historiographical discussions focused on new possibilities and approaches to History in face of challenges inherent to what was seen (again) to be a rapidly globalizing world.





The 1990s posed theoretical and methodological challenges to the field of International Relations as well: post-structural, narrative and postcolonial approaches to international phenomena led to more interdisciplinary encounters. While historians seem to have incorporated more critical methodologies over the years to embrace past and present historical phenomena, in the field of IR, post-structuralist and post-colonial studies have been creating alternatives to theorization and to discussions more related to new ontologies and epistemologies.

In the field of History, attempts to (re-) address transnational and transborder entanglements (CONRAD; ECKART, 2007) are not a new endeavor in themselves. However, from the 1990s onwards, academic outputs in the field have been increasingly deploying a variety of theoretical and methodological resources, showing an effort to go beyond state-centered explanations that have appeared in a move to understand a more multi-polarized, heterogeneous and complex world. Approaches such as those *Connected Histories* (SUBRAHMANYAM, 1997; GRUZINSKI, 2001, 2012; HARTOG, 2013); *Histoire Croisée* (WERNER, ZIMMERMAN, 2006) and *World and Transnational Histories* (VENGOA, 2009; FICKER, 2014) have been referred to as some of the strains in Historical research that are more focused on transdisciplinary, transborder and transregional histories.

As perhaps one of the most contemporarily widespread strains, what became known as *Global History* has been welcomed in the United States, Europe and elsewhere as one way to redesign research questions as to be able to focus on other regionalities, temporalities and convey historicity to actors otherwise invisible in historical research (CONRAD 2016).

The aims of this paper are thus (i) to discuss approaches to Global History — considering Global History itself as an approach or a methodological tool to tackle research objects reaching beyond the nation-state —; (ii) to present commonalities between global histories and the discipline of International Relations (IR); and, finally, (iii) to illustrate the reception of Global History approaches among Latin American scholars.

History and International Relations are mutually inter-referenced disciplines that have traditionally shared meeting-points, such as common grounds scattered throughout the history of diplomacy. However, they have responded quite differently to the challenges raised by sweeping changes to the International System over time. We claim that affinities between approaches to Global History in History and in IR rest upon the two challenging premises of both fields — state-centredness and Eurocentrism. Subfields of both disciplines have undertaken efforts to readdress





the role of the state and European thought in research design — dislocating the state from its central *explanandum*<sup>3</sup> and/or *explanans*<sup>4</sup> position (DRUWE 1995, 38), and redesigning the discursive constitution of “Europe” and its intellectual power upon the world.

Thus, in the initial part of the paper, we draw a basic understanding of the Global History approach based on Sebastian Conrad and Andreas Eckart (2007) and Sebastian Conrad (2016). Then, we schematically draw entanglements between the twofields of study from an interdisciplinary perspective. The final part of the paper presents three recent contributions of Latin-American scholars to engage in an interdisciplinary dialog drawing on International Relations’ concepts and Global History tools to advance their areas of study. In this section, we do not intend to offer a thorough overview of Latin American contributions, but rather to highlight some recent efforts of Latin American historians to engage with the field of Global History in their research topics.

Finally, conclusions are drawn around limits and possibilities of such an encounter and intend to shed light on common research agendas in the fields of History and International Relations.

## Definitions of “Global History”

According to Wenzlhuemer (2017, p. 9), with the rising popularity of the field of Global History, expectations upon it have grown significantly over the past years. In one of the most concise and clear cut overviews on Global History, Sebastian Conrad’s *What is Global History?* (2016) provides a fair starting point for an encompassing overview of uses of the term. The book goes over the main criticisms raised by Global History researchers against the Weberian nation-state as the core analytical unit of History and Eurocentrism, while also raising fundamental questions as to what would distinguish the Global History approach from others:

It is one approach among many, and it is better suited for addressing some questions and issues and less appropriate for addressing others. Its core concerns are with mobility and exchange, with processes that transcend borders and boundaries. It takes the interconnected world as its point of departure, and the circulation and exchange of things, people, ideas, and institutions are among its key subjects (CONRAD 2016, 5).

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3 That which needs to be explained.

4 That which contains the explanation.





Though distinctive differences from other approaches are still somewhat vague, the German historian stresses three possible perspectives involving Global History from a theoretical and methodological point of view. The first is to consider Global History as something like the History of Everything, encompassing all events worldwide and based on a comprehensive perception of History. The second perspective draws back to the existence of *connected histories*, where phenomena are not explained as stand-alone events. The the third is what he calls the global integration viewpoint through which objects are analyzed from an interconnection logic. It is this third perspective that embodies the most sophisticated Global History works, according to the author. Conrad asserts that, more than pointing to an object, the global viewpoint is a way of looking at History that is simultaneously a process and a perspective: “Global history is both an object of study and a particular way of looking at history: it is both a process and a perspective, subject matter and methodology” (CONRAD, 2016, p. 9).

The issue of spatiality extends beyond scale for Conrad. It is not a matter of simply switching to wider lens es and focusing on objects larger than the national unit. Rather: “as important as the quest for alternative spatial units may be, the real challenge consists in shifting between, and articulating, different scales of analysis, rather than sticking to fixed territories” (CONRAD, 2016, p. 118). Understanding History from the standpoint of processes articulated at different scales seems to be the challenge facing the researcher.

In an earlier work, Conrad and Eckart (2007), had affirmed that the spatial standpoint is precisely one of the most singular aspects of Global History perspective, as it does not attempt to embrace the entire world. Although the idea of world integration is an assumption underlying Global History research questions, presuppositions addressing systemic relations worldwide simultaneously in action serve only as a backdrop for concrete research projects. According to these authors, the idea is not to impose an abstract global totality as a counterpart to the State-centric research paradigm; on the contrary, this involves the development of research sensibilities and history writing that is grounded on the idea that relations are established globally: “The scope of Global History studies may vary by topic and research question. Spatial units are thus not necessarily starting points, but rather what results from this perspective”<sup>5</sup> (CONRAD, ECKART, 2007,

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5 Authors’ translation of the original in German: Die Reichweite globalgeschichtlicher Studien kann daher nach Thema und Fragestellung variieren, räumliche Einheiten sind dann nicht so sehr der Ausgangspunkt, sondern eines der Ergebnisse dieser Perspektive.





pp. 27-28). They feel it is not merely necessary but also possible to consider regional relations without reifying them and without establishing an alignment with civilizing paradigms.

Global History standpoints do not require a return to the macro-historical perspective as the most fascinating research questions emerge precisely from the interface between global processes and their local expressions (CONRAD, ECKART, 2007, pp. 27-28). Thus it would be necessary to consider macro-contexts and their local forms of appropriation, believing that there is no contradiction between a question drawn up through the epistemological-analytical lenses of Global History and an interest in a specific case study or a microhistorical approach. For Conrad and Eckert (2007), globalization movements are forms of glocalization<sup>6</sup>. Local “translations” and adaptations of global structures, institutions or ideas (thus adapted to the context of local languages and institutional relations) along with a redrawing of long standing connections between worlds stand among the most fertile aspects of what Global History analyses have to offer.

One can say that Global History extends well beyond both comparative studies and straightforward analyses of global events, as noted by Gruzinski (2016) who comments on the work of Conrad (2016):

To Conrad, ‘global’ means much more than simply widening the scale. A global world is a connected world, which means that the units or subjects of history can no longer be viewed in splendid isolation. Global history not only means mobility, interactions, and connections, but also mechanisms of how the world became globalized (GRUZINSKI, 2016, p. 3).

While in the field of History expectations on Global History approaches may sound overrated, Wenzlhuemer affirms that the initial interest of historians in Global History emerged from the overall dissatisfaction with existing analytical tools to interpret history in the era of globalization (WENZLHUEMER, 2017, p. 9). In IR, on the other hand, analytical tools presume the international system as a common point of departure. Still, the focus on behavior and action of national states has proven to lead to partial understandings of the international phenomenon.

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<sup>6</sup> Literature on Globalization is vast, with any in-depth discussions of its definitions, characteristics and effects extending well beyond the framework of this paper. It is important to stress that this is a multi-faceted debate that encompasses issues involving identity, governance and democracy, as well as civil society, migrations, work and daily life. It is equally vital to recall that different International Relations theories will offer conflicting comprehensions of this topic, making the absorption by International Relations of the theme of Globalization into a broad-ranging field for research and reflection (Thirknell-White, 2008).





Latest “turns” — linguistic and visual/aesthetical — as well as transversal themes (such as gender violence or neoliberal labor, among others) have affected the way IR scholars look at connections. Having produced one of the clearest arguments on what could be Global History (WENZLHUEMER 2017, 9), Conrad’s (2016) ideas presented here have inspired us to develop, in the coming section, paths for building up closer links between Global History and International Relations.

## **Potential common agendas (and hindrances) of the fields of History and IR**

Research in History and theory IR have been usually devoted to historical and political phenomena either within or beyond the boundaries of the national state. In either case, and for disciplinary reasons, a so-called methodological nationalism (SCHULZ-FORBERG, 2013; CONRAD, 2016) can be observed well to the fore in modern mainstream historiography, along with Europeanized scientific references and worldviews serving as backdrops to purportedly universal historical narratives. Methodological nationalism has served as a pillar to both fields of research traditionally providing structuring conditions to understand the contemporary world as economic, political and social phenomena.

For historians, it is common knowledge that nationalism was pumped up by the political contexts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, culminating in World War I. Following a trend towards criticizing the central role of the nation-state in History, many scholars attempted to embrace other units of analysis and other investigation routes resulting in whole new areas of research, such Comparative History (THEML, BUSTAMANTE, 2007).

Prompted by imperial advancements and the catastrophes of the World War I, the exacerbated nationalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century’s early decades (firmly buttressed by European historiography) was questioned, particularly when the perils of nationalist passions led to World War II. Accordingly, the interwar period fostered historiographical output that was more critical of nationalism, based on methods that brought other historical experiences into perspective, extending beyond national borders. In this context, Marc Bloch published his seminal criticism of mainstream historiography (‘Toward a Comparative History of European Societies’) in 1928, censoring its fundamental role as an institutional crutch for the European national states. According to José D’Assunção Barros (2014):





At that time there was a certain feeling of discouragement among at least a significant portion of Europe's intelligentsia, over the paths pursued through the exacerbated cult of nationalism that buoyed the formation of nation-states during earlier centuries. Furthermore, historians in general played a fairly important role in the institutional organization of nation-states, structuring their archives in order to record their national legacies, constructing laudatory narratives exalting each specific nation and sometimes even urging wars (BARROS, 2014, p.7)<sup>7</sup>.

In this context, comparative studies put down firm roots, not only as a method but also as an institutionalized field of work in academia. Comparative History thus appeared with the promise of "(...) opening up to dialog in some way, breaking through isolation and pitting an element of "humanity" against mere national pride; and finally questioning reciprocal intolerance among men" (BARROS 2014, 8)<sup>8</sup>. This was supposed to occur through the inherent nature of comparisons that would bring different historical experiences into perspective, consequently questioning the focus on exclusivity and exceptionality praised so strongly in national historical narratives. However, it must be stressed that this anti-nationalist context in the field of History did not eliminate the issue from the discipline's scope. Instead, it underscored its strong links to the political contexts of historiographical output.

A second important moment when nationalism was questioned occurred subsequent to the Cold War, as the academic world became more keenly aware of the effects of Globalization and transnational phenomena. Framed by milestone events as the 20<sup>th</sup> century turned into a new millennium, the multiplicity of actors and a powerful drive towards multi-polarity underscored the need to extend the subjects of study for this discipline, traditionally focused on the nation-state as an analytical unit, also impelled by new perceptions of time (shortened) and space (shrunk), as indicated by Bruce Mazlish (2006).

The decolonization of Africa and the end of the Cold War paved the way for demands for greater autonomy on the international stage, voiced by actors who

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7 In the original: (...) respirava-se então, em uma parte pelo menos significativa da intelectualidade europeia, certo ar de desânimo em relação aos caminhos que tinham sido trilhados através daquele exacerbado culto ao nacionalismo que caracterizara a estruturação dos estados-nação nos séculos anteriores. Mais ainda, de modo geral os historiadores tinham desempenhado um papel bastante relevante na organização institucional dos estados-nação, na estruturação de seus arquivos para o registro da memória nacional, na construção de narrativas laudatórias que exaltavam cada nação em particular, e que por vezes chegavam mesmo a conclamar a guerra.

8 In the original: (...) algum modo abrir-se para o diálogo, romper o isolamento, contrapor um elemento de "humanidade" ao mero orgulho nacional, e por fim, questionar a intolerância recíproca entre os homens







were previously constrained by their polarized milieus. In the field of History, this multi-polar contemporary world was to be explored by academia through assessments highlighting micro-histories — together with transnational, connected and crossed histories, — clearly reflecting approaches steered by Global History. In addition to questioning the nation-state as the core analytical unit (already anticipated by Comparative History), outspoken criticism of the ethnocentrism found in mainstream historiography soon burgeoned, together with proposals for new uses of spoken and written narratives in History. In this field, authors such as Sanjay Subrahmanyam (1997) — one of the precursors of the sub-field of Connected History who strived to link up historical sources and narratives outside the boundaries of Europe — were proposing a more globalized historiography that would encompass narratives, viewpoints and actors that had always been nudged into the shadows by mainstream historiography.

Although thinking beyond national borders is not exactly an innovation, as noted by Robert Frank (2017), thinking about History from global or transnational standpoints as an overview would evoke a set of tools that are already well-established in historiography, such as comparison, transference, crisscrossing, connection, sharing (as in ‘Shared History’) and circulation (REVEL, 2011), as well as Global History. It was not only reflections on the need to rethink analytical categories, but also the methodological tools for doing so.

In his book entitled *Thinking History Globally*, Diego Olstein (2015) suggested a strategy for thinking history globally through what he calls the four Big Cs: Comparing, Connecting, Conceptualizing and Contextualizing. This approach does not constitute an ontological exercise, but instead strives to present a typology that serves as a strategic tool. In his own words:

this typology is not an ontological exercise in which each publication must necessarily fit into one and only one category. Rather this typology is envisioned as a functional tool to help visualize clearly the possible strategies and historiographies at hand when it comes to thinking history globally (OLSTEIN 2015, 7).

To address the issue of a Global IR may seem more difficult than to explain why and in which ways strains of the field History have been devoted more and more to transborder connections and relationships. IR theories have historically moved from the centrality of the nation-state (realism) to the existence and importance of institutions and international players (liberal institutionalism). Marxist theories





such as the Dependency Theory of the 1950s and 1960s and the Wallersteinian world-system theory had the merit of interconnecting the world and showing how the capitalist mode of production was able to generate simultaneously development and underdevelopment in different regions of the globe.

However, the nation-state and its economic potential were still the main variables to be scrutinized in order to assess and predict the states' role in the international system. The English School of International Relations (often referred to as liberal realism) sees the evolution of the international community as a concentric expansion of influence, values and relationships among nations with Europe in its center. It actually puts us back again in a scenario in which an Eurocentric international system does not take developments into consideration that did not emerge from the Old world.

Constructivist approaches take into account that significant aspects of the International refer back to historical and socially-constructed relations and that those emerge from social behavior, expectations and the human ability to learn to trust and to adequately respond to others' impulses. Standing between rationalist and reflexivist approaches to IR, constructivism(s) accommodate the perception that neither agency nor structure can take ontological precedence in the analysis of international phenomena. Constructivists bury the idea that the "outer world" in which national states interact should be considered anarchical — the idea of anarchy, for them, is itself socially constructed.

Constructivist approaches diverge from each other: while Nicolas Onuf stresses the importance of discourse in the making of rules, Wendt did not foresee the linguistic turn (NOGUEIRA e MEZZARI 2005, p. 177). Hindrances for an approximation of constructivist theories to the Global History approach rely on a still very "structural" account of relationships between states. While Onuf takes identities into consideration in his worldview, constructivists such as Wendt still count on state for action and decision making, being, thus, still state-centric in their analyses. Despite the affirmation that the world in which the International takes place is something *of our making*, constructivism does not fully resonate with the aims and tools of what we propose.

Post-modern, post-structuralist and to some extent post-colonial theories seem to better fit the aspirations of global historians — while postcolonial theories emphasize the colonial encounter and legacies as points of departure to *provincialize Europe*, the arguments directed towards *difference* tend to put Europe either in the center of analysis again or as an "independent variable" — a





variable causing variegated effects upon former colonies. As for postmodern and post-structuralist approaches, they shed a completely new light upon history/stories by focusing more intensely on regimes of truths and how it act upon individuals and societies. However, a relativization of historical facts altogether may damage efforts to reinterpret epochs and founding events through the analysis of transborder connections and relationships among regions.

Nevertheless, research and practice in IR have been responding to growing interdisciplinary demands. As the constructivist scholar Amitav Acharya, distinguished professor of International Relations of the American University, puts it, experiences from the non-Western world have come to gradually capture attention within major IR events (if not within mainstream IR literature). He defines as global IR the attempt to bring those experiences in:

The idea of a global IR challenges traditional IR's neglect and marginalisation of the voices and experiences of the non-Western world, or the Global South. The principal aim of global IR is to 'bring the Rest in'. It calls for greater participation from scholars from the Global South in the IR discipline and the broadening of the way IR is taught and written in the dominant centres of knowledge in the West (ACHARYA, 2017, p. 76).

Acharya (2017) sees six dimensions to global IR that can engage in fruitful debates with global history. First, he states the necessity to overcome a particularistic universalism born out of European enlightenment through an engaged pluralistic universalism. Second, he affirms that experiences should be grounded in world history instead of Western history. That means to say that institutions, peoples and values beyond Western traditions and time-coding may engage in dialogue with each other bringing other transborder connections into light. Third, he understands the need to go beyond American hegemony (although Acharya does not go far enough in criticizing the ability of mainstream theories to adapt). Fourth, he sees the power of regionalism not as the *antithesis of universalism* (ACHARYA, 2017, p. 80) but as a legitimate force to question centers and to focus on variegated forms of interactions between peoples and institutions. Fifth, he understands that “truly global IR cannot be based on cultural exceptionalism and parochialism” (ACHARYA, 2017, p. 80). Both perspectives have seen a revival in “real” politics over the present decade. Exceptionalism and parochialism are based on the idea of homogeneity and superiority, and the rise of nationalist paroles in the United States and in Europe — not to mention a turn to political conservatism in Latin America





— is bringing these discussions back to the research agenda. While recognizing that nationalisms and national identities are an enduring political force, research can contribute to uplifting initiatives that preserve the international connectedness as a source of new visions upon national (and transnational) formations.

Finally, the sixth dimension highlighted by Acharya takes not only a broader conception of agency into account but also various forms of agency neglected by state- and Eurocentric research.

This perspective resonates with ongoing research done not only in Europe but also by Latin American scholars that have been revisiting documents and archives (see for instance SOCHACZEWSKI, 2017) in search for yet unseen or insufficiently researched political, economic and social liaisons between actors and institutions in history.

The insights of what Acharya calls ‘global IR’ help to set, in our view, three elements convergent to a common agenda with approaches to Global History: (1) enhanced value put upon actors and processes deepening the understanding of intra and interregional relationships; (2) the conscious critique of state-centrism and Eurocentrism as necessary ordering principles in theory and methodology and (3) the perception that a “global” take on international phenomena does not mean a new universal approach to global issues but instead the search for interconnectedness regardless of frontiers and barriers established by mainstream historic accounts.

In this sense, we see the possibility of establishing a common research agenda between History and International Relations in which a common set of phenomena can be studied not exclusively, but specially in the contemporary global scene. According to Dominic Sachsenmaier (2007), variegated research agendas have been approached through lenses beyond traditional boundaries, through new spatial configurations and through intertwining History and other social sciences, including International Relations. Themes such as the diasporas, minority and migration studies; histories of commodities (such as salt, sugar and cotton) have been analyzed from new notions of space and globalization notions *per se*. Besides that, Sachsenmaier warns that theoretical changes of perspective are not enough to overcome Eurocentrism; the structures of the academia should be contested:

To conclude and come back to the question of Eurocentrism, it is rather facile to postulate that scholarship needs to become more multiangled, but this in fact necessitates more than a paradigm change. At the moment, world historical scholarship develops fascinating theories of alternative spaces,





cutting across national and cultural boundaries. But in effect in our own academic communities, national boundaries and public spheres continue to dominate modes of scholarly interaction (SACHSENMAIER 2007, 488).

That means that changing theory and methodological paradigms is not enough. Even in the globalized world, where so many facilities are available, the boundaries of the academic structures are still strongly based on national patterns. Academic interchanges, international events and, specially, the possibilities offered by the internet, are some strategies to overcome structural hindrances, but some barriers still persist, mainly the linguistic barrier observed especially in the History field:

The field of historiography [...] is still far from producing a tightly integrated community of scholars, a community that would be characterized by a relative balance of opportunities between the margins and the centers of a global academic network. In China, for example, only a small number of historians have the necessary foreign language skills and financial means to actively participate in international dialogues and cross-cultural projects. Here, just as in many other countries, one can observe a basic dichotomy between a globally connected elite of scholars and a larger group of academics whose active work experience does not cross national boundaries. In addition to this problem, the majority of research is being published in national languages, which provides obstacles to international exchanges and methodological debates. Linguistic boundaries greatly determine the shape of networks among historians, which tend to be knit most tightly within national or cultural settings (SACHSENMAIER 2007, 482).

Therefore, we argue that the common agenda for Global History and International Relations should focus on the theoretical-methodological elements of convergence; on phenomena that require an interdisciplinary approach and a global perspective. And, at the same time, on the changes of academia structure which should be more globally interconnected.

Considering these possibilities of a common agenda, the next section will discuss the role of the Global South perspective for the dialogue between Global History and International Relations. The specific case of Latin America will be highlighted through three recent contributions to Global History scholarship: Diego Olstein (2017), Monique Sochaczewski (2017) and Alexandre Moreli and Stella Krepp (2017).





## Can Latin America contribute to Global History research?

The emergence of historically marginalized voices has contested the Eurocentrism throughout History. The Subaltern Studies in India, the contemporary African Philosophy and the Dependency Theory feature amongst the most significant examples of global knowledge production during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (SACHSENMAIER 2007). Politically, the Bandung Conference in 1955 and the non-alignment movement marked a notable political reflection of contestation coming from peripheral countries amidst the bipolarized world of the Cold War.

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was characterized by the protagonism of the “emerging powers” (IKENBERRY and WRIGHT 2008), in which states turned their status from “poor countries” (or underdeveloped countries) to developing countries, improving their economic and political power in the global governance. The subsequent exponential growth of peripheral economies had been imbued of great symbolic contestation and led to the promotion of new issues regarding development paths and the need of reordering the international system. This period ended up being characterized by the strengthening of what came to be considered the Global South (which includes countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America) (SANTOS 2010; MAWDSLEY 2012). These regions have played a relevant role in Global History not only as study subjects, but also as providers of research centers.

Marquese and Pimenta (2018) point out that while some of the most important Anglo-Saxon Global History production ignores Latin America History, there are relevant global perspectives in Latin American historiographic traditions, such as Slavery Studies and Dependency Theory produced prior to discussions on Global History posed by recent northern scholarship. They tend to disagree with scholars affirming that Latin American research efforts have developed either in isolation or without any preoccupation with connections between Latin America and broader, global historical movements:

In their words:

We disagree [...] that there is a persistent and negative separation between Latin American historiography and studies of global history. [...] This isn't, however, our point, but rather that Latin American and Caribbean historiographic traditions are no less “global” because they are not produced





in English; they had been produced earlier on, independently of trends within the English-speaking academic world (referência?).<sup>9</sup>

As introduced in the previous section, we understand that Latin American international Historians and IR scholars specially devoted to Global History have been making active efforts over the past years to engage in dialogue with strands of history while reaching out to transnational and global processes and encounters (OLSTEIN 2015).

We ourselves, as Latin American researchers, have had the opportunity to engage in fruitful dialogues over the past three years within the sections devoted to Global History taking place in the yearly congresses of the National Historians' Association — ANPUH, in which many other colleagues to be mentioned here have presented their research.

Attuned to the many discussions taking place in Brazil, the well-known journal “*Estudos Históricos*” released a special issue in 2017 devoted to “global and transnational perspectives”. In one of the contributions to the edition, Diego Olstein historically redraws the processes through which Latin America became part of an international history and identifies great periods during which Latin America was brought into the stream of history, the first one being “the long sixteenth century (1492-1650)” in which the discovery of the Americas led to a massive movement of evangelization of native/captive masses, recognition and annexation of new grounds and the production of scientific/biblical knowledge to justify exploration of goods and peoples.

The age to follow, according to his proposition, was the “great crisis (1650-1780)” (referência), in which the Enlightenment and the emergence of natural history sealed the place of Latin America as marginal regarding any potential of intellectual progress and, at the same time, of crucial centrality for the intellectual making of Europe itself. In another long century — the 19th century (1780-1914) —, European imperial powers, while racing for economic and political supremacy in the continent, had to cope with the (bolivarian) liberation wars.

On the verge of World War I, freedom fighters in Latin America mattered less than the preservation of territorial power over Africa, making, again, Latin

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<sup>9</sup> In the Original: Discordamos, [...] que haja uma persistente e negativa separação entre a historiografia latino-americana e os estudos de história global. [...] Nosso ponto, contudo, não é este, mas sim que as tradições historiográficas da América Latina e do Caribe não são menos “globais” em razão do fato de não serem produzidas em inglês, de terem sido gestadas antes, e de forma independente das tendências historiográficas do mundo acadêmico de fala inglesa. (MARQUESE and PIMENTA 2018, 41).





America “small” in European eyes. While Latin America remained ignored as a continent, patronized in many ways and left to the power of the British empire after a political void left by Spain (OLSTEIN 2017, 261), the thirteen colonies of the Northern American continent settled for liberty and rights, setting the course for new developments as compared to Latin America.

In the “short twentieth century” (1914-1991) (referência), Latin America seemed to be able to contribute for the first time to global social sciences: with the dependency theory as a reaction to modernization theories, Latin American scholars engaged in dialogue claiming that the continent was of paramount importance to the production of “center economies” while fulfilling its role of a *locus* of peripheral capitalist production and consumption. World-system theories derived from that assumption putting Latin America “back” in the discussion of the development of capitalism while reinstating the centrality of more advanced economies for the explanation of the global capitalist system.

By the end of the nineties, two waves swept over Latin America: transition to democracy and neoliberal economy — the latter ended up setting the poles central capitalism -peripheral capitalism to the side. As for the present century (1991 onwards), Olstein defines it as being determined by globalization of knowledge and language as well as flows of goods and people. And a renewed academic interest on networks and relationships ended up bringing forward efforts to better understand the “Atlantic history”, for example, leading us to the perspective of throwing a new gaze upon the place of Latin America in the international system. Noteworthy here is his central claim that amongst “great divergences”, be they among the old world and the new world (such as in Pomeranz’s “Great Divergence” in which he describes the causes of the Western civilization’s flourishing in the 19th century eclipsing developments in other parts of the world), or be they a consequence of ruptures within the old or the new world, Latin America has permanently stood on the losing end (OLSTEIN 2017, 254). Nevertheless, the continent’s role in the international system cannot be overseen and maybe a new historical and/or even autochthonous perspective upon the region might be able to shed light upon alternative narratives.

The PhD dissertation “*Do Rio de Janeiro a Istanbul*” (2017) from the Brazilian historian Monique Sochaczewski makes an enriching contribution to enlightening active relationships among two considered to be peripheral empires during the 19th century — the former Empire of Brazil and the Ottoman Empire. Her study







encompasses archives, letters and diplomatic accounts of what seemed to be a relationship of mutual interest between 19th century-Brazil under the ruling of D. Pedro (ranging from what became known as the *Primeiro Império* until the republican era) and the Ottoman Empire.

Her findings show that both “peripheral empires” sought to diplomatically find themselves a way into the existent international system from the 1850s until the creation of the League of Nations in 1919. In an approach that mixes History and International Relations, Sochaczewski redirects the traditional focus from central empires, especially those in central Europe, to the two multicultural and multiethnic empires with commercial ties to central economies. Her non-Eurocentric approach to international relations in the 19th century puts Brazil “back into” History and IR. Aware of her contribution to the field, Sochaczewski considers her work to be a piece of the Global History of Brazil and International Relations.

However, it is necessary to move beyond the state of the art in Latin American Global History research (OLSTEIN 2017) and successful cases such as Sochaczewski’s piece (2017). Specially because the region has been shaken lately — as has been Europe as well — by a wave of conservative nationalisms that make the historian Alexandre Moreli, the guest editor of the previously mentioned edition of *Estudos Históricos*, wonder if Global History has been a short-lived endeavor (MORELI 2017). Moreover, while acknowledging that Latin America has been given more attention in Global History research, he believes that Latin American research has been insufficiently considered while producing knowledge about Latin America (MORELI and KREPP, 2017). At the same time, scholarship in Latin America continues to be directed towards Europe and/or North America, thus making the work of Sochaczewski, for instance, an exception rather than the rule.

Moreli and Krepp (2017) bring in valuable insights on hindrances to placing Latin America “back” into global history and IR — for once, the idea that Latin America has been historically devoted to understand and explain its nationalism(s) departing from European concepts and reference points. Further hindrances have to do with a lack of thematic interest and financial support for researchers devoted to Latin American scholarship (Idem). Yet, both authors see potentialities in Latin American scholars and based on several workshops and scholarly engagement experiences that took place in Brazil and were described in their piece, they foresee new gazes upon Latin America based on the research for unknown connections





between peoples and institutions instead of a rewriting of big history from the South (Idem).

How do Latin American efforts to rethink Global History resonate with thoughts in IR? They seem to resonate precisely in the efforts of scholars such as Acharya and Buzan (2019b) to draw out the need to redesign IR scholarship so that it can meet the challenges lying ahead. They explicitly make a call for a “[...] founding or refounding of the discipline, not just on normative grounds, but as a necessity to retain IR’s relevance in a globalised, deeply pluralist, post- Western world” despite persisting phenomena in IR such as Eurocentrism and what they call “disjuncture”: a mismatch between IR theorizations and actual experiences and knowledge of the non-western world (ACHARYA and BUZAN 2019b, 285).

Both scholars (ACHARYA and BUZAN 2019a) draw this conclusion by throwing a critical gaze upon the discipline after a hundred years of its establishment among the social disciplines of the 19th century. IR has greatly learned and evolved with its theoretical and methodological (grand) debates over the century — above all, recent “turns” (discursive, critical and post-structural) have shaken the Eurocentric and state-centric roots of IR. However, Acharya and Buzan (2019a) claim that there is a need to understand IR as a global endeavor. They propose that a so called ‘global IR’:

(...) challenges the discipline of International Relations to recognize its multiple and global foundations, and give due space to the ideas, voices, and practices of societies and actors that have been neglected or marginalized in the IR literature. But it is unlikely to succeed if it does not draw in the broadest group of scholars, including both critics and those in the Western mainstream (ACHARYA; BUZAN 2019a).

In that sense, we understand that the point of encounter between the two disciplines — History and IR — especially considering the late global challenges involving the rise of nationalist movements and the reinstatement of borders dividing bodies, values and cultures would rely precisely there where both see themselves as “global”. For both disciplines, the ability to draw different connections and relationships among regions and societies may be itself the source of new questions and new answers — and the source of new interdisciplinary research possibilities.





## Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to indicate pathways to reflections on links between the fields of History (more specifically Global History) and International Relations, steered by the key ideas that, to a large extent, guide knowledge production in the more mainstream areas of these two disciplines, namely the “State” category and the Eurocentric stance adopted for theoretical output, together with epistemological and methodological tracks in both disciplines.

In Global History, criticisms of state-centrism and Eurocentrism (SCHULZ-FORBERG 2013; CONRAD 2016; GRUZINSKI 2016; BOUCHERON and DELALANDE 2015) are addressed from a methodological standpoint that extends beyond comparative studies based on methodological nationalism, seeking a History that is broader than the European narrative, a History in “*equal parts*” (BERTRAND *apud* BOUCHERON and DELALANDE 2015).

For International Relations, the State remains either a core factor for explaining international phenomena (as a cause variable or an effect variable) or as a basic analysis category for research subjects where the State is not a key element. In the classic liberal and realist segments, as well as the Marxist / critical segment and some perceptions of International Relations grounded on Constructivist approaches, the idea of power and its distribution among players in the International System traverses the State and places the “idea of Europe” at the heart of the possibilities of knowledge about the international global order.

Along these lines, the challenges faced by Global History — which seem surprisingly similar to those found in the context of post-colonial studies, for example — have also been imposed on International Relations: “are the [Western] categories of the modern social sciences appropriate and adequate to uncover the heterogeneity of global realities or should they be complemented with indigenous terminology?” (GRUZINSKI *apud* CONRAD 2016, 3).

In this paper, drew upon Sebastian Conrad’s (2016) understanding and overall methodological framing of the idea of Global History, the most fruitful way to understand the Global History relied upon the third perspective proposed by the author: the global integration viewpoint through which objects are analyzed from an interconnection logic. This perspective bears more sophistication than framings that lead to thinking all world history as a unique building block and also of framings that solely take a glimpse at individual connections existing in the world. Instead, the third perspective focuses on interconnected process, actors and narratives.





Also, we argue that a common agenda that intertwines both fields is not only a possibility, but also a necessity considering the demands of the contemporary world. Acharya's (2017) ideas about Global International Relations resonate with the three elements of convergence that we see between the fields of Global History and International Relations: (1) enhanced value put upon actors and processes; (2) the conscious critique of state-centrism and Eurocentrism (3) the perception that a "global" take on international phenomena does not mean a new universal approach to global issues but instead the search for interconnected histories.

Additionally, we pointed out that the fields of study listed by Sachsenmaier (2007) should be analyzed from an interdisciplinary approach and are considered as core issues both for Global History and International Relations, such as the diasporas, minority and migration studies; the international trade of commodities; and globalization studies. Finally, we consider for a common agenda that it is necessary to have a more globally interconnected academic structure. Academia should try to overcome the structures limited by national borders improving interconnected dialogue between different perspectives in the world and an interdisciplinary approach for the contemporary global issues analysis.

Considering this common agenda, we presented some relevant contributions from the Latin America perspective and highlighted the importance of the Global South voice — in this case the Latin American voice — for the practice of Global approach research. Rather than providing definitive answers, the intention here is to suggest dialogs, indicating possible meeting-points and their limitations: the reflections of Olstein (2015; 2017), Sochaczewski (2017), Moreli (2017), Moreli and Krepp (2017) hint at a lengthy interdisciplinary research agenda that might well benefit not only Global History, but also the history, theory and practice of International Relations.

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