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Beyond Prejudice and Pride

The Human Sciences in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Latin America

*By Julia Rodriguez**

ABSTRACT

Grappling with problematics of status and hierarchy, recent literature on the history of the human sciences in Latin America has gone through three overlapping phases. First, the scholarship has reflected a dialogue between Latin American scientists and their European colleagues, characterized by the “center/periphery” model of scientific diffusion. Next, scholars drew on postcolonial theory to undermine the power of the “center” and to recover the role of local agents, including both elites and subalterns. In the wake of numerous studies embracing both models, the way has been cleared to look at multiple dimensions simultaneously. Histories of the human sciences in the complex multicultural societies of Latin America provide an unusually direct path to integration. Moreover, this dynamic and multilayered approach has the potential to address ambivalences about authority and power that have characterized previous analyses of the production and application of knowledge about the human condition.

THAT SCIENCE CROSSES geographic, national, and cultural borders is by now a truism. New conceptual ideas such as the circulation of knowledge and contact zones are conspicuous in the field. Recently, calls to globalize science have intensified, urging historians of science from all areas to think beyond our nationally bounded training.¹ The history of science in Latin America is almost by definition transnational, characterized by recurrent interaction between foreign and local ideas, actors, and institutional structures. The region has been a cultural crossroads and a rich site of scientific ideas, inspiration, and evidence since 1492.² Scholars have long been aware of the region’s integration with Europe, Africa, North America, and even Asia and are increasingly demonstrating the extent to which Latin American history is “critical to how we understand world pro-

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¹ Sujit Sivasundaram, “Introduction [Focus: Global Histories of Science],” *Isis*, 2010, 101:95–97.

² For recent overviews of the field see Maria Portuondo, “Constructing a Narrative: The History of Science and Technology in Latin America,” *History Compass*, 2009, 7:500–522; and the website HOSLAC: History of Science in Latin America and the Caribbean (www.hoslac.org).

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cesses.”³ Observers have been intrigued by Latin America’s role in scientific breakthroughs or unusual applications of global science, such as Argentina’s role in the development of fingerprint classification or Mexico’s unique state-sponsored anthropology.⁴ Some of the insights are specific to their Latin American settings, such as the development of schools of tropical medicine or studies of rare and local flora and fauna. Others are relevant for their creative use of resources, often resulting in distinct laboratory styles and local applications. Yet others reflect unique instances of the interplay between science and society—such as the rise of psychoanalysis as an enormously popular and culturally relevant phenomenon in Buenos Aires.⁵ Such stories of scientific relevance and connection can help to correct misperceptions of Latin America as a scientific backwater. But they also run the risk of presenting the region as the site of odd or unusual events. For the Latin Americanist historian of science, the promise of insight goes beyond these curiosities. In fact, the field is moving past the specific and anomalous to focus on methodological contributions that have a bearing on other areas.

If Latin America is a producer, and not just a passive recipient, of universal science, the problem arises of how knowledge moves from one particular location into general circulation. And what about the impact on and relevance for the local setting? Latin America, it turns out, provides fertile ground to explore both sets of questions within the framework of what the historical geographer David Livingstone calls the “geographies of science.” Livingstone’s concept embraces local conditions as a critical ingredient of the transnational production of scientific knowledge, in opposition to purist ideas of knowledge as a “detached enterprise, impartial and impersonal in its interrogation of nature,” separate from social context. Yet the ultimate aim is not just microhistories of place: “Scientific findings . . . are both local and global; they are both particular and universal; they are both provincial and transcendent.”⁶

Looking at Latin America, the historian Ricardo Salvatore points out in the introduction to his edited volume *Los lugares del saber [Sites of Knowledge]* that local knowledge production, especially in the human and social sciences, has almost always resulted from the merging of situated ideas and disciplinary frameworks that are by their nature transnational. He poses some helpful questions for our inquiries: “What does it mean to

³ Jeremy Adelman, “Latin American and World Histories: Old and New Approaches to the Pluribus and the Unum,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 2004, 84:399–409, on p. 400. See also Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 2002), p. 9.

⁴ Julia Rodríguez, “South Atlantic Crossings: Fingerprints, Science, and the State in Turn-of-the-Century Argentina,” *American Historical Review*, 2004, 109:387–416; Rick López, *Crafting Mexico: Intellectuals, Artisans, and the State after the Revolution* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2010); and Christina Bueno, “Forjando Patrimonio: The Making of Archaeological Patrimony in Porfirian Mexico,” *Hispanic Amer. Hist. Rev.*, 2010, 90:215–245.

⁵ For work specific to the Latin American setting see Julian Peard, *Race, Place, and Medicine: The Idea of the Tropics in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2000); and Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2004). For a focus on the creative use of resources see Marcos Cueto, “Laboratory Styles and Argentine Physiology,” *Isis*, 1994, 85:228–246. Regarding psychoanalysis in Buenos Aires see Mariano Plotkin, *Freud in the Pampas: The Emergence and Development of a Psychoanalytic Culture in Argentina* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 2001); see also Plotkin, “Psychoanalysis, Race Relations, and National Identity: The Reception of Psychoanalysis in Brazil, 1910 to 1940,” in *Unconscious Dominions: Psychoanalysis, Colonial Traumas, and Global Sovereignties*, ed. Warwick Anderson, Deborah Jensen, and Richard C. Keller (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2010), pp. 113–137.

⁶ David Livingstone, *Putting Science in Its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge* (Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 185, xi.

construct knowledge *in and from* a particular place? How does the transnational current of objects, texts, and experts contribute to the enterprise of knowledge? What occurs when a knowledge or disciplinary project acquires a local or national character? When and why does a body of knowledge become transnational and therefore seemingly ‘out of nowhere’ in particular?” Salvatore’s thoughts also complement Lauren Benton’s suggestion—formulated in the context of recent reconceptualizations of Latin America’s place in world history—that we seek out “wormholes,” stories and instances that “thread through seemingly unconnected parts of the globe, linking noncontiguous regions.” Benton calls for nothing less than “a reorientation of world history and a repositioning of Latin America within it,” citing historical processes of commerce and law as obvious starting points.⁷

For historians of science, a smart centering of Latin America is not easy. It requires an integrated, multisite, multistrata, and often multilingual approach; the types of questions we ask are equally important. In the past forty years, approaches to the complexities of transnational human sciences in Latin America have varied in their emphases, vacillating between a focus on external and internal structures as well as between theory, practice, and experience. We now find ourselves at a promising moment of integration of the foreign and the local, of ideas and outcomes. To that end, historical studies of the human sciences, especially in the rich and complex multicultural societies of Latin America, provide an unusually direct path to such an integration.

THE HUMAN SCIENCES IN LATIN AMERICA

While location to a great extent determines the material reality for all scientific fields—for example, providing access to raw data, dictating the need to study abroad or contend with a lack of funds and equipment—the human sciences are embedded in place in particular ways. A distinction of the human sciences is that they relate directly to behavior and often contain assumptions and prescriptions for individuals and population groups alike.⁸ Economic, psychological, and “racial” forces are routinely accounted for in the human sciences. Moreover, the human sciences engage questions of environment versus biology, scrutinizing the details of the local milieu. In Latin America, an additional particularity of the human sciences is that their subject matter frequently invites comparison with Europe and “universal” humanity. Here, science debates have routinely engaged questions about whether “we” are superior, inferior, or the same, about why “we” have fewer institutions or less government or popular support for our work. Explicitly or implicitly, they have raised comparative questions about “our” racial stock and national characteristics. (The question of who this “we” included more often than not remained murky and confused.) But the actual subjects of human science research in Latin America were in practice *always* local—for example, the science looked at *Argentine* criminals, *Mexican* mental patients, *Andean* Indians.

Grappling with these problematics of status and hierarchy, recent literature on the

⁷ Ricardo Salvatore, “Introducción: Los lugares del saber,” in *Los lugares del saber: Contextos locales y redes transnacionales en la formación del conocimiento moderno*, ed. Salvatore (Buenos Aires: Viterbo, 2007), pp. 9–13, on pp. 9, 11, 17 (here and throughout this essay, translations are mine unless otherwise noted); and Lauren Benton, “No Longer Odd Region Out: Repositioning Latin America in World History,” *Hispanic Amer. Hist. Rev.*, 2004, 84:423–430, on p. 426.

⁸ Theodore M. Porter and Dorothy Ross, “Writing the History of Social Science,” in *The Cambridge History of Science*, Vol. 7: *The Modern Social Sciences*, ed. Porter and Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008), pp. 1–10, esp. pp. 8, 10.

history of the human sciences in Latin America has gone through three overlapping phases. First, the scholarship has reflected a dialogue and at times a struggle between Latin American scientists and their European colleagues over method, approach, and world-view. This literature was for a while dominated by the “center/periphery” model of scientific diffusion.⁹ Studies took as their starting point the realities of geopolitical and scientific imbalances of power faced by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Latin American scientists. They assumed that, given their place in the postcolonial world order of the late nineteenth century, Latin American scientists *had* to embrace global science and in fact sought membership in a “universal” science defined by the countries of the Northern Hemisphere.

In a subsequent wave of literature, scholars drew on postcolonial theory to challenge this rigid view, undermining the power of the “center” and eventually seeking to recover the role of local agents, including both elites and subalterns. In this phase, historians turned to close examinations of national and local science, including the relationship between science and the state, especially in institutions of education, public health, and “social control,” such as prisons and asylums. They brought out from the shadows scientists who in their day were both nationally influential and internationally recognized, but who had been overlooked in the scholarship, such as the Argentine police scientist Juan Vucetich and the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortíz.¹⁰ By and large, these studies at the local and national levels sought to appreciate Latin American science on its own terms, often finding instances of phenomenal, and previously unacknowledged, local achievement.¹¹

Studies emphasizing local science necessarily shifted our vision. However, the importance of the old “centers” cannot be ignored. In the wake of the numerous publications embracing both models, the way has been cleared to look at multiple dimensions simultaneously, for a more subtle and finely tuned picture. While there continue to be published many studies of national science in Latin America, insightful and sophisticated in their own right, a small number of ambitious studies aim to address the multinodal and multilevel connections and processes, seeking, again, those “wormholes” of relevance. After some forty years of scholarship shifting between global and local themes, between prejudice and pride, we are now poised to move “beyond” the global/local dichotomy. Aside from providing good stories, such a dynamic and multilayered approach has the

⁹ The earliest publication to map out the center/periphery model was George Basalla’s article “The Spread of Western Science,” *Science*, 1967, 156(3775):611–622. Basalla’s model influenced a number of Latin American science studies, such as Elena Díaz et al., eds., *La ciencia periférica: Ciencia y sociedad en Venezuela* (Caracas: Monte Avile, 1983); for an early inversion of the model see Marcos Cueto, *Excelencia en la periferia: Actividades científicas e investigación biomédica en el Perú, 1890–1950* (Lima: CONCYTEC, 1989).

¹⁰ For work that looks closely at national or local science see Silvana Vallone, *Los peligros del orden: El discurso positivista en la trama del control social* (Mendoza: EDIUNC, 2009); Gilberto Hochman and Diego Armus, eds., *Cuidar, controlar, curar: Ensayos históricos sobre salud e doença na América Latina e Caribe* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2004); Claudia Agostini and Elisa Speckman Guerra, *De normas y transgresiones: Enfermedades y crimen en América Latina, 1850–1950* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2005); and Maria Argeri, *De guerreros a delinquentes: La desarticulación de las jefaturas indígenas y el poder judicial: Norpatagonia, 1880–1930* (Madrid: CSIC, 2005). Studies that focus on overlooked but important figures include Rodríguez, “South Atlantic Crossings” (cit. n. 4); and Mauricio Augusto Font and Alfonso W. Quiroz, eds., *Cuban Counterpoints: The Legacy of Fernando Ortíz* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington, 2005).

¹¹ Cueto, *Excelencia científica en la periferia* (cit. n. 9); and Marcos Cueto, “Andean Biology in Peru: Scientific Styles on the Periphery,” *Isis*, 1989, 80:640–658. On local resistance see Ricardo Salvatore, “Local versus Imperial Knowledge: Reflections on Hiram Bingham and the Yale Peruvian Expedition,” *Nepantla*, 2003, 4:67–80; and Neil Safier, “Global Knowledge on the Move: Itineraries, Amerindian Narratives, and Deep Histories of Science,” *Isis*, 2010, 101:133–145.

potential to clear up the ambivalences about authority and power that have characterized previous analyses of the production and application of knowledge about the human condition.

PREJUDICE: CENTER, PERIPHERY, AND THE AMBIVALENCES OF EUROCENTRISM

As in many other locales, in Latin America the human sciences have played a unique and powerful role. Encompassing the disciplines of anthropology, criminology, psychology, the social sciences (sociology, economics), and, for some, geography, history, and education, the human sciences carry specific and direct sociopolitical implications—in fact, they are often taken as prescriptive or even disciplinary. There is considerable overlap with medicine and public health, especially in the history of applied fields such as criminology and psychology. In Latin America, these fields came into fruition in the late nineteenth century and were further institutionalized and entrenched in the twentieth.¹² These disciplines expanded considerably after about 1870, as the chaos of the postindependence period receded and relative stability returned and as many Latin American countries saw a boom in state institution building, focused especially on public works, public health, and education.

The expansion of state science in the late nineteenth century was guided largely by European positivism, as filtered through the lenses of Latin American elites' visions of progress.¹³ Positivism framed most if not all discussions of the human sciences until the mid-twentieth century, although it did have its critics earlier, mostly from the Catholic Church. As Edgardo Lander has pointed out, owing to the near-hegemony of positivism in Latin American scientific and intellectual circles, and because the "problems" identified in the social sciences originated in nineteenth-century Western Europe and the United States, many Latin American ideas were largely shaped by assumptions of European superiority. Institutions, organizations, and university curricula were modeled on European ones, and the end goals of social engineering projects often corresponded to a white, North Atlantic ideal.¹⁴ Positivism's influence among late nineteenth-century liberals and scientists in Latin America, according to Jorge Balán, can be seen in the marriage of "progress" and science, "shaped by the French tradition of . . . science in the service of the secular state."¹⁵ (A stark example of Latin American elites' worship of positivism is reflected in the motto on the Brazilian flag since 1889: "Order and Progress.")

¹² We should not forget that measured and methodical attempts to understand and shape human behavior in the Americas stretch back at least to the fifteenth century, beginning with early European narrative and statistical accounts, followed by geographic, historical, demographic, and ethnographic surveys. For a sampling of the literature on early modern and colonial human sciences see Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World* (cit. n. 3); Neil Safier, *Measuring the New World: Enlightenment Science and South America* (Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 2008); and Antonello Gerbi, *Nature in the New World: From Christopher Columbus to Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo* (Pittsburgh: Univ. Pittsburgh Press, 1985). See also Roy MacLeod, ed., *Nature and Empire: Science and the Colonial Enterprise, Osiris*, 2000, 15. On the history of geographical surveys in Latin America see Raymond B. Craib, *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2004); and Jordana Dym, "Taking a Walk on the Wild Side: Experiencing the Spaces of Colonial Latin America," *Colonial Latin American Review*, 2012, 21:3–16.

¹³ Greg Gilson and Irving Levinson, eds., *Latin American Positivism: New Historical and Philosophical Essays* (New York: Lexington, 2013).

¹⁴ In a further twist, the scientific study of non-European people was by definition "segregated"—left to orientalist and area studies specialists. See Edgardo Lander, "Eurocentrism and Colonialism in Latin American Social Thought," *Nepantla*, 2000, 1:519–532, esp. p. 527.

¹⁵ Jorge Balán, "The Social Sciences in Latin America during the Twentieth Century," in *Cambridge History of Science*, Vol. 7, ed. Porter and Ross (cit. n. 8), pp. 413–430, on p. 414.

Latin American scientists who engaged with “Western” or European science and positivism in the first decades of the twentieth century, such as the Argentine sociologist José Ingenieros or the Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio, had exaggerated attachments to its methods but also an ambivalent relationship with it. Transcontinental relationships between human scientists were fraught with contradiction, unevenness, and indecision. On the one hand, Latin Americans were caught between admiration and resentment of towering figures and ideas of European science; on the other hand, European scientists were increasingly humbled and thrown into doubt as their contact with the “field” deepened.¹⁶ As a result, numerous attempts were made to reconcile European models with the messier realities of multicultural societies still staggering under the weight of traditional, semifeudal structures. Yet, as Lander points out, while Latin American leaders and intellectuals embraced European positivism “in their attempt to transplant and install a replica of their understanding of the European or North American experience,” in the process they often ignored the realities of the material and social conditions in their own backyards.¹⁷

If most practitioners of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century human sciences on *both* sides of the Atlantic long understood those disciplines as emanating from Europe, historical explorations have shown that what actually transpired in the circulation of ideas, including their sources and impact, was more complicated. For example, Nancy Leys Stepan’s 1991 book *“The Hour of Eugenics”: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America*, a pioneering study of eugenics in three Latin American countries, emphasized the specific national interpretations of that powerful set of ideas. While recognizing the North Atlantic point of origin of eugenical thought, the book challenged the center/periphery model by focusing on the unique local dynamics in the three countries. Examinations of eugenics and related fields in Latin American settings, primarily Brazil and Argentina, continue to be an area of intense scholarly interest.¹⁸ Even as Europe and the United States remain the implicit paragons, Latin American iterations continue to capture historians’ interest insofar as the “well-born science” directly raised questions of superiority and inferiority and comparative human traits. Given eugenicists’ focus on specific human behavior, the topic also (like

¹⁶ Notably, some scholars, inspired by postcolonial theory, have recently used the history of science to question the very separation between “the West and the Rest,” finding key components of the Enlightenment, modernity, philosophies of human rights, and so on in Latin America itself. For literature on decentering the “West” see Lander, “Eurocentrism and Colonialism in Latin American Social Thought” (cit. n. 14); Anibal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,” *Nepantla*, 2000, 1:533–580; Enrique Dussel, “Europe, Modernity, and Eurocentrism,” *ibid.*, pp. 465–478; Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World* (cit. n. 3); Nicolas Wey-Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire: Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008); and Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005). On human rights ideas see Paolo G. Carozza, “From Conquest to Constitutions: Retrieving a Latin American Tradition of the Idea of Human Rights,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, 2003, 25:281–313.

¹⁷ Lander, “Eurocentrism and Colonialism in Latin American Social Thought,” p. 519.

¹⁸ Nancy Leys Stepan, *“The Hour of Eugenics”: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991). See also Andrés H. Reggiani, “Depopulation, Fascism, and Eugenics in 1930s Argentina,” *Hispanic Amer. Hist. Rev.*, 2010, 90:283–318; Yolanda Eraso, “Biotypology, Endocrinology, and Sterilization: The Practice of Eugenics in the Treatment of Argentinean Women during the 1930s,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 2007, 81:793–822; Natalia Milanesio, “Redefining Men’s Sexuality, Re-Signifying Male Bodies: The Argentine Law of Anti-Venereal Prophylaxis, 1936,” *Gender and History*, 2005, 17:463–491; Marisa Miranda, *Controlar lo incontrolable: Una historia de la sexualidad en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2011); Sergio Cecchetto, *La biología contra la democracia: Eugenesia, herencia y prejuicio en Argentina, 1880–1940* (Buenos Aires: EUEM, 2008); Luzia Aurelia Castañeda, “Eugenics and Marriage,” *História, Ciências, Saúde*, 2003, 10:901–930; and Vanderlei Sebastião de Souza *et al.*, “The National Museum’s Physical Anthropology Archive: Sources on the History of Eugenics in Brazil,” *ibid.*, 2009, 16:763–777.

the history of public health) opens the door to detailed studies of its local and particular courses.

PRIDE: LOCAL SCIENCE AND EXCELLENCE

Perhaps in reaction to the rigidity and limitations of the center/periphery model, historians of the human sciences turned to closer examinations of national and local scientific dynamics. This trend resulted in a keen look at the relationship between science and the state, a subject almost unavoidable in the history of the human sciences. It is well documented that scientists in Latin America have long enjoyed close contact with the state, holding powerful positions in institutions of health, education, and social control. In the twentieth century, scientists would also be invited to take up new roles in crafting economic, legal, and political policy, both nationally and regionally.¹⁹

Latin American historiography provides numerous examples of state science, especially under centralized, activist governments.²⁰ Eugenics, again, was exposed in its distinct national character and shown to be closely aligned with government agendas, if often unfinished and unfulfillable.²¹ Another stunning example of state science is the technocratic class of the *fin-de-siècle* Mexican state called the *científicos* (literally, “the scientists”). In the words of the anthropologist Claudio Lomnitz, the *científicos* embodied a “nationalist orthodoxy” in science, in which anthropological ideas and institutions were harnessed to national myths, including the attempted reshaping of Mexican identity based largely on the assimilation and incorporation of the Indian “Other.”²² Scholars have also been drawn to histories of criminology and related fields, with interest in wide-ranging facets such as forensics, prisons, policing, and social control of dangerous populations.²³

¹⁹ Balán, “Social Sciences in Latin America during the Twentieth Century” (cit. n. 15), p. 414.

²⁰ Neiburg and Plotkin emphasize the role of institutions such as universities and academic presses: Federico Neiburg and Mariano Plotkin, *Intelectuales y expertos: La constitución del conocimiento social en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2004). See also Benoît de l’Estoile *et al.*, eds., *Empires, Nations, and Natives: Anthropology and State-Making* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2005).

²¹ Recent works on eugenics programs in the United States have included Latin American neighbors, given the porous borders between these nations. See Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2005); Natalia Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens? Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879–1939* (Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2006); and Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2002). See also Armando García González, *Las trampas del poder: Sanidad, eugenesia y migración: Cuba y Estados Unidos (1900–1940)* (Madrid: CSIC, 2007).

²² Claudio Lomnitz, “Bordering on Anthropology,” in *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: Univ. Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 228–262, on p. 242. See also Alexander Dawson, “From Models for the Nation to Model Citizens: Indigenismo and the ‘Revindication’ of the Mexican Indian, 1920–1940,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 1998, 30:279–308. There is a great deal of literature on Mexican state projects in this period, especially in terms of public health and education. For a sampling see Mary Kay Vaughan, *Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930–1940* (Tucson: Univ. Arizona Press, 1997); Claudia Agostini, *Monuments of Progress: Modernization and Public Health in Mexico* (Calgary: Univ. Calgary Press, 2003); and Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, “Stereophonic Scientific Modernisms: Social Science between Mexico and the United States, 1880–1930,” *Journal of American History*, 1999, 86:1156–1187.

²³ Histories of criminology and related fields (such as policing and prisons) have focused predominantly on Mexico, Argentina, and Peru. See Elisa Speckman Guerra, *Crimen y castigo: Legislación penal, interpretaciones de la criminalidad y administración de justicia, Ciudad de México, 1872–1910* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2002); Lila Caimari, *Aprende un delincuente: Crimen, castigo, y cultura en la Argentina, 1880–1955* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2004); Robert Buffington, *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico* (Lincoln: Univ. Nebraska Press, 2000); Pablo Piccato, *City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900–1931* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2001); Carlos Aguirre, *The Criminals of Lima and Their Worlds: The Prison Experience, 1830–1935* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2005); and Julia Rodríguez, “Inoculating against Barbarism? State Medicine and

Many, but not all, of these studies emphasize the disciplinary nature of the applied human sciences—for instance, in asylums and policing; they have also explored how criminology overlapped significantly with anthropology and psychiatry.²⁴

The state is not the only actor, however. A body of work has emerged on the heels of studies of the social control literature that de-emphasizes the role of government officials. These studies instead highlight the local, on-the-ground experience of the human sciences, emphasizing their importance for understanding social, cultural, and political moments. Such work often takes into account the perspective of nonelite actors such as laboratory workers, patients, and assistants and examines the broader social and cultural interpretations of official scientific ideas.²⁵

Methodological tensions have surfaced between these two approaches, centering on questions of scope, agency, and outcomes. In broad strokes, one side points out that science almost always involves elites, even more so in Latin American countries with entrenched oligarchies and self-reproducing elites that included scientists. It also recognizes the significance of global structures, power, and transcontinental ideas. On the other side, local, microhistorical studies often rightly point out the failure of the state to carry out its social reform projects; they also uncover the participation of the disenfranchised or “subaltern” and instances of resistance to state engineering efforts. To a great extent, this scholarly divide is a distraction—we do not, in fact, face an either/or choice, a battle between social history and the history of ideas. On the contrary, increasing numbers of case studies bring these perspectives together, merging local experience and outcomes with extranational factors: geopolitical, intellectual, practical. Highlighting this trend, Salvatore points to new scholarship that looks at “moments of local-global intersection,” allowing us to map intellectual geographies that take local knowledge into account. Increasingly, new investigations strive for what Jeremy Adelman refers to as the “heterogeneous integration” of Latin America, traversing the various and shifting centers, epicenters, and peripheries, as well as the “negotiations, compromises, and institutional syncretisms” involved in that process.²⁶

MANY CENTERS: DYNAMIC AND MULTINODAL SCIENCE

Current work on the history of Latin American human sciences is moving toward this multilayered, multinodal recounting of the circulation of scientific ideas. For example, there has been of late an explosion in histories of anthropology from a variety of angles, including expeditions, archaeology, fieldwork, museums and collections, policy, and

Immigration Policy in Turn-of-the-Century Argentina,” *Science in Context*, 2006, 19:357–380. Some recent collections of essays include Aguirre and Buffington, eds., *Reconstructing Criminality in Latin America* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 2000); and Aguirre, Ricardo Salvatore, and Gilbert Joseph, eds., *Crime and Punishment in Latin America: Law and Society since Late Colonial Times* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2001).

²⁴ Alejandra Bronfman, *Measures of Equality: Social Science, Citizenship, and Race in Cuba, 1902–1940* (Chapel Hill: Univ. North Carolina Press, 2004); Cristina Rivera Garza, *La Castañeda: Narrativas dolientes desde el Manicomio General, Mexico, 1910–1930* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 2010); Andrés Ríos Molina, *La locura durante la revolución mexicana: Los primeros años del manicomio general La Castañeda, 1910–1920* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 2009); and Kristin Ruggiero, *Modernity in the Flesh: Medicine, Law, and Society in Turn-of-the-Century Argentina* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 2004).

²⁵ See, e.g., Jonathan Ablard, *Madness in Buenos Aires: Patients, Psychiatrists, and the Argentine State, 1880–1983* (Calgary: Univ. Calgary Press, 2008).

²⁶ Salvatore, “Introducción” (cit. n. 7), p. 9; and Adelman, “Latin American and World Histories” (cit. n. 3), p. 409.

theory.²⁷ Many of these new histories of anthropology provide subtle insight into latter-day Euro-American contact and exchange.²⁸ Another area now attracting attention is the history of applied social science, such as censuses.²⁹ New policy histories are often exquisitely sensitive to local/global dynamics—for example, Adelman's study of Albert Hirschman, the exceptional development economist.³⁰ Salvatore documents the complicated back-and-forth, incomplete collaboration, and power struggles among U.S. and Latin American policy makers in the initial stages of Pan-Americanism.³¹ Additional recent transnational policy histories include Federico Finchelstein's study of Fascist ideology and policy in Italy and Argentina and Sergio Silva Castañeda's study of demography in Mexico and Spain.³²

The history of the social sciences of the mid-twentieth century provides a striking example of Latin America's rootedness in global intellectual currents. After World War

²⁷ Recent studies of anthropology in Latin America include López, *Crafting Mexico* (cit. n. 4); Carolyne Ryan Larson, "'The Ashes of Our Ancestors': Creating Argentina's Indigenous Heritage in the Museo Etnográfico, 1904–1930," *Americas*, 2013, 69:467–492; Emilio Kourí, "Manuel Gamio y el indigenismo de la Revolución Mexicana," in *Historia de los intelectuales en América Latina*, Vol. 2, ed. Carlos Altamirano (Buenos Aires: Katz, 2010); Héctor García Botero, *Una historia de nuestros otros: Indígenas, letrados y antropólogos en el estudio de la diferencia cultural en Colombia, 1880–1960* (Bogotá: Univ. Andes, 2010); Oscar Calavia Sáez, "La fábula de las res ciencias: Antropología, etnología e historia en el Brasil," *Revista de Indias*, 2005, 65(234): 337–353; Antonio Carlos de Sousa Lima, "Indigenism in Brazil: The International Migration of State Policies," in *Empires, Nations, and Natives*, ed. de l'Estoile et al. (cit. n. 20), pp. 187–222; João Pacheco de Oliveira, "The Anthropologist as Expert: Brazilian Ethnology between Indianism and Indigenism," *ibid.*, pp. 223–247; Jerry Dávila, *Diploma of Whiteness: Race and Social Policy in Brazil, 1817–45* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2003); and Seth Garfield, *Indigenous Struggle at the Heart of Brazil: State Policy, Frontier Expansion, and the Xavante Indians, 1937–1988* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2001).

²⁸ Sensitive transnational studies of anthropology in Latin America include Anadelia Romo, *Brazil's Living Museum: Race, Reform, and Tradition in Bahia* (Chapel Hill: Univ. North Carolina Press, 2010); Bueno, "Forjando Patrimonio" (cit. n. 4); Glenn Penny, "The Politics of Anthropology in the Age of Empire: German Colonists, Brazilian Indians, and the Case of Alberto Vojtech Friç," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2003, 45:249–280; Karin Roseblatt, "Other Americas: Transnationalism, Scholarship, and the Culture of Poverty in Mexico and the United States," *Hispanic Amer. Hist. Rev.*, 2009, 89:603–641; Paul Edison, "Conquest Unrequited: French Expeditionary Science in Mexico, 1864–1867," *French Historical Studies*, 2003, 26:459–495; Jason Pribilsky, "Development and the 'Indian Problem' in the Cold War Andes: *Indigenismo*, Science, and Modernization in the Cornell-Peru Project at Vicos," *Diplomatic History*, 2009, 33:406–426; Irina Podgorny and Gustavo Politis, "It Is Not All Roses Here: Ales Hrdlicka's Travel and His Visit to Buenos Aires in 1910," *Revista de História da Arte e Arqueologia*, 2000, pp. 95–105; and Metschild Rutsch, *Entre el campo y el gabinete: Nacionales y extranjeros en la profesionalización de la antropología Mexicana* (Mexico City: INAH, 2007). See also Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997).

²⁹ Mara Loveman, "The Race to Progress: Census-Taking and Nation-Making in Brazil," *Hispanic Amer. Hist. Rev.*, 2009, 89:435–470; and Rossana Barragán, "The Census and the Making of a Social 'Order' in Nineteenth-Century Bolivia," in *Histories of Race and Racism: The Andes and Mesoamerica from Colonial Times to the Present*, ed. Laura Gotkowitz (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2011), pp. 113–133.

³⁰ See Jeremy Adelman, *Worldly Philosopher: The Odyssey of Albert O. Hirschman* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2013); see also Adelman and Emmanuelle Loyer, "Between Worlds: The Life and Work of Albert O. Hirschman: Introduction," *Tocqueville Review/La Revue Tocqueville*, 2010, 31(2):9–18. Other recent studies of economic history include Federico Neiburg, "Inflation: Economists and Economic Cultures in Brazil and Argentina," *Comp. Stud. Soc. Hist.*, 2006, 48:604–633.

³¹ Ricardo Salvatore, "The Making of a Hemispheric Intellectual-Statesman: Leo S. Rowe in Argentina (1906–1919)," *Journal of Transnational American Studies*, 2010, 2:1–36. See also Roseblatt, "Other Americas" (cit. n. 28), p. 607; and Helen Delpar, *Looking South: The Evolution of Latin Americanist Scholarship in the United States, 1850–1975* (Tuscaloosa: Univ. Alabama Press, 2008).

³² Federico Finchelstein, *Transatlantic Fascism: Ideology, Violence, and the Sacred in Argentina and Italy, 1919–1945* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2010); and Sergio Silva Castañeda, "Forking Paths: Authoritarianism, Population Growth, and Economic Performance in Mexico and Spain, 1934–2000" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 2009). See also Alejandro Blanco, *Razón y modernidad: Gino Germani y la sociología en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2006).

II, Latin America (especially Brazil) emerged in full force as a “center” of social science theory, producing in particular the well-known school of political economy known as Dependency Theory (DT). This school of thought emerged from a flourishing Latin American social science community in the 1960s and 1970s that produced many new and unique concepts recognized the world over, including internal colonialism and pedagogy of the oppressed.³³ DT was created and popularized by a group of Latin American Marxist academics, including the Chilean economist Enzo Faletto, the Brazilian economist Celso Furtado, and the Brazilian sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who later moved to the right and became president of Brazil (1995–2003). Cardoso and Faletto, in particular, became virtual household names (at least in academic and policy circles) with their 1979 book *Dependency and Development in Latin America*.

While the DT model had global applicability and was in fact adopted worldwide, it was seen then (and now) as a distinctly Latin American response to mainstream Modernization Theory (MT), a philosophy that privileged North Atlantic models of development while ignoring historical patterns of exploitation. Dependency theorists rejected the imitative prescriptions of MT and drew attention to the uneven distribution of global wealth. In this sense, DT was part of a longer thread of postcolonial consciousness reaching back to the Cuban nationalist José Martí and other early twentieth-century critics of Northern imperialism. Yet Ramón Grosfoguel, in recounting the complicated story of DT’s origins, shows that while Latin American *dependistas* genuinely broke through the hegemonic perspective of the United States regarding development and economic policy, they were nonetheless trapped in cultural and perspectival mind-sets that reflected familiar hierarchies. For example, twentieth-century social scientists in Latin America were largely blind to the inequalities within their own societies.³⁴ The history of DT and international social science in Latin America highlights the need to examine critically origins and impacts on the ground in the localities where theories flourish, as we simultaneously trace their global circulation.

FINAL THOUGHTS

It is not easy to get multilevel, multidirectional work right, with the local and the global integrated and fine detail and big themes addressed equally well.³⁵ In the history of the Latin American human sciences, challenges remain: accounting for diverse societies; incorporating the subaltern; speaking across the North/South divide; and, finally, exploring more thoroughly the regional (or South–South) connections.³⁶

The stakes of grasping the complex dynamics that play out in the human sciences are high: social science ideas continue to shape state programs, economic and political

³³ Lander, “Eurocentrism and Colonialism in Latin American Social Thought” (cit. n. 14), p. 520.

³⁴ Fernando López-Alves, “Modernization Theory Revisited: Latin America, Europe, and the U.S. in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century,” *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura*, 2011, 38:243–279; and Ramón Grosfoguel, “Developmentalism, Modernity, and Dependency Theory in Latin America,” *Nepantla*, 2000, 1:347–374, esp. pp. 371–372.

³⁵ William Cronon, then president of the American Historical Association, issued a similar call for the integration of fine-grained microhistory and broader synthesis in “Breaking Apart, Pulling Together,” *Perspectives on History*, 2012, 50:5–6.

³⁶ See Ori Preuss, *Bridging the Island: Brazilians’ Views of Spanish America and Themselves, 1865–1912* (Madrid/Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2011), a study of Brazilian national identity in Latin American context that demonstrates how transnational history engages not just “center and periphery” but also dynamics among Latin America countries themselves.

policies, cultural attitudes, and social practices, whether they emanate from without or within the nation. (Brazil's far-reaching recent affirmative action policies are a case in point.) Latin American governments have long harnessed science for concrete social goals and, while rarely successful in administering them in a totalistic manner, have nonetheless had an impact on their populations through forced relocation of minority groups, by the suppression or management of dissent, by delineating social roles for men and women, and by disciplining children and immigrants. Unequal access to power and resources has been both intensified and challenged in Latin America on the basis of theories of gender, class, and (especially) race. Even today, social hierarchies can be preserved or subverted on the basis of powerful ideas about individual and group capabilities and features.

A recent study underscores the relevance of our work as historians who explore trends in the human sciences. In 2013, psychological researchers at two U.S. universities reported that "commonly observed differences in how groups perceive racism may be explained by ignorance about—and even denial of—the extent of racism over the course of history." They further concluded that "individuals from the majority group may deny racism in the context of current events because they are ignorant about documented racism from the past."³⁷ Of course, as historians of science, we approach these conclusions carefully, thoughtfully assessing the psychologists' assumptions and methodology. And yet, doesn't this study highlight how the social sciences—fields that lay claim to knowledge about human behavior—are centrally critical to the human experience? Disciplines that claim objective knowledge about society have operational significance in our daily lives. They have the potential to promote segregation and stratification or empathetic and fair estimations of the human condition. The elaboration of their theories is shaped by the multiple locations, origins, and layers through which ideas pass before landing in textbooks, laws, and organizations. Now more than ever, we who study the social dimensions of science are on the path to recognizing more fully the complex, multinodal, and often overlapping transnational and local processes by which we view our neighbors and ourselves. That's one idea we shouldn't be ambivalent about.

³⁷ "Claims of 'Post-Racial' Society and Other Denials of Racism May Reflect Ignorance of History," press release, 15 Jan. 2013, Association for Psychological Science, www.psychologicalscience.org.