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Juan Guijarro y Verena Hitner

En el capitalismo cognitivo, la ciencia y la tecnología se han convertido en factores principales para un nuevo patrón de desarrollo intensivo en conocimientos vividos en la actualidad. Este nuevo patrón supone oportunidades, pero también desafíos para los países latinoamericanos. Por una parte, se abre la posibilidad de recuperar y producir conocimientos para impulsar formas alternativas de bienestar y convivencia; por otra parte, la tendencia a la concentración de conocimientos introduce nuevas desigualdades y una brecha cognitiva cada vez más amplia entre los que pueden acceder y disponer de las innovaciones y los que no.

En el año 2018 coinciden dos acontecimientos de especial relevancia para el debate sobre la ciencia y la tecnología en la región: por una parte, se cumplen cien años de los movimientos universitarios que desembocan en el Manifiesto de Córdoba, y cincuenta de los movimientos sociales de 1968; y, por otra, la UNESCO ha convocado la III Conferencia Regional de Educación Superior (CRES 2018). Pensar esos momentos históricos y el paralelo que se puede hacer de aquél contexto con el que vivimos hoy, es útil para entender el rol que ocupan los conocimientos, la ciencia, la tecnología y la innovación en el contexto actual de nuestras sociedades.

Así que, para reflexionar sobre los desafíos impuestos hoy a la producción de conocimientos en América Latina, es necesaria la consideración del rol que cumplen las universidades en términos de investigación, ciencia y tecnología. En este marco de ideas hay que reflexionar sobre cómo la reforma de Córdoba y los movimientos sociales de mayo de 1968, incidieron en la evolución de nuestros sistemas de producción y reproducción de conocimiento. En la literatura histórica existe un gran consenso sobre el hecho de que la reforma de la Universidad de Córdoba en 1918 introduce a las universidades latinoamericanas en la era moderna.

Su detonante fue una revuelta estudiantil en respuesta al cierre del Hospital Universitario (Sabina, 2008; Tünnermann, 1998, 2008). Para América Latina, el significado del Movimiento de Córdoba –que desde su inicio ambicionaba alcance regional,– emerge de la propia historia de la Universidad en la región.

El proceso de independencia de las colonias tuvo poco impacto sobre muchas de nuestras universidades que se resistían a las transformaciones más radicales¹. Era claramente el caso de la universidad de Córdoba que mantenía aún a inicios del siglo XX algunas de las características del período colonial, destacando sobretodo su vínculo con los jesuitas (Freitas Neto, 2011, n.p.) Así, en 1918, los estudiantes argentinos se levantaron contra lo que consideraban reminiscencias medievales en una sociedad moderna, primero en Córdoba –símbolo provincial del atraso–, después en el resto del país, lo que llevó al presidente de la república a autorizar una intervención de la universidad.

Para la mayoría de los autores, resulta evidente que la reforma de Córdoba representó mucho más que un simple movimiento universitario de la periferia. Fue un movimiento social amplio que aspiraba reorientar el desarrollo de toda América Latina.

Es importante destacar que justo por representar algo más que una simple reforma universitaria, el movimiento de Córdoba se anticipó a las diferentes olas de reforma que experimentó la universidad en el siglo XX. Además de exigir la modernización de los métodos de enseñanza a partir de la incorporación de la función de investigación y la preservación de la libertad académica, el movimiento de Córdoba reivindicaba también la participación de los alumnos, profesores y egresados en el cogobierno universitario, anticipando la demanda que emergería con fuerza mucho después con los movimientos de 1968.

1 Importante distinguir las rutas opuestas que tomaron las Universidades en la América Portuguesa y en la América Española. Por una parte, en la América portuguesa la fundación de instituciones de educación superior estuvo prohibida hasta la elevación del Brasil a reino unido en 1808, con ocasión de la llegada de la familia real portuguesa a la colonia, consecuencia de la expansión napoleónica en Europa. Esa restricción limitó la educación a los niveles más básicos de enseñanza, concentrando en Europa la formación de las elites locales. En la América española, con su estructura administrativa más autónoma que admitió precozmente la figura de los virreinos, se crearon las primeras universidades ya en el siglo XVI, como el caso de las inaugurales Real Pontificia Universidad del México y la Universidad de San Marcos en Lima, ambas de 1551. La fundación de universidades en sus colonias continuó a lo largo de todo el período colonial. Fue esa la situación de la Universidad de Córdoba fundada en 1621. Estas instituciones, como era de esperar, mantenían una fuerte conexión con la Iglesia católica y poseían una estructura de organización medieval semejante a la que predominaba en las universidades europeas antes de la reforma de Humboldt.

Esas reivindicaciones de Córdoba sirvieron para sustentar los debates sobre la educación superior como bien público y patrimonio social compartido, sea por acceder a ella o en lo concerniente al gobierno académico y su misión social. Todo eso hace que las ideas de aquel movimiento sean extremadamente actuales, en la medida que dialogan con las discusiones más contemporáneas de la relación entre producción y reproducción de conocimiento en la región, de contrabalancear las fuerzas privatistas y mercantilizadoras que orientaron la evolución de la Universidad en la región en el período neoliberal.

El innegable dinamismo que los sectores intensivos en conocimiento vienen presentando en los últimos años, hace imposible ignorar el impacto que los procesos de innovación ejercen en la economía y, en consecuencia, en el proceso de producción de conocimiento. En el caso de América Latina, ese proceso de producción de conocimiento depende efectivamente de la Universidad. Sin embargo, el predominio del paradigma liberal en los años 1990 significó el abandono de una visión estructural del desarrollo, que desvinculaba desvinculaba la producción nacional de la producción académica (Carlotto & Hitner, 2018).

Los años 2000 han representado, para parte de América del Sur, una inflexión política importante con efectos no despreciables sobre la ciencia, la tecnología y la innovación. Resultado de la elección en varios países de gobiernos “progresistas”, la región entró en un nuevo período de inserción internacional, con impactos importantes sobre la relación entre producción y reproducción de conocimiento. Las iniciativas de establecer un nuevo patrón de inserción internacional significaron una revalorización de la ciencia, la tecnología y la innovación.

Actualmente, el mundo se halla en una encrucijada civilizatoria provocada por los efectos de la globalización productiva, en un momento de transición del capitalismo industrial al cognitivo. Este fenómeno atiende a un patrón específico y asimétrico de inserción internacional. En este momento, replantear el lugar de la educación superior, en particular, y de los conocimientos de manera general, en las sociedades subdesarrolladas es fundamental.

Por todo lo señalado resulta necesario y urgente el debate sobre qué ciencias, qué tecnologías y qué innovación deben buscar los países de América Latina y el Caribe. En esta dirección el presente volumen temático de la Revista Educación Superior y Sociedad se centra en este debate, recopilando una selección de los mejores

trabajos de investigación presentados en el Encuentro Preparatorio Regional para la CRES 2018 “Los nuevos conocimientos emancipatorios desde Sur: repensando el centenario de la Reforma de Córdoba y el cincuentenario de mayo del ‘68”, realizado en Quito, Ecuador, entre el 15 y 17 de noviembre de 2017.

Los textos son diversos, como plural ha sido el debate del que surgieron, y para su lectura los hemos organizado en dos grandes divisiones: una primera sección refleja las ideas y perspectivas sobre los conocimientos en ALC, y reúne textos con una mirada crítica y de intervención teórica; y una segunda sección sobre nuevas prácticas cognitivas en la región, que refleja cómo se están decantando los debates sobre CTI mediante su aplicación en casos concretos.

La primera sección inicia con el texto de Ramírez, que apunta un diagnóstico incisivo sobre las nuevas formas de colonialismo que provoca la acumulación basada en CTI: el Norte geopolítico genera conocimientos y se beneficia de sus rentas a través de monopolios de propiedad intelectual, mientras que el Sur se vuelve dependiente de esos conocimientos. A partir de este escenario problemático, se plantea un debate a fondo sobre las alternativas y los caminos para generar conocimientos posibles y deseables para la región.

Debate que prosigue el texto de Hilgert y Carrillo quienes se enfocan en las concepciones de la autonomía universitaria y la libertad de cátedra, dos pilares de las universidades que siempre se pensaron como instancias centrales en la producción cognitiva. Centralidad que no siempre se adecúa a las circunstancias prácticas, como reflexionan los autores en el caso de su propia experiencia en un barrio periférico en Ecuador.

Tema que también cuestiona el texto de Altmann desde otra perspectiva más extensa, para examinar la transnacionalización de las teorías estudiando la conformación de las ciencias sociales en Ecuador en los años sesenta, demostrando que nunca hay imitación acrítica, sino complejos procesos de subsunción que bajo las etiquetas al uso revela teorías previas y valores no teóricos que dan cuenta de una “recreación rebelde”.

La noción de transnacionalización teórica también se vincula con el texto de Antonio Malo, que reflexiona sobre la construcción discursiva del concepto de naturaleza bajo el signo del discurso dominante de la economía de mercado, exponiendo mecanismos

de dominio y explotación de carácter utilitario. Asunto que es de suma importancia a la vista de que los países de la región tienen un vasto patrimonio cognitivo en su biodiversidad, que está siendo silenciosamente expoliada por la lógica de la expropiación biopirata.

La segunda sección, como se mencionó, se concentra en los estudios de caso de prácticas concretas de los nuevos conocimientos generados en ALC. En esta dirección el texto de Perales propone, a partir de una exploración amplia y a profundidad, un modelo de gestión del capital intelectual para valorar los activos intangibles en la Escuela Ciencias de la Tierra Núcleo Bolívar de la Universidad de Oriente (Venezuela). La novedad del estudio consiste en presentar un enfoque integral y dinámico enmarcado en las dimensiones del conocimiento organizativo, que puede ser replicado en otros casos.

Interés práctico que también comparte la investigación de Ura, Pedroza, Torrealba Febres-Cordero y Buenaño Alviarez, quienes estudian la ocupación territorial de la Región de los Valles del Tuy (Venezuela), que deriva en varios conflictos socio-espaciales que los autores, partiendo de una discusión que impugna el desarrollismo y reivindica un nuevo paradigma, el buen vivir, propone superar mediante un plan de acción que postula a la agricultura urbana como principal nodo alternativo para el equilibrio de los sistemas socio-ecológicos de la región. Alternativa que puede servir de inspiración para otros casos en la región.

Se trata de textos diversos, pero no necesariamente heterogéneos: hay un horizonte de expectativas compartidas que propone la búsqueda común de alternativas teóricas y prácticas para proyectar a América Latina y el Caribe como región potencia de los conocimientos. Por todo lo cual se trata aquí de aportes para un debate en proceso, que esperamos también pueda alimentar esta publicación, frente a escenarios de progresiva relevancia de las ciencias y tecnologías para nuestras sociedades.

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Localization of global scientific Knowledge - or: how global Theories became local Buzzwords

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:: ABSTRACT

The production of scientific knowledge is organized around a series of transnationally relevant theories. Neglect or ignorance of those theories generally leads to a rejection of the correspondent studies by fellow scientists. The production of transnationally relevant theories happens mainly in the Global North and is influenced heavily by the institutional frameworks and the academic culture there. The process of transnationalization of a given theory is therefore an act of globalization of one specific locality – the theory on power by Max Weber carries in it German values and ideals of the early 20th century. Transnationalized theories are not simply accepted in other countries, but go through a process of localization by the agents and institutions there. They are translated into the local culture and the local academic sphere. The values in Weber’s theory are connected to local values and by this, the theory as such is resignified.

This text will study the process of localization of transnational theories in social sciences in the Ecuadorian university. Social sciences in Ecuador have a history as academic discipline since the 1960s and are marked by several breaks considering the use of theory. The argument here will be that the localization of transnational theories happens in part in the form of buzzword-like categories, such as “North American sociology” or “positivism” and in part via subsummation under already existing theories and non-theoretic values. The result was –at least for a certain time– a contradictory and rebellious re-creation of theory that is the base for nowadays theory-building in Ecuador.

Keywords: Localization, Social Sciences, Sociology, Ecuador

:: RESUMEN

La producción de conocimiento científico se organiza en torno a una serie de teorías transnacionalmente relevantes. El descuido o la ignorancia de esas teorías generalmente conducen a un rechazo de los estudios correspondientes por parte de otros científicos. La producción de teorías transnacionales relevantes ocurre principalmente en el Norte Global y está fuertemente influenciada por los marcos institucionales y la cultura académica allí. El proceso de transnacionalización de una teoría dada es, por lo tanto, un acto de globalización de una localidad específica: la teoría del poder de Max Weber lleva en sí los valores e ideales alemanes de principios del siglo XX. Las teorías transnacionales no son simplemente aceptadas en otros países, sino que pasan por un proceso de localización por parte de los agentes y las instituciones. Se traducen en la cultura local y la esfera académica local. Los valores en la teoría de Weber están conectados a los valores locales y por esto, la teoría como tal se resignifica.

Este texto estudiará el proceso de localización de las teorías transnacionales en las ciencias sociales en la universidad ecuatoriana. Las ciencias sociales en Ecuador tienen una historia como disciplina académica desde la década de 1960 y están marcadas por varios descansos considerando el uso de la teoría. El argumento aquí será que la localización de las teorías transnacionales ocurre, en parte, en la forma de categorías parecidas a palabras de moda, como “sociología norteamericana” o “positivismo” y en parte a través de la subsuminación bajo teorías ya existentes y valores no teóricos. El resultado fue, al menos por un tiempo determinado, una recreación contradictoria y rebelde de la teoría que es la base para el desarrollo de la teoría actual en Ecuador.

Palabras claves: Localización, ciencias sociales, sociología, Ecuador

:: RÉSUMÉ

La production de connaissances scientifiques est organisée autour d'une série de théories transnationales pertinentes. La négligence ou l'ignorance de ces théories conduit généralement à un rejet des études correspondantes par des collègues scientifiques. La production de théories pertinentes au niveau transnational a lieu principalement dans le Nord global et est fortement influencée par les cadres institutionnels et la culture académique. Le processus de transnationalisation d'une théorie donnée est donc un acte de globalisation d'une localité spécifique - la théorie du pouvoir de Max Weber porte en elle les valeurs et les idéaux allemands du début du XXe siècle. Les théories transnationales ne sont pas simplement acceptées dans d'autres pays, mais passent par un processus de localisation par les agents et les institutions. Ils sont traduits dans la culture locale et dans la sphère académique locale. Les valeurs de la théorie de Weber sont liées aux valeurs locales

et, par conséquent, la théorie en tant que telle est resignifiée.

Ce texte étudiera le processus de localisation des théories transnationales en sciences sociales dans l'université équatorienne. Les sciences sociales en Equateur ont une histoire en tant que discipline académique depuis les années 1960 et sont marquées par plusieurs pauses considérant l'utilisation de la théorie. L'argument ici sera que la localisation des théories transnationales se produit en partie sous la forme de catégories à la mode, comme la «sociologie nord-américaine» ou le «positivisme» et en partie par subsumation sous des théories déjà existantes et des valeurs non théoriques. Le résultat fut - au moins pendant un certain temps - une recreation contradictoire et rebelle de la théorie qui est à la base de la construction de la théorie actuelle en Equateur.

Mots-clés: Localisation, Sciences sociales, Sociologie, Ecuador

:: RESUMO

A produção de conhecimento científico é organizada em torno de uma série de teorias transnacionais relevantes. A negligência ou ignorância dessas teorias geralmente leva a uma rejeição dos estudos correspondentes por colegas cientistas. A produção de teorias transnacionais relevantes ocorre principalmente no Norte Global e é fortemente influenciada pelos quadros institucionais e a cultura acadêmica lá. O processo de transnacionalização de uma determinada teoria é, portanto, um ato de globalização de uma determinada localidade - a teoria sobre o poder de Max Weber contém valores e ideais alemães do início do século XX. As teorias transnacionalizadas não são simplesmente aceitas em outros países, mas passam por um processo de localização pelos agentes e instituições lá. Eles são traduzidos para a cultura local e a esfera acadêmica local. Os valores na teoria de Weber estão conectados a valores locais e, por isso, a teoria como tal é resignificada.

Este texto estudará o processo de localização de teorias transnacionais em ciências sociais na universidade equatoriana. As ciências sociais no Equador têm uma história como disciplina acadêmica desde a década de 1960 e são marcadas por várias pausas considerando o uso da teoria. O argumento aqui será que a localização das teorias transnacionais ocorre em parte na forma de categorias semelhantes a palavras-chave, como “sociologia norte-americana” ou “positivismo” e, em parte, por subsumação sob teorias já existentes e valores não-teóricos. O resultado foi - pelo menos por um certo tempo - uma recriação contraditória e rebelde da teoria que é a base para a construção da teoria de hoje em dia no Equador.

Palavras-chave: Localização, Ciências Sociais, Sociologia, Ecuador

:: Introduction

The globalization of science –including social sciences– is a common place nowadays. However, the term ‘globalization’ is usually not reflected upon. More than a general tendency that is to be found in the most diverse fields of social action, it is a process that is actively constructed by the actors in those fields. Social science is actively globalized, one local knowledge –the European social sciences around 1900 and before– are turned into universal and global knowledge, forcing other, similar knowledges into a dialogue defined by the recently globalized European knowledge. This never happens outside of power struggles. Some forms of knowledge are imposed, others are silenced. This is visible in the revival of certain thinkers, even in Europe itself – think about Gabriel Tarde or, to a certain degree, Georg Simmel. This construction of global social sciences implies efforts of localization that happen everywhere, including the places where the global knowledge is created: how are global and universal theories fitted into a local context?

The most important element of globalization and universalization of scientific knowledge are theories. Combined with methods and concrete academic styles in texts and presentations, theories are what is localized if global social sciences are localized. Other elements, such as institutional spaces, research cultures, work ethos, etc., are generally taken for granted – even if they correspond to a high degree with the theories they produce. One argument here will be that the localized theories co-produce through the process of localization local institutions. They create the space where they can work. Localization, therefore, changes both the localizing agent as the theory that is localized.

This text will discuss the process of localization of global social sciences in one special case, Ecuadorian social sciences. While there were university courses in sociology since the 1910s, sociology and political sciences only became proper academic institutions with their own degrees in the 1960s. (Campuzano, 2005, p. 407, 419) It is a sociology behind its time. This is why the social sciences of the 1960s has to engage in processes of localization on a scale that would define its identity and culture for the time to come. Here, these processes of localization, roughly between 1960 and 2000, will be traced by an analysis of the programmatic texts produced by the main actors of localization, that is, sociologists of the School for Sociology and Political Sciences of the Central University of Ecuador. In order to do so, first (chapter 2), a theoretical framework of globalization and localization of knowledge will be elaborated. This will be applied, in chapter 3, to the development of social sciences in Ecuador. Part of this application will be the search for mechanisms of localization, namely, (part A) Marxism as theoretical framework and (part B) *ensayismo* as academic style.

:: Social Sciences between Globalization and Localization

Science as such and social sciences in our case can be understood as a discursive complex that is necessarily global. It consists of “ongoing interactions between ideas, discourses, institutions and actors.” (Eleveld, 2016, p. 75) What defines social sciences, that is, theories, methods, and concrete research, moves in these interactions between universities, researchers, journals, and so on. Theories and methods can be considered as ideas that are “non-stable elements in a discursive field in which a broader network of power relations is at play.” (Eleveld, 2016, p. 75) They can be stable only through a temporarily fixation by articulation in discursive formations (Eleveld, 2016, p. 75), understood as “regularity in dispersion” (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 105) that establishes “differential positions” (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 109). This is where meaning is somewhat stable: they are “privileged discursive points of this partial fixation, nodal points.” (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 112) In the context of the argument developed here, theories and academic styles will be considered discursive nodal points. That implies that, on the one hand, theories articulate “the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity”. (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 113) There is always more than what a theory can represent. On the other hand, nodal points articulate a given discursive formation with other, external discourses that put the given formation in danger. (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 146) Theories, therefore, are never stable and never only exist in a given discursive field or scientific discipline. At the same time, they can become or articulate floating signifiers from other formations. (Eleveld, 2016, p. 78) Academic theories can be political, political ideas can become academic theories. Their function is not something derived from the theory itself – it consists in providing differences to other theories and other discourses.

The discursive formations that are the social sciences correspond with culture, institutions and structures that make certain expressions possible and others not, for instance, universities, research networks or academic journals. Those institutions are always local, yet produce globality – even if Max Weber was just one man with a series of publications, that is, he was quite local, he was globalized as a classic by teaching standards in universities, by research projects, by peer review, and so on. The problem is, therefore, how globality is produced in the first place and how it is localized later on. In this, the institutional setting should never be forgotten:

“Broad cultural and organizational environments provide templates for local settings, structuring these in standardized and sometimes isomorphic ways. Supported or constrained by these templates, local social organizational structures arise and are stabilized by their environmentally provided exoskeletons. Sometimes, the conformity to the environment and the organizational forms it provides is superficial, with local reali-

ties decoupled from the wider standards, and commonly, the standards themselves vary and make room for much local variation. [...] A common idea is that the variation is a product of strategic action by local participants. But in other cases, variation is thought to result from differences in linkages to environmental institutions, which themselves vary.” (Meyer, 2014, p. 413)

Institutions, organizations and local actors are the force of localization of global structures and ideas. At the same time, the global shapes “the interests and customs of local people and worlds.” (Meyer, 2014, p. 414) The way localization happens is pre-structured in some way by globality. You can be different locally – but you have to present your local difference in a globally understandable way. The same applies on a much more material level: globality “forces reconstruction of local organizational settings [because] the local participants and settings reacting to globalization are themselves legitimated, supported, and constrained by the emerging rules of the wider system”. (Meyer, 2014, p. 414) Following Meyer, globalization is related to a global expansion of organizations, leading to a reduction of the authority of traditional authorities. This new organizations –as well as the discourses they engage in– become increasingly rationalized, leading to a strengthening of “formal managerial organizational structures”. (Meyer, 2014, p. 415-416)

The application or implantation of globalized ideas, norms, theories, but also organizational structures in a given place can be considered “norm diffusion that stresses the agency role of norm-takers through a dynamic congruence-building process called localization”. (Acharya, 2004, p. 240) This is how “the translation of global norms into local settings” (Meyer, 2014, p. 420) can be understood. Localization not necessarily happens through local actors that are part of the global structures and ideology (Meyer, 2014, p. 419), it rather is “the active construction (through discourse, framing, grafting, and cultural selection) of foreign ideas by local actors, which results in the former developing significant congruence with local beliefs and practices.” (Acharya, 2004, p. 245) Those local actors must act as translators, knowing both the local and the global level. Their job is to build “congruence between transnational norms (including norms previously institutionalized in a region) and local beliefs and practices.” (Acharya, 2004, p. 241) This happens not through a simple reinterpretation of global ideas, but goes a step further, including “more complex processes of reconstitution to make an outside norm congruent with a preexisting local normative order. It is also a process in which the role of local actors is more crucial than that of outside actors.” (Acharya, 2004, p. 243-244) The local actors involved in localization need to have sufficient influence and credibility to be able to implement global norms. This happens especially if they are seen “as upholders of local values and identity and not simply ‘agents’ of outside forces or actors and [if] they are part of a local epistemic community that could claim

a record of success in prior normative debates.” (Acharya, 2004, p. 248) These local actors “localize a normative order and [their] main task is to legitimize and enhance that order by building congruence with outside ideas.” (Acharya, 2004, p. 249) This implies institutional changes, for instance “by functional or membership expansion and [the creation of] new policy instruments to pursue its new tasks or goals without supplanting its original goals and institutional arrangements.” (Acharya, 2004, p. 253) On the long run, localization can allow for fundamental change of ideas, discourses and institutions. So, localization does not happen out of global force only. Globalization can be localizing and “does not necessarily or even frequently imply homogenization or Americanization.” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 17) Instead, “[l]ocal agents also promote norm diffusion by actively borrowing and modifying transnational norms in accordance with their preconstructed normative beliefs and practices.” (Acharya, 2004, p. 269) The localized idea can look completely different than what its global origin looks like.

It is not so much about what happens at the global level – rather, what should concern us is the local level and the conscious acts of localization by some kind of local elite. Locality has to be understood as relational construct (Appadurai, 1996, p. 178), it “is always emergent from the practices of local subjects in specific neighborhoods.” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 198) Local knowledge is therefore the “knowledge of how to produce and reproduce locality under conditions of anxiety and entropy, social wear and flux, ecological uncertainty and cosmic volatility, and the always present quirkiness of kinsmen, enemies, spirits, and quarks of all sorts.” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 181) At the local level, contexts and local subjects are produced that allow, in turn, the re-construction of locality. The production and reproduction of locality is in constant danger. It has to be maintained against the tendency of the nation-state and other non-local actors to produce localities that fit its political project, against globalization understood as rationalization, and other odds. (Appadurai, 1996, p. 187-191)

Social sciences in a given place are product of efforts of localization of a global knowledge. Global theories, methods, academic cultures, are translated into locally relevant or useful local theories, methods, academic cultures by credible and powerful local elites. The act of localization –if successful– leads to an institutionalization of the localized ideas – in favour, of course, of the elites themselves. As the actors of localization are the first and only experts in the localized knowledge, they have the power to define what this localized knowledge actually means. While there are many aspects of localization of knowledge, certain parts, such as theories or academic styles, are nodal points in the discursive and institutional construction of academic disciplines. They are the main matter that must be localized in order to build up credible local social sciences.

This long-term effort of localization must be studied in detail to understand the relation between local and global social sciences. It is obvious that this relations-

hip is not free of power – however, this power has to be studied on different levels. “The ‘social construction’ of knowledge is a collective work through time. How different knowledge formations are related to each other in the world created by empire –in opposition, in hybridity, in symbiosis, in subordination– can only be established empirically.” (Connell et al., 2017, p. 26) On the global level, that is, concerning globalized knowledge, this construction of academic or scientific knowledge happened in a global system of power.

“A global division of labour was created in which the periphery served as a source of raw material, while the metropole was the site of data accumulation, methodology and theoretical processing. This structure is sustained in the post-colonial world by differences of wealth and institutional support, but also by the practices of knowledge workers in the periphery.” (Connell et al., 2017, p. 25)

Different takes on science are not impossible, but their possibilities of success are pre-defined by their positioning on the global level. In other terms, a ‘southern’ sociology cannot exist outside the global sociology. “Epistemologies of the South exist in complex but strong relations with the North, not in isolation nor in rupture. These relations are practical, significantly institutionalized, and massive. They are also ridden by tensions, and constantly in change.” (Connell et al., 2017, p. 29)

Playground and product of discursive developments, for instance, related to theories, are institutions, including organizations such as universities and “also professional and scientific societies, the journals and conferences through which knowledge workers meet and circulate knowledge, the publishing corporations [...], and a host of other means of connection ranging from the Internet to indigenous practices of access and transmission.” (Connell et al., 2017, p. 28) If we understand institutions as “the incentive structure of a society [and] humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction” (North, 1994, p. 359-360), the institutional background allows for certain strategies of localization of global knowledge and globalization of local knowledge, forbidding others – and, at the same time, is formed by localization and globalization. Organizations, such as universities, move on a field defined by institutions. “If institutions are the rules of the game, organizations and their entrepreneurs are the players.” (North, 1994, p. 361) The institutions of a given society further or limit the creation and the concrete form of organizations: “The organizations that come into existence will reflect the opportunities provided by the institutional matrix.” (North, 1994, p. 361) That also means that institutions are not led by social responsibility, “rather they, or at least the formal rules, are created to serve the interests of those with the bargaining power to create new rules.” (North, 1994, p. 360-361) One of the results is path dependence, understood as “the powerful influence of the past on the present and future.” (North, 1994, p. 364)

An organization, for instance a School for Sociology, is built up within the rules of institutions. Once it comes into existence, the way it acts determines until a certain point the concrete form of the institution and with it the possibility of future actions. Or, in closer relation to the argument of this text: localization of global theories happens in the framework of local institutions – you cannot localize anything at any time, nor frame it locally in any way you want. If localization finally succeeds, that is, if theories and other elements are embedded in local experiences and strategies, this results in a change of the institution that restricts the way of future localizations.

Theories and scientific practices as nodal points in global social sciences become local nodal points, connecting discourse in local academia, while, at the same time, they are connectors to the global nodal points. They –just as methodologies– “are important in understanding relations between knowledge formations.” (Connell et al., 2017, p. 28) To come back to the earlier example: the localization of Weber’s thought can be central in the local formation of sociology. Think of Parsons’ lecture of Weber that marked the lecture of Weber in the US and elsewhere for decades. This would be a discursive nodal point, embedded in institutional structures – Parsons-centred US-sociology between the 1930s and the 1970s. At the same time, however, this localized theory is connected to the global level. This particular interpretation of Weber is in constant debates with the interpretation of Weberians in Germany, France or elsewhere, always in struggles for control of what the ‘global Weber’ would be – certainly a globalized form of a local theory, but which?

:: Ecuadorian Social Sciences as Localization

Social sciences appeared relatively late in Ecuador. While there existed a chair of sociology as part of the Department of Jurisprudence of the Central University of Ecuador –the oldest and one of the biggest universities of the country– since 1915 (Campuzano, 2005, p. 407), it was not until 1960 when these courses close to philosophy of law were turned into a proper degree-course. (Jácome, 2005, p. 135-136) In this year, the first School for Sociology and Political Sciences of Ecuador was created at the Central University in Quito. As the first sociology –between 1915 and 1960– did not build up a set of theories and methods that could inspire an institutional sociology (Campuzano, 2005, p. 426-427), the creation of the first institutional space meant the creation of sociology in Ecuador as such. The background of this creation was, on the one hand, international pressure, especially in international conferences of sociology, like the third conference of the Latin-American Association of Sociology³⁷ that took place in the Central University of Ecuador in 1956. (Campuzano, 2005, p. 439) On the other hand, it was the direct support through two key figures in the university

37 In Spanish: *Asociación Latinoamericana de Sociología* (ALAS).

itself: Manuel Agustín Aguirre as vice-rector and –later– rector of the university and Francisco J. Salgado as dean of the Department of Jurisprudence. Especially Aguirre, at that time general secretary of the Socialist Party, pushed for a non-positivistic social science compromised with a dialectical treatment of the historical totality and a political relationship between students and peasants and workers in order to prepare a socialist revolution. (Polo, 2012, p. 44-45) The first School of Sociology and Political Sciences in the early 1960s was marked by a lack of distinction from the rest of its department – professors and staff had been part of the School of Law before. Therefore, the teaching was rather far away from actual sociology, it could be considered part of the ‘lawyers sociology’ that marked Latin America’s social thought in the first part of the 20th century. (Jácome, 2005, p. 137) Following dean Salgado, social sciences at that moment were thought to “train academically the administrators of the state.” (Campuzano, 2005, p. 440)³⁸ This did change after an agreement between the Central University and the University of Pittsburgh in 1963³⁹ that led to a reform of the School, the inclusion of Anthropology as a degree course and a re-orientation of teaching towards US-American structural-functionalism. However, this first academic sociology was never properly localized. The agreement was considered an act of cultural imperialism and ended as reaction to students protest in 1968. The lasting rejection of structural-functionalism as a whole, put simply and without much differentiation as ‘North-American sociology’, could be considered one major result of this first attempt to create a sociology. This happens at the same time a ‘scientific sociology’, based on research and connected to some of the different streams of sociological theory is established. (Jácome, 2005, p. 137) It was not a rejection out of scientific reasons but out of political ones (Campuzano, 2005, p. 442-443), marking one important logic for future localizations of global social sciences. However, the new teaching plans that were in place until 1973 (Jácome, 2005, p. 137) did not solve the problem of theoretical vacuum in the School for Sociology and Political Science. This vacuum did, instead, attract a series of young thinkers of the left with a background in philosophy and literature. (Campuzano, 2005, p. 443) The older courses that were related to law were ended and proper professors, not associated with the law school, was installed. (Campuzano, 2005, p. 444-445) As long-time member of the School, Rafael Quintero, remembers: “Still without major analytical instruments, Sociology and Political Sciences as nascent university professions, arose looking inside in relation to hopes to solve problems, but looking outside in relation to the theoretic development.” (Quintero, 2005, p. 6-7)

38 All translations by the author.

39 This agreement included technical and infrastructure support, such as the equipment of libraries and laboratories, and a small number of scholarships for professors and students. (Campuzano, 2005, p. 442)

Just during the period discussed until now, the number of students in the Central University did increase considerable. During the 1950s, the number increased by 55%, from 1963 to 1973, it grew 8,7 times (from 4.091 to 34.797). (Campuzano, 2005, p. 430) This extreme expansion of higher education led also to an expansion of the number of university teachers, attracting young intellectuals to the universities. In our case, many of these young intellectuals came from the *tzántzicos*⁴⁰, a literary movement of the 1960s in Quito that favoured political and cultural radicalism and the critique towards capitalism and modernity. Intellectuals and *tzántzicos* such as Agustín Cueva and Alejandro Moreano (Polo, 2012, p. 42-43) participated in the re-creation of the School for Sociology and Political Sciences since the late 1960s. It was there where they found the proper surrounding for their project of a profound critique of society, state and culture. (Polo, 2012, p. 47-48) The result was a teaching program that –with few changes– was applied between 1973 and 1997. It was defined by a political, potentially revolutionary, vision on social sciences, centred around the study of political economy.⁴¹ As such, the new program responded to the tendencies in social sciences in Latin America, especially the Southern Cone. (Jácome, 2005, p. 138) At the same time, there was an absence of courses that could introduce the students to sociological or political theory or social thought in its diversity – it was clearly a Marxist program of study that ignored most other theoretical visions. (Jácome, 2005, p. 139) In fact, the Marxism in place did only represent some of the different branches of Marxist thought. Ecuadorian sociology, at that point, “is nothing else than a variation, in some aspects paradoxical, of this theoretical stream.” (Campuzano, 2005, p. 403) This did not necessarily present itself in the same manner to the actors at the time. Daniel Granda, several times director of the School for Sociology and Political Sciences, presents the teaching as based on theoretical material (in three areas: political theory, national problems and methods and techniques of social research) that later on in the study program is completed by concrete research. (Granda, 1977, p. 216) Later authors insist that research was never professionalized within the School for Sociology and even rejected by several of the central persons. (Campuzano, 2005, p. 432) However, already at that time the lack of institutionalization of research, for instance in an institute for research, but also considering funding, was seen as a major problem. (Granda, 1977, p. 218) Research was weak, due to a lack in research politics and funding. (Jácome, 2005, p. 126) Also, a considerable time gap between research and publication was a major problem in this regard, Quintero mentions several years of delay. As a result, he highlights the influence of research in teaching and the informal discussions at the School. (Quintero, 1977, p. 139)

40 Referring to the shrunken heads of the Shuar-people, a ritual that gives warriors the power of the one they killed in battle.

41 The official Areas of study were at that time the Area of Historical Materialism, the Area of Theory of Methods, the Area of Political Economy, the Area of History of Social Thought and an Area of Methods and Techniques of Research that was yet to be properly established (Quintero, 1977, p. 137-138).

In 1975, a second Department for Sociology and Political Sciences is created in Quito⁴², at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador⁴³ (PUCE). It was based on ongoing research at that university, funded by the Ford Foundation and CLAC-SO⁴⁴ and focused on rural development, economic growth and public policy. (Jácome, 2005, p. 128) The creation of the Department was backed by then rector Hernán Malo, a progressive Jesuit. This project was weakened by the resignation of Malo and the crisis of his political and academic project in the 1980s. This leads slowly to a rather professional approach to sociology, directed, especially, towards the growing sector of NGOs in the country. At the same time, the social sciences at the Central University suffer from the notable weakening of the labour movement that is increasingly absorbed by state structures. The possibility to reflect these changes in an autonomous manner had never been developed. Now, that the direct input by social movements ceased, the School for Sociology found itself without connection to the social reality. This was also due to the lack of a proper research policy or established research activities. (Campuzano, 2005, p. 452-454) Part of this problem was the absence of funding and other support for research both inside and outside the Central University. (Jácome, 2005, p. 129) This general crisis led to a reduction in the number of students, a de-actualization of teaching and a further weakening of the already weak research. (Jácome, 2005, p. 119) Only in the 1990s, a re-adaption is undertaken with a series of reforms both at the PUCE and the Central University. These reforms were more of a legitimation of changes already underway, but can be considered part of the attempt to organize the diversity of theoretical and ideological position of the professors. (Jácome, 2005, p. 142-143) While Marxism remained the central and organizing stream of thought at the Central University, other theories were increasingly represented. (Jácome, 2005, p. 131) This did not affect the lack of internal organization and the theoretical and methodological weakness of research. (Jácome, 2005, p. 146)

During this whole time, the School for Sociology and Political Sciences at the Central University marked what social sciences meant in Ecuador. It was the main agent of localization of global sociological theories and academic practices that until the 1960s were hardly present in the country. The first stage of localization, the collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh, has to be researched yet. The second stage, the creation of a local sociology in an institutional context led, above all, by critical writers and intellectuals around the *tzántzicos* was a successful localization, based on local credibility of the actors in question

42 During the 1970s, there were Schools for Social Sciences at the universities of Machala, Cuenca, Guayaquil and in Quito. Quito being then and until today the strongest place for social sciences.

43 In Spanish: *Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador*. A private university, run by Jesuits.

44 Latin-American Council of Social Sciences (in Spanish: *Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales*), a non-governmental organization that furthers Social Sciences in the region.

and leading to the creation of organizational and institutional structures that formed the conditions of future localizations of global social sciences until today. This is recognized by one of the main actors at that time:

“Very soon, the School became a condition of the institutional development of Sociology and Politics as sciences, in our country, making possible that, in the context of the Ecuadorian reality, both theoretical concerns and the knowledges reached in the international and national scope of the comprehension of the Ecuadorian and Latin-American reality are diffused and developed. In this sense, the School has been in charge to create the conditions for the development of the Ecuadorian sociological thought through different means.” (Quintero, 2005, p. 7)

This successful localization happened through a series of concrete strategies that were discussed between the actors of that time. Those strategies were related to the necessity to create a unique position for the sociology to be created. And this was achieved through delimitations to other possibilities to do sociology. The main factor here was the political compromise in Marxist terms and the rejection of ‘bourgeois’ sociology. This can be understood as culturalism, insofar as the concrete form of localization of global social theories, practices and methods is marked by self-consciousness “about identity, culture, and, heritage” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 15) within visions of a different nation-state. Two of the major strategies of localization in this context are Marxism as a both theoretical and political-practical background for social sciences and *ensayismo*, a specific style in communicating in science, as a practice. Both strategies are product of power struggles, both went openly against the rejected forms of social sciences. And both can be understood as nodal points that articulate (1) the production of local social sciences, (2) the relation of local social sciences with the rest of local society, including the construction of organizations and institutions, and (3) the relation of local social sciences to other social sciences, both on a local and global level.

1. Marxism as Localization

The social sciences created since the late 1960s in Ecuador were born in contraposition to the social sciences of the previous period and the openly ideological and positivistic juxtaposition of knowledges and ideas that marked state institutions and teaching in schools at that time. (Jácome, 2005, p. 139-141) The declared political and academic project was to “make possible the defiance and serious critique to the pseudo-scientific thought of the bourgeois sociology” (Quintero, 1977, p. 129) created to defend the interests of the ruling class. (Quintero, 1976, p. 13) This pseudo-science impeded the development of a scientific knowledge of society, “mystifying, distorting and hiding the real gears of the functioning of our society.” (Quintero, 1976, p. 14) It produced both

the way reality in general and society in concrete were understood and the way social sciences were made, "closing itself in a determinism to point out that the attempts to challenge the established order are fundamentally irrational." (Quintero, 1976, p. 14) The project of critique and destruction of 'bourgeois sociology' was undertaken in complete consciousness that the university itself was "nothing else but the space of the circulation of a class-knowledge produced inside of the 'theoretical' matrix of the dominant ideology." (Moreano, 1984, p. 277) The critique of the place where critique would be possible was an important part of this project. The solution was that "to question the dominant ideologies in the university means to question the teaching that is done there." (Quintero, 1977, p. 129) This was understood as the "natural scenario of the fight" (Quintero, 1977, p. 129) of the School for Sociology and Political Sciences. The main problem detected was the organization of teaching and research in isolated academic disciplines as an obstacle for the analysis of the social totality. The sociology that was a first product of this general organization was neo-positivist, trivial and "classifies' our reality without developing rigorous rules of thought." (Quintero, 1977, p. 131) Against it, the critical movement in the social sciences had to be strengthened. This critical sociology is defined by a constant application to the historical conditions of the country and a rigorous and rational methodology. Therefore, its discourse "is not only not ideological, but also built in function of the de-mystification and destruction of every bourgeois pseudo-scientific sociology, born in virtue of the defence of the interests of class and domination." (Quintero, 1977, p. 132) It goes against the immediate previous sociology in the School for Sociology and Political Sciences, until 1967/68 working as "a School of Public Law badly amalgamated with an ideological stream within the bourgeois sociology." (Moreano, 1984, p. 278) In this pseudo-scientific sociology, empirical methods and demographic analysis were preferred, while revolutionary thought was only integrated "inside the liberal matrix of ideological pluralism." (Moreano, 1984, p. 278) The critical teaching of this branch of sociological thought in the new School was one of the strategies to counter it. (Granda, 1977, p. 217)

Marxism was the way this fight was undertaken. The particular view on Marxism was the ground for an understanding of social sciences, "where the object is identified with the subject, which implies [...] a compromise with this object, as we are creators of a knowledge of which we are part" (Quintero, 1976, p. 13). This subject was the working class. (Quintero, 1976, p. 14) The central position of the School for Sociology and Political Sciences at the Central University in the social sciences in the whole country is explained by one of its actors as the result of the triumph of a Marxist movement first in the School and later in the rest of social sciences in the country. (Moreano, 1984, p. 279) This was the critical sociology pushed by the School since the early 1970s. (Quintero, 1977, p. 129) The most relevant theoretical inspiration for this attempt was the Marx lecture of Louis Althusser, localized in Ecuador through several of the founding figures

of the School that had studied in France. Besides Althusser, the reception of Marx was tied to the reception of the work of Poulantzas, Gramsci, Marcuse and Goldman. On a Latin-American level, important influences were Marini, Dos Santos, Gunder Frank and José Nun. This was a considerable advance, given that Marxism was not taught through the notorious manuals of the Communist Parties, but by the lecture of Marx himself and recognized Marxists. (Jácome, 2005, p. 139-140) The classical left was considered non-Marxist, given that it preferred Lenin or Mao, and positivistic and not critical. (Moreano, in: Kingman & Burbano, 2004, p. 100) However, important influences within Marxist thought such as the Schools of Frankfurt and Birmingham and Gramsci were integrated only later. (Campuzano, 2005, p. 446) This was visible not only in the classes but also in conferences and other events realized in the School and especially in the academic journal *Ciencias Sociales*, published since 1976. The first editions of this journal were dedicated to establishing what a leftist or Marxist social sciences could be in the university of that time. (Campuzano, 2005, p. 446) However, most of the debates did not engage in conceptual refinements –what would have been a starting ground for further localizations–, instead, they became a struggle “over the correct comprehension of what ‘Marx really meant to say.’” (Campuzano, 2005, p. 447) In this sense, the lack of teaching and research in theories and schools of thought not connected to Marxism, such as functional-structuralism, interpretative approaches, micro-sociology (Jácome, 2005, p. 139), is part of a systematic localization of social sciences as Marxist social sciences that created an institution which allowed certain further localizations –of some branches of Marxist thought– but not others. Historical materialism was the main articulation of social sciences at that time and in this place. (Granda, 1977, p. 216; Polo, 2012, p. 138-139) In this sense, research was connected to this particular end: “All those works have [...] one only objective: to wake, through their publication and knowledge, the class-consciousness of workers.” (Granda, 1977a, p. 219-220)

But this close relationship to Marxism did not remain on an academic level, where an international articulation with Marxist sociology, for instance, could be achieved. Instead, this Marxist thought was articulated to the local reality, leaving scientific discussions behind quite openly. It was about solidarity with the fight against fascism and imperialism and about “supporting the interests of the working class.” (Quintero, 1977, p. 129) The function of the School was not only to create scientific knowledge, but also to further “the revolutionary social forces, the working class and the masses of the people.” (Moreano, 1984, p. 280) Thus, the university, at least in certain parts, turned into “the university of the left.” (Campuzano, 2005, p. 446) In the case of the School for Sociology and Political Science, the fight against ‘bourgeois sociology’ and a university that reproduces the ideas of the dominant class led to a structural integration of leftist organizations. This did not only include the institutional support for leftist organizations (Quintero, 1977, p. 129), but went far beyond:

“The academic development of the School has been subject, since several years, to the political orientation of the organizations of the left. They have attempted to criticize the contents and structure of the plans of study with the objective that in our academic centre an advances thought is taught and that here the possibility of an analysis of the reality we live in is confirmed.” (Quintero, 1977, p. 137)

This connection to leftist organizations had the advantage that the School for Sociology and Political Sciences was immune to later attempts of a notorious Maoist organization that did run the major part of the university since the late 1970s to take control of it. (Campuzano, 2005, p. 439) However, the political influence was so important that the directors of the School had to make clear several times that it was not “a school for political cadres” (Quintero, 1977, p. 131) or even “a political party”. (Moreano, 1984, p. 280) This influence started in relation to the workers movement. The strikes of 1971 and 1974 and the broad participation of students and professors in them were major factors in the transformation of the teaching program, pushing for Marxist theory. (Moreano, 1984, p. 279) Therefore, the political action of the members of the School and the direct influence of organizations of the left were understood as a defence against “the official thought”. (Moreano, 1984, p. 279) The crisis of the social movements connected to the School for Sociology and Political Sciences led to a crisis of the School itself. This had been denounced on several occasions as a “speculative or purely theoretical level” (Quintero, 1976, p. 13) of thought in teaching and research with the danger to “develop as support the theoretical speculation”. (Moreano, 1984, p. 280) Still today, the School of Sociology and Political Sciences and with it the major part of social sciences in the country understands itself –albeit in a less openly Marxist language– as empathetic with social movements and the poor. (Quintero, 2005, p. 9)

Localization means the articulation of global ideas with local ideas and realities. As social sciences entered Ecuador, they were connected to a specific social thought of the political left, building on some texts of Marx and an incomplete selection of international Marxists of the 1970s. Thus, only a certain part of global social theory was localized. The reception of global ideas happened in function of local necessities or what the actors of localization understood as such: first, the rejection of the earlier attempts to install social sciences. Besides the question if those really were deficient, this rejection is important as a means of legitimation of the actors. Second, the university was seen as a hostile place, therefore localized ideas were not in the first place articulated within the university, for instance, with other departments, but rather with actors outside academia, such as social movements, that had a non-academic take on the localized theories. This logic of localization made an articulation of sociological research produced in Ecuador with research elsewhere basically impossible – and even irrelevant, given that research was understood as service for the social

movements and the masses and not as participation in an academic debate on certain topics. Parting from a perspective of localization, another contraposition comes into view: two different forms of applied social sciences oppose each other – the technocratic ‘bourgeois sociology’ with its background in the formation of state administrators and the Marxist ‘critical sociology’ with its allegiance to leftist organizations. A conceptual debate outside a closed Marxist worldview –even with other branches of Marxism– is deemed not only unnecessary but harmful for the danger to fall into speculation. This created institutions –a culture within and beyond social sciences in Ecuador– that favoured certain future localizations or innovations and limited others. Interviews conducted with four professors at the School for Sociology and Political Sciences –all of them were students or professors during the period discussed⁴⁵– revealed that the most important sociologist is, besides the founding fathers of the School, Marx. Most of the other sociologist mentioned were classics (like Weber or Comte) or contemporary classics (like Bourdieu or Foucault). It seems that the incomplete reception of global social thought persists until today.

2. *Ensayismo* as academic Style

*Ensayismo*⁴⁶ was the way to express this Marxist orientation that was more a political than a scientific choice. This literary style of communicating knowledge –generally with few references to other works and not necessarily connected to empirical research– was and still is quite common in Latin-American social sciences, philosophy and general social thought. This non-disciplinary and naturally anti-positivistic style, given that there is no strict work with theories or empirical findings, goes well with the newly established social sciences. (Campuzano, 2005, p. 449) Here again, *ensayismo* as localization has above all local meanings: it goes against ‘bourgeois sociology’ with its preference for empirical data and does connect to the earlier ‘lawyers’ sociology. This was again linked to the *tzántzicos*, the young poets and social thinkers that were amongst the founders of the new social sciences in Ecuador. They were inspired by the Cuban Revolution that had an impact more on literature than on social sciences – *ensayismo* seemed an ideal way to express a new social thought breaking with social sciences that were considered positivistic and ‘bourgeois’ at that time. (Moreano, in: Kingman & Burbano, 2004, p. 98) The more academic work led to a rupture in the group. The “more meticulous research, yet in an essayistic tone considering theory of dependency, Ecuadorian social formation, etc.” (Polo, 2012, p. 94) of some of them, turned sociologists, led to a separation between a literary stream and an essayistic and political stream within the *tzántzicos*. *Ensayismo* became –once again– the dominant academic style in Ecuadorian social

⁴⁵ The interviews were conducted and analysed by...

⁴⁶ In English, this refers to an essayistic style. However, while the style is comparable, the background is not. Therefore, the Spanish name will be preferred here.

sciences. Of course, there were differences within social sciences and how they are supposed to be written. Campuzano distinguishes two projects, connected to a certain degree with Rafael Quintero on the one hand, and Agustín Cueva, on the other, both founders of the School of Sociology and Political Sciences:

“The one intellectual project points towards the academic-institutional consolidation of the social sciences from an interdisciplinary perspective, and the second one to the deployment of a social thought that goes beyond the frontiers between the disciplines as well as the frontier between those and the field of philosophy and literature.” (Campuzano, 2005, p. 449)

One project tries to go beyond speculation and the culturalist tradition of Ecuadorian social thought in the attempt to create a scientific community, the other one connects research systematically to cultural and literary critique pushing for a link to a more general thought. While both styles were present during the whole time treated here, *ensayismo* could gain more influence. Besides Cueva, who moved to Mexico shortly after the creation of the School, one central proponent of *ensayismo* was Alejandro Moreano. For him, *ensayismo* was a way to fight the false objectivity of social research that only reproduces ideology. It is the rejection of statistics and the need to prove everything. (Moreano, 1990) *Ensayismo* was the appropriate way to express critique “to the specialized knowledge and the aesthetical autonomy”. (Ortega, 2014, p. 23) The academic style to write social sciences, for Moreano, is characterized by an absent researcher and thus an absent ideology, letting the facts speak for themselves, which is nothing else than pure ideology. The *ensayo*, in contrast to that, works with the open intervention of the writer. “The Marxist thinker does not hide his position and pretends to define the proof of truth in theoretical rigour and the political position.” (Moreano, in: Kingman & Burbano, 2004, p. 104) It is a way not to fall in the trap of not only accepting but fetichizing modern technology as the only science imaginable. (Moreano, 1990) While positivistic science denies individuality and the possibility of the single person to change anything, *ensayismo* affirms the intervention of the subject in social life and tries to mobilize passions and ideas for change. In order to do so, the *ensayo* mixes science, politics and literature constantly, it “does not prove or show anything. It affirms and denies. Expresses and agitates.” (Moreano, 1990) This does not mean necessarily a rejection of theoretical or empirical research, but rather a rejection of the pretention of knowledge and neutrality. (Moreano, 1990) The *ensayo* points to a provisional understanding of reality from a perspective or a fact that is not obvious. (Gudynas, 2017, p. 46) It allows to understand local reality from its particular situations, without falling in generalizations from the start. (Gudynas, 2017, p. 59)

Essayismo as academic style is a localization of scientific ways to think about reality. It is connected more to literature than science elsewhere and it is understandable to wider populations – without leaving the sphere of an intellectual elite. *Essayistic* social sciences are connected to a diversity of local thinkers that engage in the same local or national questions. Not to discuss too much complex disciplinary theories or methods is therefore helpful for the *essayistas* to communicate with their public. But just this way to communicate makes it hard to keep track with or even engage in discussions on a global level. *Essayismo* is a localization that makes a later globalization as social science (not necessarily as literature, think of Mexican Nobel prize laureate Octavio Paz) hard to achieve. A different way of thinking and referring to ideas and a different set of theories and topics define global social sciences. (Gudynas, 2017, p. 54) But this difference between two styles of producing academic knowledge is an unequal one: theories and findings of the Global North –that is, a certain form of globalized local knowledge– become the standard that define social sciences, the Global South tends to become excluded. (Gudynas, 2017, p. 57; Connell et al., 2017, p. 24-25)

:: Conclusion

Global knowledge –strictly speaking, some sort of local knowledge that can present itself as global via mechanisms such as canonization– has to be localized in order to work in whatever locality it is supposed to work in. That means that a group of actors of localization –generally some kind of intellectual and political elite– has to use its local prestige to articulate this knowledge to the local reality. In the case of scientific knowledge, certain elements are more important than others. Just like nodal points, they articulate thinking within and without. Those nodal points of knowledge have to be localized, that is, key elements such as theories, practices and methods, have to be connected to local histories, conceptions of reality and society, politics, institutions, and so on. The result is the creation of institutions that guide future processes of localization by legitimizing actors of localization – or the organizations related to those institutions themselves become actors of localization.

This article did revise one specific phase of localization of knowledge within social sciences – the creation of Ecuadorian social sciences. This localization was related to an organizational change and an institutional shift due to an expansion in higher education and changes in several of the most important universities in the country. A group of young poets and intellectuals used this possibility to become actors of localization, implementing Ecuadorian social

sciences around several nodal points, two of them being a particular reception of Marx and *ensayismo* as an academic style. Their success is visible on an institutional level, where Marxism is still the dominant connector of teaching and research and social sciences outside a narrow conception of Marxism is hardly received.

In the last twenty years, social sciences in Ecuador changed dramatically and are still changing. This is due to, on the one hand, the retirement of most of the founding figures of Ecuadorian social sciences in the 1970s, especially between 2010 and 2013. Young people enter the universities and not always do they follow the ways of their teachers. On the other hand, legal reforms made a clearer structure in teaching and research necessary. Classes need now a comprehensible framework and a connection to the academic debates of the moment. More than that, publications in academic journals that work with global theories and methods are institutionally preferred and linked to the possibilities of promotion (Gudynas, 2017, p. 50). Time will tell if these new modes of localization lead to institutional changes and how they will relate to the older modes. Will they continue the work of the founding fathers of Ecuadorian social sciences or will they break with it?

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NOTA
BIOGRÁFICA

:: LOCALIZATION OF GLOBAL-SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE – OR: HOW GLOBAL THEORIES BECAME LOCAL BUZZWORDS ::

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