

A Global and Gender Perspective to the Historiography of Intellectual Cooperation

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Roig-Sanz Diana. 2022. "A Global and Gender Perspective to the Historiography of Intellectual Cooperation". *Centenary of the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations*. Geneva, 71-73. <https://intellectualcooperation.org/roigsanz-2022>

The project of narrating the global past does not engage in an encyclopedic claim, nor it represents an extension of national histories (Middell and Naumann 2010, Berg 2013) or a homogenization of fields. Instead, the discipline of global history is concerned with interactions, processes of exchange and cultural differences in various locations, but also over time. In that respect, global history has developed in the last two decades as an approach that connects multiple disciplines and their historiographies, and promotes exciting, but challenging methodological debates about how a global history of economic, social, political, cultural or intellectual processes should be written. Indeed, many scholars work now in large-scale contexts and in the relations between nation-state building, regionalization, and globalization. However, global approaches often reduce intercultural entanglements to networks involving Europe or the Western world, and literature on intellectual cooperation and their organizations is still too Eurocentric and reproduces the idea of national organizations and binary exchanges. In that respect, the study of institutions, including those specialized in intellectual cooperation and cultural diplomacy, has kindled the interest of a great number of researchers working in the field of history of international relations and international cultural relations (Iriye 1997). However, literature on cultural international organizations has privileged the narrative of their historical development (Laqua 2011; Laqua, Van Acker and Verbruggen 2018), and it has also retained the role of major figures or cultural mediators (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018) in relevant centers and channels of cultural production (Paris, London, New York), but it has left aside the role of the so-called peripheries (for example, Latin America), non-state capitals (Barcelona), and apparently secondary actors in cultural relations, intellectual cooperation and cultural diplomacy. Likewise, multiple studies on cultural diplomacy and soft power have historically focused on unilateral actions and bilateral cultural agreements (Haigh 1974; Northedge 1953, 1986), but multilateral circuits have been overshadowed, (Renoliet 1999; Pernet 2007; Dumont 2008; Pita 2017; Grandjean and Van Leeuwen 2018).

In that respect, this paper aims at shedding light into cultural international organizations in the so-called peripheries by placing mobility and networks at the centre of this research and giving a voice to actors and cultural mediators that are little known or have gone into oblivion by mainstream literature, many women among them. Indeed, we are aware that many of these women played a key role in these organizations and developed pioneering positions that had a lasting effect. Within this framework, I aim to discuss the intersections between gender and global history (Rotger, Roig-Sanz and Puxán 2019) applied to the historiography of intellectual cooperation by proposing: 1) an interdisciplinary theoretical framework at the crossroads of gender, global literary studies (Roig-Sanz and Rotger 2022, forth.) and international cultural relations, that put culture at the chore of international relations and exchanges within a decentred perspective, both geographically and thematically (Carbó-Catalan and Roig-Sanz, forth.), and 2) a brief analysis of some Latin American women who played a key role in the international networks woven around the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation and the National Committees as a way to visibilize their work and international exposure.

In the case of the IICI, women were absent from cultural or political processes, or they often occupied peripheral positions, as reflected by the gender imbalance in the League's institutions on intellectual cooperation, with women representing 8'4 %, men 80'4% and a remaining 11'3% for which data is not available (Grandjean 2018, 65). Thus, we lack a clear understanding of their public and mediating role beyond national borders and we have yet to examine how Latin American women contributed to women's shifting roles in the modern world through their work as diplomats and poets (the Chilean Gabriela Mistral, in the League of Nations and the IICI), diplomats and pedagogs (the Mexican Palma García or the Chilean Amanda Labarca), or, on a different level, as editors (the Argentinean Victoria Ocampo), or cultural

animators (the Argentinean Elena Sansinea de Elizalde). Thus, this paper would like to break gender stereotypes and explore how these Latin American women joined forces on a transatlantic scale through their professional and personal networks and their various travels and stays abroad, showing how they not only contributed to the building of Latin American modernity, but also to a modern treatment of gender issues.

By discussing this geographic area from a global perspective and in its intersection with gender, I intend to make a step forward in the effort that has been carried on during the last years to decenter the IICI's historiography from a geographic (Pita González 2014; Dumont 2018; Herrera León and Wehrli 2019; Saikawa 2014; Pernet 2015; Roig-Sanz 2013; Roig-Sanz and Subirana 2020) and a thematic standpoint (Löhr 2011; Pita González 2014 and 2019), thus contributing to avoid, in the historiographic domain, the reproduction of the symbolic violence undergone by women (Goodman 2012). Based on the assumption that the IICI contributed to institutionalize a specific definition of the international intellectual space by offering shared models and practices and by promoting concurrence between countries (Sapiro 2009), I aim at discussing the double peripheral character of Latin American women, as was the case of the above-mentioned Gabriela Mistral and Palma Guillén. This will allow me to challenge membership at the IICI and explore forms of inclusion, exclusion and agency.

In short, the idea of network and connectivity through cultural exchanges and the emphasis on the relational, rather than on isolated prefixed categories, fosters a reassessment of cultural contact and circulation phenomena, shedding light into unknown aspects of the past. On the other hand, the relevance of gender in many fields and, specifically, in intellectual cooperation, has not been sufficiently addressed. In that respect, a global and decentered perspective to intellectual history has enormous potential, as it allows us to apply a relational and data-driven approach and study global processes and global connections both in the present and in the past, as well as from an interdisciplinary and gender perspective.

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