American Globalization, 1492–1850

Trans-Cultural Consumption in Spanish Latin America

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Chapter 13

From Goods to Commodities in Spanish America: Structural Changes and Ecological Globalization from the Perspective of the European History of Consumption

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13 From Goods to Commodities in Spanish America

Structural Changes and Ecological Globalization From the Perspective of the European History of Consumption[1]

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One of the most accepted ideas by contemporary historians is that America's contact with Eurasia and Africa in 1492 produced an unprecedented upheaval in human history. Authors such as McNeill (1977), Crosby (1986), and Diamond (1997), to name but a few of the most influential, have made it clear how the "encounter" between European and American ecosystems – microbial complexes, animals, plants, etc. – produced the destruction of the latter, and with it a hecatomb of a far-reaching demographic nature that would dramatically and irreversibly change the lives of the original Americans and their societies. This is, without a doubt, the most important turning point of what we can call American globalization, which is the focus of our attention here.

As stated in the introduction, the globalization of America entailed more than this process. We must also consider as part of it the inverse development by which America flooded the world with products, goods, plants, animals, and commodities, which contributed to deep changes not only in European societies but also in their political economies and economic thought (Carmagnani 2012). But our focus here is to examine the many transformations that American forms of consumption and material culture underwent since the arrival of the Europeans in 1492. It is also in this context that I would like to reflect in general terms on two different but complementary avenues. On the one hand, I want to underline the complexity and the obstacles involved in the process of introducing European and Asian goods into Spanish America. In doing so, I will also share some observations on how studying the case of America sheds light and serves to criticize many of the existing – and by degrees revised – clichés in relation to the history of consumption. In this connection, we must understand what happened from a dual perspective: its significance in the long-term process of globalization of material cultures that humanity has witnessed since its origins; and what this signified in terms of trade. These are two perspectives which, while they refer to the same

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phenomenon, have not been linked by historiography. Secondly, I would like to draw attention to the need to compensate for the emphasis that some studies, such as Crosby's, place on what he called the "ecological imperialism" of Europeans and "neo-Europes" and, above all, his insistence on its most destructive aspects. These questions will hopefully serve to tie up some of the more or less loose ends of this book and, above all, to create some questions and approach a definition of the concept of American globalization as stated in the title.

* * *

Studies on the history of consumption and changes in material culture in Spanish America represent nothing new. They may even precede those undertaken in Europe, where since the 1980s scholars like McKendrick (1982), Roche (1989), and others dealt with a subject on which Braudel (2000) had produced some very interesting reflections. In effect, the history of consumption and of material culture have been continuously present in the many works of anthropologists and historians who have focused on social and economic change, as well as the processes of "acculturation", dominance and intercultural resistance or dialogue in general occurring in American societies since 1492.[2]

Arnold Bauer's pioneering book (2001), which articulates and systematizes a good deal of that knowledge, would scarcely have been possible without those precedents. Much of the secondary information he uses does not come from specific studies on consumption and material culture, but from works that adopt the above-mentioned perspectives. This precocity of Americanist historiography – sometimes not perceived by scholars from other areas of the world, and from Europe in particular – is in part due to the importance of the works of anthropologists, which is much greater in the case of Spanish America than in studies on early modern Europe. And perhaps it should also be related to the fact that the phenomenon of conquest and intercultural encounters forced everyone – historians and anthropologists alike – to include aspects relating to material culture and consumption in works dealing with a more extensive range of issues.

What is evident in these studies, as well as in those that have come since, is a series of increasingly pronounced characteristics that have also been gradually noticeable in the European past and that necessitate a rethinking of the history of consumption, material cultures, and even globalization. The original works of McKendrick, Roche, and even in certain aspects – although to a lesser extent – those of Braudel underlined the importance of the market and marketing, of social emulation, of fashion trends, of the processes of social levelling and of the convergences between the diverse regimes of consumption. What the history of America and of Latin America in particular shows us, however, is a panorama with different accents. Of course, mercantile persuasion, emulation

and even trickle-down processes also came into play in the New World. But compared to what we historians of early modern Europe have been thinking, the differences have been quite significant. It has been demonstrated, for example, that there could have been reasons behind the concept of emulation that had nothing to do with conspicuous consumption or with the desire to imitate that Veblen spoke of (Veblen 2009). To cite just one example, what Indian chiefs or even slaves who imitated Spanish consumption patterns were often seeking – and certainly not only that – was a way to avoid being classified socially as Indians, to avoid paying taxes, and to avoid social degradation.[3] The use of coercion and even violence could coexist with marketing, vicarious consumption, or persuasion. Persuasion could be exercised through intimidation and was based on fear rather than market trends. This is demonstrated by a multitude of cases from all over the continent.[4] The agents of the process were often traders, but more frequently than not they were civil servants or members of the clergy eager to get taxes in return or to "civilize". Among the civil servants, the *repartimiento de mercancías* system was very common. This institution implied that the native American population – often represented by *caciques* and local authorities – received from an agent, who could be a merchant but was often a mayor or an authority of the king, a series of goods in exchange for other commodities that were normally oriented to extra-regional marketing.[5] Regarding priests, contrary to the image we might have of them, their promotion of certain forms of consumption and merchandise also could have had financial motivations, as has been demonstrated in the case of the Jesuits in many American regions (Svriz-Wucherer 2019). In Europe, the adoption (or not) of certain consumption patterns or elements of material culture has been associated with hierarchical divisions and deep-rooted forms of consumption norms that, only in the eighteenth century and in England especially, would have given way to forms of consumerism in which only economic availability, and not the fact of belonging to a closed social order, would limit the spread of fashion trends (McKendrick 1982).[6] What Latin American colonial societies show is that purchasing power was an important factor in the demand of some goods, and that its importance was accentuated in certain regions and consumer segments. But, on many occasions purchasing power may have been less influential than social divisions in determining the dissemination of new products.[7] Added to this was the fact that access to particular commodities – in a much higher proportion than in Europe for many years – was not via the markets and that the price differential was very dissimilar from that of Europe, with the result that the popularization or otherwise of some goods could also vary, as in case of beef in a number of regions. This situation was not about to go away, but would very possibly increase over time in some consumer segments, partly due to the introduction of the caste imaginary, as a reaction to the opposite process.

There are also several aspects worth considering that have not been dealt with so systematically by historiography until relatively recently, and which provide an even greater contribution to our understanding of the globalization of consumer regimes.

The first of these refers to the relations between consumption, material culture and social change. Classical studies on Europe have already placed some emphasis on this aspect. In fact, studies have underlined from the outset how a change in appearances could constitute a change of attitude in social relations (Roche 1989). There has even been talk of how changes in consumption patterns have triggered revolutionary processes. And, of course, it has been emphasized how social change has been accompanied by transformations in material culture and consumption.[8] Nevertheless, the Latin American case goes much further and constitutes a laboratory for something that was the rule in early globalization: the encounter of societies at very different stages and models of development. It is precisely this fact that forces us to consider the relationship between changes in consumer patterns and material culture and in social structures as something that does not operate in a two-way direction. This was in fact a single process in which the market played a less central role, especially in the early stages of the process. As Crosby pointed out in his famous book, the encounter between European and American societies meant, in many cases – according to the social structures of those societies – the coming together of cultures that had long since surpassed the Neolithic revolution and developed forms of political, social and economic organization, as well as technological advancement, with others that were barely in the Iron Age, and only approaching the Neolithic revolution (Crosby 1986 *passim*). In these circumstances it is unthinkable – not to say impossible – that European products, technology, and material culture would meet with rapid acceptance in America, at least in many areas, social segments and consumer sectors. Or, in other words, contact with the settlers who came to America would simultaneously and in a parallel but selective manner activate social change, as well as the same forms of consumption and material culture. This reasoning, which undoubtedly may be viewed as tautology, nevertheless helps us – or so I hope – to understand that we need a very different approach to the one we use when we talk about this type of phenomena in Europe.

Given the diversity of pre-Columbian societies, this also implies the existence of a very wide variety of cases. The case of the Maya, studied by Nancy Farriss, among others, is that of a group in which the superposition of a system of *encomenderos* and an ecclesiastical administrative structure seem to have led to a series of transformations sparked by existing interregional family relations. The result is a superposition of societies that perhaps, with the exception of Campeche, were able to maintain their original structures for quite some time, which did not prevent the diffusion of products such as hens, nor the strong resistance of corn and

potatoes, which were not to be supplanted by wheat on their land. All this was favored by the fact that the Maya seem to already belong to an advanced phase of the Neolithic revolution in which extensive slash-and-burn cultivation lasted for quite some time (Farriss 1992, 205–21).

In the absence of a more detailed comparison, it is possible to assume that the Guaraní of Paraguay followed a model which, although not necessarily the opposite, was in a sense different. Here signs of agrarian development were beginning to appear; but at least on the surface, it was even more in its infancy than in the case of the Maya. Among these peoples, activities such as hunting and gathering, typical of groups in constant movement, were vital and even determined their social structure and the associated consumer regimes and material culture. The arrival of the Jesuits was thus a hugely significant element. The *reducciones* were set up in this frontier zone for the purpose of evangelization, as they explicitly acknowledged, but also with the aim of providing the region with a defense force to protect the nearby villages and the growing production and trade of the beverage known as *mate*, of which the Society of Jesus was an important beneficiary.[9] In that framework, assigning land to a people like the Guaraní was vital for the Jesuits. But this implied a transformation of their social structures and material culture. In fact, the Jesuits encouraged a kind of induced Neolithic revolution that took place in very different conditions to those in other parts of the planet and even in other parts of America. In effect, it was not demographic pressure on resources that led to a system of settled agriculture, in accordance with the general model (at least in appearance) of Neolithic revolution in human history.[10] In this case, it was rather a case of induced settlement at a time when war was being reinforced as an essential activity, which affected the social structure. This implied the introduction of crops such as wheat – which encountered difficulties when competing with corn – and, above all, the adoption of property systems introduced by the Spaniards into the very core of Guaraní society, important changes in gender relations (with women increasingly involved in cultivation and men in war), and, above all, the growing appreciation of objects such as weapons that in the same process and in tandem transformed social structures, and the patterns of consumer behavior. This is an example of how, rather than a two-way process – from consumption to social transformations and from the latter to consumption – what took place in these societies were inseparable transformations within the social structure in its twofold dimension as producer and consumer.[11]

The second aspect relates to the importance of ecological factors in these mutations, something that has hardly concerned historians dealing with the subject in Europe. In fact, given that these were to a large extent transformations that operated through the productive system and given the variety of American ecosystems, natural conditions had to be decisive for the alteration in consumption trends. This was true above all until

solid interregional markets were developed that allowed access to certain products, not due to changes in societies but due to their import from areas of different productive specialization, which was frequent in Europe but did not become reality in many American areas until well into the seventeenth century. The work presented in this volume by Manuel Díaz-Ordóñez is a good example of the limits to the massive production of a crop like hemp that had become widespread in the Old World, and particularly in Russia. For a long time, not even the active policy of the Crown managed to turn it into a plantation product that could potentially modify the history of Chile, as happened with so many other products, among them tobacco, sugar, cotton and others around which the plantation economy developed. Other products, such as wheat, wine and olives – the Mediterranean trilogy – also encountered difficulties or expanded more or less easily depending on the circumstances of the ecosystems. Their dissemination also rely on a combination of food culture, natural conditions, the possibilities of foreign trade and supply, the strength of the European presence and the regulations of the Crown, apparently important in relation to oil and other products.[12] The adoption of European consumption patterns was thus severely limited by a set of factors, including what Horden and Purcell (2000) called the "microregions", which were to play an important role.

All of this has implications far beyond American history, which also refers us to the history of globalization in its trade-related aspect. I refer here to the enormous complexity and slow pace of change in consumption patterns, and the introduction of European habits. The writings of Americanists from Bauer to the present day have spoken of rejection and resistance to these products, although it is recognized that the receptivity of the Amerindian populations varied depending on circumstance. On the other hand, it is evident that cultural distance and the physical distance of the ecosystems to which we refer imposed a relatively long lapse of time before these transformations could take place. In any case, many products took a long time to adapt, often because of their inferiority to the original products, which, as we have said, was the case with some goods such as wheat, which competed poorly in many areas with corn, cassava and potatoes. Fabrics that were fashionable in Europe, although at times overly heavy and hot until the arrival of new draperies from northern Europe, nevertheless spread across many areas. But often they could only do so with strong competition from local products and by placing lifestyle ahead of comfort and convenience (Bauer 2001). The introduction of European techniques in textile workshops and the development of local industries may also have limited the adoption of Old World fabrics (Miño 1991). It is evident, too, that the development of what some Americanists have called a monetary economy and, with it, the establishment of markets, was not an automatic process. Although it was highly developed in some areas and for some products, this form of

economy, and again hens are a good example, was not established until products of this type transformed family economies and even the gender relations within them, and brought them ever closer to the marketplace. Without these transformations, there could be no longer an "industrious revolution" as described by Jan de Vries (2008), but not even a process that would make the original peoples sell more products and labor in the market and, at the same time, consume more goods – even if not of an industrial nature – in those markets.[13] We often forget that the conquest of America triggered the circulation of American products on their own continent, which in turn limited the entry of European goods. A well-known case is that of cassava, which Spanish soldiers introduced to regions where it was previously unknown (Saldarriaga 2012 chapter V). Another is that of *mate*, whose consumption and trade extended from the current Argentina to Peru thanks to the integration of regional markets derived from European colonization (Assadourian 1982). And these are just two examples that make us think about the process of American globalization in a more complex way than that of a solely bipolar relationship between the Old and the New World. Returning to the issue of the potential of the emerging American market, we must also consider the effects of demographic change. Even if we were to believe – although it is inconceivable – that there were no rejections, adaptations or hybridizations that limited the use of European goods, we must bear in mind that the demographic catastrophe drastically limited the possibilities of this potential market, making the growth of the number of possible consumers very slow. As is well known, historians have not agreed on the dimensions of the demographic disaster in America, but the figures, in any case, show a very clear decline (Romano 2004, chapter 1). On the other hand, the growth of the "white" population, the one previously best adapted to European consumption patterns, was very slow, which, together with the slow incorporation of the Indian population to the consumption of European and African products, made the market for these goods grow more slowly than had been expected (Yun-Casalilla 2019, 289). In many areas, the arrival of African populations was accompanied by the introduction of their own consumption patterns, which also hampered the development of those from Europe, as can be deduced from some known cases in the Caribbean (see, for example, Eltis, Morgan, and Richardson 2007). Although very difficult to measure, similar effects derived from sumptuary laws which the Crown aimed at maintaining the social differentiation between the indigenous and slave populations or even the most dispossessed classes of the colonizers, on the one side, and the elites of cities like Mexico or Lima, on the other.[14]

The fact that the introduction and dissemination of European products was not as automatic as had been often assumed helps to explain why the emergence of an American market for these products was not as rapid as economic historians tried to present it a few decades ago. For a long

time, historians have considered the development of American markets to be a key episode in the development of European capitalism. It was even believed that Spain and Portugal missed a unique opportunity by becoming semi-peripheries in that process (Wallerstein 1979). If we pause to consider the above, however, we realize that this is a difficult assumption to sustain. Furthermore, some very rough calculations from a commercial perspective prove quite revealing. If we take into account the consignments of silver sent to Seville by Spanish emigrants to America around 1590, we can conclude that the official export trade to the New World could have been about twenty-five million *reales* a year. Naturally, this is a smaller amount than the total trade figure, given the importance of smuggling and the possible reinvestments of profits from that trade in America. But this difference is partly compensated by the fact that these figures also included the repatriation to Spain of many kinds of benefits, not all of them commercial. Moreover, given that the profits from smuggling, while significant, were far from what might have been expected, these figures can be thought of as an acceptable minimum and approximate to the volume of goods shipped from Spain. Be that as it may, the amount was equivalent to the internal trade of a city like Cordoba, which did not reach more than 2% of the gross domestic product of Castile (Yun-Casalilla 1998, 128 and 131). In these circumstances it is difficult to consider the colonial market as a potential driver of the expansion neither of European economies, nor even of the Castilian or Spanish economies, at least well into the seventeenth century. We would have to wait, most probably until the eighteenth century, for this to be attained, a fact that is underpinned by the processes described in this book.

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As has previously been stated, it is very difficult to separate the study of changes in consumption and material culture in Latin America from their ecological aspects.

America has rightly been presented as one of the main victims of ecological imperialism that has dominated globalization since the fifteenth century. But that approach – rightly, of course – may have downplayed other aspects of the phenomenon that, although well known, do not always play the role they deserve in general discussions on the subject.

The first thing to consider is that the ecological globalization of the Americas was a quantum leap. At present there is a debate regarding what could be understood in some way as a previous step in the process of ecological globalization on a worldwide scale, and in the long term. I am referring to the concept of the "green revolution", which, according to some authors, had been taking place in Europe since the Muslim era. Its alleged gateway was via the Iberian Peninsula and it consisted of the reception and dissemination throughout the Mediterranean of products – many of them from distant origins in Asia – in particular citrus

fruits, many types of vegetables, almonds, honey and others.[15] Horden and Purcell (2000) drew attention to the fact that it is difficult to speak of a revolution, since most of these products – and especially the most important for the Mediterranean economy, such as wheat, olive trees and vineyards – already existed. In any case, the transfer to America of many of these products is a fundamental milestone in ecological globalization. As we mentioned previously, America was inundated – albeit at a very slow pace – with the result of centuries and centuries of plant and animal development.[16] The products brought there were often the result of centuries and in some cases thousands of years of crossbreeding and migrations within Eurasia of species which were further strengthened by cross-breeding and the struggle between the various strains. In some cases, this transfer implied the existence of complementary ecological chains. Wheat was directly associated with livestock breeding and in particular with fertilization systems based on animals such as sheep, or with rotation systems and agro-pastoral cycles typical of the Mediterranean. The expansion of mules, a Eurasian "invention" of huge importance in America, was equally relevant and linked to the cultivation of barley and the use of natural grasslands.[17] Often forgotten is the fact that this animal – perhaps because it does not correspond to the image of a wild animal, in the style of those which in Crosby's vision would sweep the Americas – became a key element in Latin American economies and especially in the creation of interregional markets (Assadourian 1982 and Glave Testino 1989). Also crucial would be the use of other draft and farm animals, nonexistent – at least with the necessary level of efficiency – in the New World.

When we introduce the technology that mediates relations between human beings and the environment into the concept of the ecosystem, what was happening acquires even more significant proportions. First of all, Mediterranean technology and inventions such as the Muslim waterwheel, and then a wider technological spectrum derived from European processes of propagation and interaction, also contributed to changing the American ecological systems. Such technologies also facilitated – or were the result of – the expansion of European crops and products with which they had been associated for centuries in an exceptional laboratory created in medieval Europe, but which in many respects cannot be separated from Asia (White 1963). This process, often forgotten when historians refer solely to the enormous impact of American products on the rest of the world, not only on Europe but also on Asia and Africa, enables a better understanding of decisive steps in global history within a more complete perspective.

The second consideration is closely linked to the first. What is striking on rereading the works of Crosby and McNeill following the long time lapse since they first appeared is that although they account for a two-pronged process, they focus mainly on the destructive impact of the clash

of ecosystems in the New World, leaving very much in the background the processes of environmental reconstruction arising from that clash. To give an example, a term like "weeds", used by Crosby and criticized by him, is very relative. A plant can be a weed in one ecosystem but also a fundamental and positive factor in another ecosystem's biotic chain. Clover, whose destructive character Crosby highlights, is in itself a plant that has contributed to high-productivity crop rotation systems in Europe. The pig, which by reproducing in omnivorous herds capable of destroying indigenous crops contributed to weakening the ecological balance in America, has been and remains one of the most important sources of calories for European peoples for centuries. This also became the case in America only a few decades after its introduction. And we could continue with further examples.[18]

It is also important to emphasize that the demographic and human disaster that occurred in the Americas represented a fundamental element in the ecological balance, and a decisive factor in achieving new and undoubtedly more positive balances between resources and population. The fact is all the more important because, although we know that in many areas of Latin America the relationship between resources and population was comfortable, some calculations estimate that a "full world" situation had been reached by 1492 (McNeill 1977, 179). And if one considers that the population was very possibly reduced by more than 60–70%, it is obvious that despite the initial destruction of resources, the relationship between the number of people and the environment was changing. What would happen from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards represented a new situation: a much smaller population would enjoy the available resources – some in clear relative abundance – created by ecological changes.

Also in this regard, technological transfers to America played a very important role, which, as we have said, must also enter into the equation, and be included under the concept of the ecosystem.[19] This technology was not limited to the use of animals, such as the mules mentioned above. The grinders and mills for the production of sugar perfected during centuries in Europe became a key element in the intensive use of hitherto untapped natural resources. Their usage was also associated with animals such as oxen and others that for decades had been domesticated for this type of activity. The Mediterranean plow, the thresher, the mills – also associated with the use of horses and cattle and used in all kinds of work, from the milling of cereals to sugar grinding or mining – shears, the pedal loom, the carding board, the spinning wheel, or simply the wheel applied in all types of activities in trolleys, wheelbarrows, carriages and rudimentary transport systems, all of which were new to many American regions, had the same effect when Mediterranean crops were introduced, despite the slow rate at which some of these innovations were launched. It has even been said that the machete increased productivity by four in

Brazilian *palo* farms. And there is little more that remains to be said about the introduction of Eurasian technology in mining and its effects on productivity and production or textile technology, which made it possible to increase efficiency in the processing of fibers in the workshops where it was introduced.

Although not exactly what we are stating here, Ruggiero Romano synthesized some of these ideas into an excellent book. The demographic collapse was accompanied by an increase in forced migrations, but also by an improvement in available technology and the ability to use animal labor. And, according to the author, this would lead to a different but positive combination between what he calls endosomatic working instruments (human muscular force) and exosomatic instruments (tools and machines, and animals as a source of mechanical energy applied to production) (Romano 2004, 35 et seq.). This combination proved positive insofar as it generated more wealth and available resources per inhabitant and, therefore, greater possibilities of growth that would become effective during the eighteenth century.[20] Added to this is another equally important equation. The increase in the amount of available suplies per person involved in these new production systems facilitated access to food and goods with scarcely any investment in terms of time or work in certain areas. This is the case of zones such as the Argentine pampa or some areas of Nueva Granada, where the capture of animals – cattle and horses, above all – was so easy that it made cattle rearing, as traditionally conceived, almost unnecessary. It is not surprising that both population and production increased during the eighteenth century. Moreover, it has rarely been stressed that the combination of American animals or plants with European technology or vice versa could have very positive multiplier effects. This is the case of cassava and pigs in areas where the abundance of the former facilitated more efficient feeding of these animals in captivity (Saldarriaga 2012). Another example is the use of meat, especially abundant thanks to the development of bovine production, which was used to feed the indigenous population exposed to strenuous work and whose traditional diet, based mainly on carbohydrates, was hardly sufficient for the enormous expenditure of energy required by their new work regime.[21]

All this should not make us forget that this reconstruction of the ecosystems encouraged the importation of enslaved people from Africa, and the marketing of human beings to supply the factor in scarcest supply in these new ecosystems: the labor force. Nor should we forget that these new schemes were by no means self-sustainable from the point of view of ecological balance and that they would encourage unsuspected social imbalances among pre-Columbian communities. This is particularly true since they have become an integral part of capitalist development to this day and have associated forms of production that are damaging to the environment with the large-scale production of "frontier commodities",

with devastating effects, for more than two centuries in many areas of Latin America.[22] This is another facet of American globalization from the perspective of this book. Indeed, in order to comprehend the transformations described above, one must take into account that ecological processes, changes in consumption patterns and the transformations of native communities cannot be understood without the process of mercantile globalization that was taking place at the same time. In reality, this is what was driving the development of mining – especially silver mining – and the spread of the plantation economy that was changing that world and encouraging the production and consumption of new products.

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All of the above calls for reflections of a more general nature. Firstly, when changes in consumption patterns are considered in this global perspective – or American, if you like – many of the conventions in use become very relative. It ratifies the idea that alterations in consumption can no longer be understood as something located geographically. Theories such as those of McKendrick and others thus become less and less functional. Changes in consumption patterns have derived in human history from the interrelationship between geographically separated societies. The mutual influences between them have had as much or more importance than the changes in the social structures of each of them. But it is also evident – and this is not so apparent in these writings – that these changes have not always derived from marketing techniques or strategies, but frequently from intercultural relations often tinged with rejections, violence, coercion and adaptations, if not from unintended cultural transfers derived from simple contacts between societies. These are relationships which, moreover, take place in local intercultural and ethnic encounters which oblige us to study the great changes on a global scale by means of very local case studies. It is also very difficult to draw a general chronology of these changes for the whole American continent. Their rhythm depended on a multitude of factors that affected the different phases of Europeanization and globalization or the changes – also very unequal – in the border character of many regions. In addition, what is less frequent in historiography, changes in consumption patterns and in the material culture of the different peoples have been linked to profound transformations in the social system: in the passage, for example, from economies based on hunting and gathering to settled agro-pastoral communities through procedures whose complex mechanisms have remained outside the dominant currents in the history of consumption. This should be said without forgetting, as mentioned in the introduction, that coercion and more or less forced persuasion could also derive from ways of creating trust between social agents that permitted cultural and technological transfers. These are changes that cannot be dissociated: consumption does not modify with social transformation and the latter does

not change the former. They are in many ways the same thing. One of the institutions that best reflects this fact is the *repartimiento de mercancías* (see a description above), which was a way of incorporating the Indians into the market while changing their consumption patterns and productive structures. Alterations in local society and its forms of consumption were thus inextricably linked.[23]

The magnitude of the processes described here also requires a review of the ideas of some economists on globalization. This cannot be understood solely from a mercantile perspective and less still from the perspective of the evolution of convergence or not between prices and wages on a planetary scale. To define it as classical economics of a narrow perspective usually does is to forget about the very large-scale transformations that have had equally important or more important effects than price convergence on millions of people.[24]

Furthermore, by looking at the problem in this way and situating it in areas that have undergone radical ecological transformation, the study of ecosystem changes becomes essential in the history of consumption. This is exactly what happened in colonial America. And this is not only in terms of the history of food, usually linked to changes in production processes, but also to other spheres of consumption. The history of consumption and material culture renovates its tone completely when we look at it from this more global perspective, in which some of the mechanisms that have been considered normal in European transitions are presented to us as exceptions, or at least as specific journeys very different from those that other peoples have lived through. Was Europe the exception? This is the question we must ask ourselves, but it would do no harm to look at Europe from an American point of view in a comparative heuristic exercise in order to look for many of the phenomena found in America, an exercise that we cannot enter into here. In view of some reflections on the globalization of consumption in recent years, America, and the way in which social habits changed there, is *also* part of the global history of consumption. While this may be regarded as a commonplace, it is nonetheless important because any history at this level that does not take into account the mechanisms that Latin American historians have been referring to for years is not a global history of consumption. It is only an approximation that does not take into account a specific case of the utmost importance that affected and continues to affect millions of human beings.

Notes

1. This research has been carried out within the framework of the project HAR2014–53797-P "Globalización Ibérica: Redes entre Asia y Europa y los cambios en las pautas de Consumo en Latinoamérica" [Iberian Globalization: Networks between Asia and Europe and Changes in Consumption Patterns in Latin America] financed by Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad,

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2. See Farriss 1992; Boccara 1998; Wilde 2009, and others.
3. See Saldarriaga on the difficulties of the development of emulation in such different societies. Saldarriaga 2012, 142–43.
4. The most common case of mixed strategies was the creation of tax obligations on certain products. The case of hens has been studied here, but tax levies on cotton, cocoa, eggs and textiles were frequent (De la Puente Brunke 1992; Bauer 2001, 53, 67). This, while logical in low-monetized economies with a strong domestic consumer sector, also represented a way of disseminating these goods.
5. The very broad literature on this subject has provoked more than a few debates among specialists. A good synthesis also concerned with the system's rationality can be found in Rodolfo Pastor 2002.
6. The idea is developed by Yun-Casalilla 2007. On consumer norms, see Appadurai 1988.
7. On occasion the most important factor could be the need to create group or ethnic identities (Bauer 2001, 76–77), which could have a notable force in such a multiracial society.
8. This is actually a recurring theme in bibliographical terms since the early works of McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb 1982. Brewer and Porter represent a cornerstone on this issue (1993).
9. See Garavaglia 1983 on the consumption and trade of *mate* in this region.
10. See Cohen in particular (1977).
11. This development on the Guaraní emanates above all from Omar Svriz-Wucherer (2019).
12. On the influence of the Spanish mental universe on Latin American food systems, see Earle (2012). Even the expansion of products and consumption patterns typical of the peninsula was affected by diverse opinions. Some of them opted for the prohibition of developing certain crops in America under the pretext that this was damaging to export possibilities and promoted the independence of the colonies from the metropolis. See, for example, Archivo General de Indias, Gobierno, Indiferente General, 2690 (07/09/1633). I appreciate the reference to Sergio Serrano.
13. See the chapter in this volume written by Gregorio Saldarriaga.
14. See, for example, certain passages in Ricardo Cappa, SJ (1892). Regarding slaves' depositions, see Manuel Lucena Salmoral 2000.
15. See, among others, Watson 1981. On the evolution of the concept, see Squatriti 2014.
16. On the introduction of certain products and technologies toward the end of the sixteenth century, see Bernardo De Vargas Machuca 1892, especially books II and III.
17. On the importance of this animal in Asia before its arrival into America, see various works by this author (Clarence-Smith 2015).
18. Works on dietary changes and above all the increase in the consumption of meat, at least until the last decades of the eighteenth century, have increased

for a substantial number of zones in Spanish America. See, for example, Saldarriaga 2012.

19. In another work we reflected on the importance of Iberia as the intersection of technologies and knowledge, which meant that it was an exceptional platform for the dissemination of technology in America (Yun-Casalilla 2017).
20. This is the argument adopted in Yun-Casalilla 2019, 414–17, from the reasoning put forward by Romano 2004, and Arroyo Abad and Van Zanden 2016.
21. On meat consumption in these conditions, see Saldarriaga 2012, 274–75. On the effects of the work imposed by Spanish settlers on account of the type of diet in some American regions, see Bennassar 1980.
22. Beckert 2014, among others.
23. A well-studied case is that of the *repartimientos* associated with the production and export of grana or cochineal in Oaxaca; see Basket 2000. For a series of critical comments, see Carmagnani 2004 and Menegus 2000. However, the *repartimiento de mercancías* did not always result in profound changes in indigenous consumption regimes, because, frequently, the Indians received goods that were part of their usual consumption patterns prior to the conquest.
24. Obviously I am referring to the view expressed in various works by O'Rourke and Williamson 2002, among others.

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