

## Special Thematic Section "Collective Memories and Present-Day Intergroup Relations: A Social-Psychological Perspective"

### Social Representations of Latin American History and (Post)Colonial Relations in Brazil, Chile and Mexico

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#### Abstract

Social representations of history play an important role in defining the identity of national and supranational groups such as Latin America, and also influencing present-day intergroup relations. In this paper, we discuss a study that aimed to analyse and compare social representations of Latin American history among Brazilian, Chilean, and Mexican participants. We conducted a survey with 213 university students, aged 18 to 35 years old, from these three countries, through an online questionnaire with open-ended questions about important events and people in the region's history. Despite the reference to different historical events and the existence of national specificities, several common topics were noteworthy across the three samples. There was a centrality of events involving political issues, conflicts and revolutions, as well as a recency effect and a sociocentric bias, replicating previous research about social representations of world history in different countries. There was also a strong prominence of colonization and independence issues in all samples. Through an emphasis on a common narrative of struggle and overcoming difficulties, the participants' social representations of Latin American history may favour mobilization and resistance, challenging the stability and legitimacy of the existing social order. Furthermore, the findings are discussed in terms of their potential connections with present-day intergroup relations within Latin America, and between Latin America and other parts of the world.

*Keywords:* Latin America, social representations of history, intergroup relations, social identity, (post)colonialism

#### Resumo

As representações sociais da história desempenham um papel importante na definição de identidades sociais de distintos grupos nacionais e supranacionais, ao mesmo tempo em que influenciam relações intergrupais. Neste artigo, discutimos dados de um estudo que visou analisar e comparar as representações sociais da história da América Latina entre participantes brasileiros, chilenos e mexicanos. Foi realizada uma pesquisa com 213 estudantes universitários destes três países (18 a 35 anos de idade), através de um questionário online com perguntas abertas sobre acontecimentos e pessoas importantes na história da região. Apesar da existência de especificidades nacionais na nomeação de eventos históricos, destacaram-se vários tópicos comuns nos três países. Verificou-se uma centralidade de eventos envolvendo questões políticas, conflitos e revoluções, além de um efeito de recência e também de sociocentrismo, replicando pesquisas anteriores sobre representações sociais da história mundial em diferentes países. Os resultados também mostram uma forte proeminência de questões relativas à colonização e independência destes países. Através da ênfase em uma narrativa comum de luta e superação de dificuldades, as representações sociais dos participantes sobre a história latino-americana poderão favorecer a mobilização coletiva e a resistência, desafiando a estabilidade e a legitimidade da ordem social existente. Os resultados também são discutidos considerando as suas ligações com as relações intergrupais atuais na América Latina e entre a América Latina e outras partes do mundo.

*Palavras-Chave:* América Latina, representações sociais da história, relações intergrupais, identidade social, (pós)colonialismo

## Non-Technical Summary

### Background

Social representations of history (i.e., shared knowledge about a group's past) are closely linked to the social identities of different groups, as well as the relations that occur between them. On the one hand, they can reinforce past and present conflicts between groups and, on the other hand, they can challenge the legitimacy of the current power balance order. Latin America, the context we studied, is a very diverse region that went through a violent process of European colonization, involving the genocide and enslavement of indigenous groups, as well as the forced displacement of Africans brought through the slave trade.

### Why was this study done?

Previous studies regarding social representations of world history found that people tend to: remember recent events (recency bias), mention events related to conflicts, war and politics (centrality of warfare and politics) and events that involved their own country (sociocentric bias). We conducted this study to determine if data regarding Latin America (a supranational group) would replicate these results. Considering the long process of colonization that the region went through, we also wanted to better understand the role of this colonial experience on participants' remembrances about Latin American history.

### What did the researchers do and find?

We conducted an online survey with 213 Brazilian, Chilean, and Mexican university students. We asked them to free-recall five events and five historical figures that they considered to be the most important in Latin American history, and to evaluate the impact (positive or negative) they thought these events and personalities had on the region's history. Our results replicated the trends found in previous studies concerning social representations of world history. Participants mentioned more events/personalities from the twentieth century (recency bias). Despite the prominence of events referring to Latin America in general, the participants also mentioned several events that happened within, or directly concerned, their own countries. The recency and sociocentric biases were stronger for historical figures. Moreover, great importance was given to events related to conflicts, revolutions and political issues. Finally, there was also a prominence of issues concerning colonization and independence processes. Interestingly, there were more similarities between the pattern of results of the Chilean and Mexican samples but fewer with the Brazilian sample – a result that may be related to historical differences between these countries.

### What do these findings mean?

These findings indicate that, despite the particularities of each of the three samples, respondents in these three Latin American countries emphasise a story of struggle and overcoming difficulties in the region. This shared knowledge of Latin American history, which involves different crucial moments (e.g., colonization, independences, dictatorships), might be an attempt to denounce the long process of violence and exploitation the region experienced while also contributing to the promotion of cooperation between the countries that make up this larger (supranational) group. In addition to valuing the capacity of resistance and struggle of different individuals throughout the region's history, sharing these social representations of Latin American history might also be a way of (re)gaining and maintaining a positive social identity, especially when facing the threat of dominant outgroups (for instance, when compared to countries such as the United States of America). Political leaders should take these representations into account when formulating policies that might be important to improve and maintain positive relations across countries in Latin America.

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Several studies have been conducted in recent years on social representations of world history (e.g., Liu et al., 2005, 2009; Pennebaker et al., 2006) and on social representations of national history (e.g., Cabecinhas & Feijó, 2010; Liu, Wilson, McClure, & Higgins, 1999). Nevertheless, we argue that there is a lack of studies on collective memories of supranational groups such as Latin America. We conducted the current study in order to fill this gap by analysing data about social representations of the history of Latin America. Moreover, we compared our results with the general patterns of results found in previous studies on representations of national and world history. Considering that countries in the Latin American region went through long periods of exploitation during their colonial processes, we argue that this might influence how individuals interpret and (re)construct the memories of past events that are relevant to their group's history.

## Collective Memories and Their Links With Social Representations, Social Identities and Intergroup Relations

The study of collective memories involves an effort to articulate different perspectives in order to comprehend their complexity and ramifications for present-day intergroup relations. Therefore, it is necessary to take into consideration their close relationship with two other concepts: social representations (Moscovici, 1961/2004) and social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

According to social representations theory, social representations are theories of common sense that can be “defined as the elaborating of a social object by the community for the purpose of behaving and communicating” (Moscovici, 1963, p. 251). In turn, according to social identity theory, the social identity of individuals is the acknowledgment of their belonging to one or more social groups, and associated with the values and emotions they attribute to these belongings (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Previous studies (e.g., Breakwell, 1993; Deschamps & Moliner, 2008; Zouhri & Rateau, 2015) emphasised the importance of articulating concepts of social representations and social identities, since the social representations that individuals share about their reality play an essential role in the formation and maintenance of their identities, as well as distinct action intentions. On the other hand, social identities also influence the agreement, exposure, and the use of social representations (Breakwell, 1993). Therefore, through this dynamic process, different objects can be redefined by groups in relation to their relative social context, their current intergroup relations and also through time, depending on the groups' needs (Breakwell, 1993; Deschamps & Moliner, 2008).

Furthermore, contemporary studies on collective memory were inspired by the seminal works of Halbwachs (1950/1968, 1925/1994) and Bartlett (1932/1995). According to these perspectives, collective memories are

products and processes inserted in the social environment; understanding them requires considering different factors, such as power relations, personal trajectories, individual and group agency in addition to the ways in which these memories are shared. Hence, collective memories constitute more than just an objective remembrance or reproduction of the past: They involve an active process of permanent interpretation, selection and (re)construction by individuals and groups, considering their different belongings, their social interactions, relations with the media, and the present-day context (Cabecinhas, Lima, & Chaves, 2006). In this sense, Licata and Klein (2005) define collective memory as “a shared set of representations of the past based on a common identity to a group” (p. 243). In this paper, we use the terms “collective memory” and “social representations of history” interchangeably.

Several studies (e.g., Licata & Klein, 2005; Rimé, Bouchat, Klein, & Licata, 2015; Tavani, Collange, Rateau, Rouquette, & Sanitioso, 2017) have analysed the connections between collective memory and social identity. In a recent review, Páez, Bobowik, De Guissmé, Liu, and Licata (2016) summarized the main functions of collective memory, which are: a) to define the group and its continuity –, that is, to delineate the categorization of who belongs to the group and who does not, thereby mobilizing and (re)defining social identities; b) to define norms and values of the group, dictating how its members should behave and react to different situations; c) to increase the sense of group cohesion, since it constitutes shared representations within the group; d) to help define the relative value of the group, as it compares its past with that of other groups, while trying to maintain a positive ingroup image; e) to legitimize past, present and future behaviour of the group; f) to mobilize the sense of belonging to the ingroup, contributing to the tendency of group members to engage in collective projects due to their shared belonging; and g) to influence the current psychological state of group members, since individuals may present different emotions (such as guilt, shame or pride) when reminded of past achievements or misdeeds of their ingroup (Páez et al., 2016).

These functions provide a better understanding of the role that social representations of history play in intergroup relations. In this line, the concept of charter is of great importance. This concept became well known through the work of Liu and Hilton (2005), who based their ideas on Malinowski's work (1926/2011) when referring to the “historical representations that serve to justify why the world is, by explaining how it came to be that way” (Liu et al., 1999, p. 1023). According to Liu and Hilton (2005), charters are central parts of the social representations of a group's history, given their constitutive properties (i.e., which contribute to the position settings and status of a group) and their normative properties (i.e., setting moral codes, norms, and values to justify and legitimize actions that can serve as foundational myths within a society). In addition, they may act as guides that allow group members to decide what they should or should not do, and how to react to a situation (Liu & Hilton, 2005).

Because we investigated social representations of history in the Latin American context in the present study, it is important to briefly discuss the main results found in the literature on social representations of world history (e.g., Pennebaker et al., 2006), namely: a) centrality of warfare and politics – people tended to consider events concerning conflicts, wars and revolutions as the most important factors in world history instead of other events such as those involving socioeconomic issues or scientific and technological achievements; b) recency bias – people tended to evoke recent events (for example, from the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries), considering them more important than those that occurred longer ago; c) sociocentric bias – individuals tended to adopt ethnocentric positions by considering events that occurred in or involved their own country and historical figures who were important for their national history as some of the most relevant to world history; d) Western-centric bias – when asked about the most important events in world history, people tended to remember events that took place mostly in Europe

or in the United States of America (USA), reproducing the current world power order (e.g., Liu et al., 2005, 2009; Pennebaker et al., 2006). In this paper we analyse whether our findings also reveal these biases.

## The Latin American Context

The construction of Latin America presupposes a heterogeneous set of political, economic, and social changes that occurred over the centuries in the different countries belonging to this region. Thus, the very concept of Latin America is controversial, and built from the interaction of different criteria, like geopolitical, historical, and cultural issues (Farret & Pinto, 2011)<sup>1</sup>.

Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, a process of European colonization took place in Latin America, mainly by Portugal and Spain, as well as France, England, and the Netherlands. This process led to profound economic, political, and social changes in the region, involving distinct aspects such as the genocide and enslavement of indigenous groups, as well as the forced displacement of Africans to the continent through the slave trade (Williamson, 2009).

In addition, most of the independence processes of Latin American countries took place in the nineteenth century. However, it is known that the end of colonialism as a political relationship did not mean its end as a form of social relation (Cabecinhas & Feijó, 2010; Santos, 2004) at the political, economic and social levels. This relation translates into a coloniality of power (Quijano, 2005), and, in many Latin American countries, one can still find a Eurocentric perspective regarding politics, which is mainly adopted by the elites of these countries (Quijano, 2005). It was also in the nineteenth century that the term “Latin America” began to be used. From that moment onwards, the parameters of opposition and comparison that were previously centred between the “New World” (i.e., the colonies in America) and Europe, also began to be configured between the USA (as part of the Anglo-Saxon America) and Latin America (Farret & Pinto, 2011).

During the twentieth century, Latin America underwent a process of modernization – a reflection of neoliberalism and the processes of globalization that began to intensify during this period, promoting the development of the region. Still, such processes did not eliminate the economic and social inequalities that constituted one of the obstacles to the process of social cohesion in Latin America (Gallucci, 2009). Thus, the construction of Latin America as a social category of belonging is being constituted in this political-cultural context, in which “a dynamic, multifaceted and multipolar identity process developed, crossed by a series of contradictions” (Solis, 2000, p. 9).

In view of the previous considerations, our main research questions are: How do young Latin American university students represent the history of the region? What are the main events and people remembered when thinking about Latin American history? Will the data regarding social representations of Latin American history replicate the general patterns found in previous research concerning social representations of world history (i.e., recency bias, sociocentric bias, centrality of warfare and politics)?

Having these questions as a starting point, we carried out this study aiming to analyse social representations of Latin American history in three countries of the region: Brazil, Mexico, and Chile.

## Method

For the purpose of this study, we selected countries that had Portugal and Spain as their main colonizers, whose official languages were Portuguese and Spanish. Among these, we selected Brazil, Mexico, and Chile due to feasibility, such as having contacts in these countries that could help disseminate the questionnaire. Moreover, despite the crises that countries like Brazil and Mexico are currently going through, the selected countries still present themselves as three of the largest economies in the region ([Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean \[ECLAC\], 2015](#)), and could have great importance in the political, economic and social decisions that concern Latin America.

### Participants

The sample consisted of 213 young undergraduate and graduate students: 112 Brazilians (69.6% women; age  $M = 25.40$ ,  $SD = 3.78$ ), 47 Chileans (46.8% women, age  $M = 25.15$ ,  $SD = 4.03$ ), and 54 Mexicans (68.5% women, age  $M = 25.74$ ,  $SD = 3.81$ ). Regarding their political orientation, 37.1% of the participants (Brazil = 36.6%; Chile = 31.9%; Mexico = 42.6%) reported they did not have one or preferred not to disclose it. Among those who said they had some political preference, most (64.9%) were left-wing oriented (Brazil = 59.2%; Chile = 78.1%; Mexico = 64.5%). It was a multiple-choice question, containing the following items: “left,” “moderate,” “right,” “I do not have one/I would rather not to disclose it” and, “others,” in which participants could write other possible political views.

Because the samples were non-probabilistic they cannot be considered representative of the whole population of the respective countries, nor of Latin America.

### Procedures

Data collection was conducted from the second half of 2015 until the beginning of 2016 via an online questionnaire, which contained open-ended questions about important events and people in the history of the region, as well as sociodemographic data. The instrument was adapted to each of the three countries, according to language and specific questions involving the countries' names. The set of questions used in previous studies on world history ([Liu et al., 2005](#)) was adapted to the Latin American context. Accordingly, participants were first asked to list five events and, afterwards, five people/personalities that they considered to be the most important in the history of Latin America. The questions were as follows: “In your opinion, what are the most important events [people] in the history of Latin America? (Write down the 5 main events [historical figures] that come to mind).” No list of events or people was presented, so recall was free and without restrictions. After each of these questions (about events and about historical figures), respondents were asked to assess the impact that they believed the events and people they mentioned had in Latin American history, on a scale ranging from 1 (very negative) to 7 (very positive).

It is noteworthy that the instrument also contained other open-ended questions about participants' perceptions regarding Latin America in general, and questions about the reasons for their responses. These questions are not analysed in this paper, although the answers given served as a source of contextualization for our understanding of participants' answers, and further substantiated the analyses conducted.

## Analytic Strategies

Data processing was performed using the protocols established in previous research (Liu et al., 2005). According to these protocols, the events and people that were initially mentioned by the participants were grouped, taking into consideration their recurrence. We kept the names that were most used by the participants to refer to the events and people. Then, they were coded according to “when,” “where” and “how” they were alluded to by adapting the codes used in the abovementioned studies. Therefore, the events were categorized as occurring, and historical figures as having performed their greatest achievements, during twelve different periods<sup>ii</sup>. These periods were proposed by Liu and colleagues (2005), with the exception of the “Sixteenth century (1500s),” and the “Twenty-first century (2000s),” which we added in the present study.

Also, historical figures were categorized according to their region of origin and/or where they were most active, whereas events were grouped according to the place where they occurred. Liu and colleagues (2005) used a more general coding scheme – involving different regions of the world, since they were investigating social representations of world history. In our case, considering social representations of Latin American history, we created the following system: 1) Countries of South America; 2) Central America; 3) North America (considering that Mexico is geographically located in North America); 4) Caribbean (island countries/areas which are part of the “Latin America and the Caribbean”); 5) Portugal; 6) Spain (since these two countries were the main colonizers of the countries studied in this research); 7) Other countries/regions; 8) Latin America in general (without specifying any country). Together with this categorization, we also checked the percentage of evoked events/people, which referred to the respondents’ country of origin.

The themes according to which the events were coded are as follows: 1) Wars and conflicts, including revolutions; 2) Political events other than wars, including references to government regimes, such as dictatorships; 3) Scientific and technological achievements; 4) Disasters; 5) Discoveries, exploration and colonization; 6) Economic issues; 7) Births, deaths and lives of individuals; 8) Art, culture, sports and tourism; 9) Independences (given the importance of this category to the participants, we considered it separately); 10) Social issues; 11) Rights claims/social achievements; 12) Environmental issues; 13) Social groups/society; 14) Other aspects. The first seven categories were proposed by Liu and colleagues (2005); the remaining ones were created based on our results. Since there were fewer mentions of events related to “Art, culture, sports and tourism,” we decided to create a single category for these four issues.

Regarding the historical figures, they were also coded according to their main area of expertise and/or the reasons for which they were mostly called forth<sup>iii</sup>: 1) Conflict and wartime achievements; 2) Political leadership not primarily because of warfare; 3) Scientific and technological achievements; 4) Art, literature, music, philosophy and other theoretical advances; 5) Discoveries, exploration and colonization; 6) Humanitarian work; 7) Spiritual leadership; 8) Athletics, dance and physical beauty; 9) Independences; 10) Other aspects. These categories were proposed by Liu and colleagues (2005), with the exception of “Independences.” It is important to highlight that each response was coded into only one of the abovementioned categories.

After conducting the coding, data were processed with the *IBM SPSS Statistics 20* software, in order to perform descriptive statistics calculations concerning the events and historical figures, and the impact attributed to them.

## Results

### Most Important Events in Latin American History

In total, 229 different events (most of these with one mention) were listed by the participants in the three samples: Brazilian sample = 142 events; Mexican sample = 96 events; Chilean sample = 82 events. There were five common events among the ten events most frequently evoked by participants in this study, as shown in Table 1: independences, dictatorships, Cuban Revolution, colonization, and discovery.

*Independences* was the event most frequently mentioned by the three samples, with positively perceived impact; whereas *colonization* and *dictatorships* were negatively assessed by the three samples, particularly by the Chilean one. The impact of the *Cuban Revolution* was considered positive, mainly by Mexican participants.

Regarding the “*discovery*” of Latin American countries, we found more controversy in our results. Different expressions were used by the participants to refer to this event; some named it discovery, others conquest or invasion. These different ways of naming the same event seem to convey a different positioning of the individuals and different interpretations regarding the impact of this event. Those who used the term *discovery* tended to evaluate its impact as more positive than those who used the term *conquest*. For this reason, we chose to separate these constructs in order to encourage discussions about representations of the “discoveries,” which are fundamental to the construction of Latin American history and the identity dynamics of those who belong to this region.

Table 1

*Most Important Events in Latin American History*

Brazil (N = 112)	%	Impact	Chile (N = 47)	%	Impact	Mexico (N = 54)	%	Impact
independences	46.4	5.39 (1.86)	independences	59.6	5.18 (1.39)	independences	61.1	5.30 (1.51)
dictatorships	33.9	3.73 (2.43)	dictatorships	44.7	1.00 (0.00)	conquest	33.3	3.56 (1.92)
Paraguayan War	33.9	3.66 (2.29)	Cuban Revolution	42.6	5.30 (1.38)	Cuban Revolution	25.9	6.07 (1.21)
Cuban Revolution	32.1	4.53 (2.08)	conquest	25.5	2.75 (1.06)	dictatorships	24.1	2.00 (1.83)
colonization	19.6	2.36 (1.73)	colonization	17.0	2.13 (1.25)	colonization	20.4	3.00 (1.79)
Treaty of Tordesillas	19.6	4.88 (1.62)	coup d'état	17.0	1.38 (0.74)	revolutions	18.5	5.80 (1.62)
MERCOSUR	17.0	4.56 (2.53)	discovery	14.9	5.86 (1.35)	Mexican Revolution	16.7	5.44 (1.67)
discovery	14.3	5.13 (1.86)	Chilean dictatorship	12.8	1.80 (1.30)	discovery	14.8	4.13 (1.46)
end of dictatorships	9.7	6.50 (0.71)	Mexican Revolution	12.8	5.17 (1.83)	NAFTA	14.8	3.00 (2.20)
democracies	8.0	4.44 (2.01)	Allende's government	10.6	6.20 (1.30)	loss of Texas/USA–Mexican War	11.1	1.67 (0.82)
			neoliberalism	10.6	1.60 (1.34)	independence of Mexico	11.1	5.67 (1.75)
			revolutions	10.6	5.40 (1.14)			
			extermination of native/indigenous peoples	10.6	1.00 (0.00)			

*Note.* (%) = Percentage of participants who spontaneously mentioned the event; Impact = average perceived impact (and standard deviation); Impact Scale: 1 = very negative; 7 = very positive. For Chile and Mexico, more than ten events are listed, since different events were mentioned in equal frequency.

In the Chilean and Mexican samples, there was a strong remembrance of the events: *conquest* (with negatively perceived impact), *revolutions* and *Mexican Revolution* (both with positively perceived impact). Regarding the specificities in each country, the events nominated only in the Brazilian “Top 10” were: *Paraguayan War*, *Treaty of Tordesillas*, *MERCOSUR*, *end of dictatorships*, and *democracies*. The events named only in the Chilean “Top



10” were: *coup d'états*, *Chilean dictatorship*, *extermination of native/indigenous peoples*<sup>iv</sup>, *neoliberalism* and *Salvador Allende's government*. This last event had a positive evaluation and the other four had negative evaluations regarding their impact on Latin American history – in particular, the *extermination of native/indigenous peoples*. Lastly, the events named only in the Mexican “Top 10” were: *independence of Mexico* (with a positive rating), *NAFTA agreement*, and *loss of Texas/USA-Mexican War* (as a result of the expansionist policy of the USA), all of which were negatively evaluated.

### Most Important Personalities in Latin American History

The total number of personalities nominated by the participants was 162 (Brazilian sample = 97; Chilean sample = 70; Mexican sample = 61). There were four common historical figures among the ten most evoked names from the three samples, as shown in Table 2: *Che Guevara*<sup>v</sup> and *Fidel Castro* – leaders of the Cuban Revolution; the Venezuelan politician and military person *Simón Bolívar*, and the navigator *Christopher Columbus*.

Che Guevara, who is usually considered a worldwide symbol in the fight against social injustice (Páez et al., 2016), was the personality most frequently named in all samples (with positive evaluations). As in previous studies (Larson & Lizardo, 2007), Che Guevara's importance seems to be salient among young, highly educated and mostly left-wing orientated people, as was the case of most of the participants in our study.

Table 2

Most Important Figures in Latin American History

Brazil (N = 112)	%	Impact	Chile (N = 47)	%	Impact	Mexico (N = 54)	%	Impact
Che Guevara	61.6	5.12 (1.78)	Che Guevara	53.2	5.36 (1.44)	Che Guevara	63.0	5.62 (1.44)
Fidel Castro	39.3	3.51 (1.80)	Fidel Castro	51.1	4.58 (1.61)	Simón Bolívar	55.6	6.03 (1.19)
Simón Bolívar	35.7	5.75 (1.37)	Simón Bolívar	48.9	5.52 (1.38)	Fidel Castro	50.0	4.74 (1.53)
Lula	34.8	4.87 (2.12)	Augusto Pinochet	38.3	1.39 (0.98)	Christopher Columbus	29.6	4.13 (1.54)
Christopher Columbus	21.4	4.58 (2.04)	Salvador Allende	34.0	5.56 (1.93)	Hernán Cortés	24.1	3.00 (1.63)
Hugo Chávez	18.8	3.86 (2.29)	Christopher Columbus	25.5	4.17 (1.95)	Miguel Hidalgo	18.5	5.50 (1.32)
Getúlio Vargas	17.9	4.11 (1.79)	José de San Martín	23.4	6.18 (0.98)	Benito Juárez	16.7	5.22 (0.97)
Pedro Álvares Cabral	13.4	4.60 (2.16)	Pablo Neruda	19.1	5.56 (1.94)	José de San Martín	16.7	6.33 (1.12)
Eva Perón	10.7	5.50 (1.93)	Hugo Chávez	17.0	3.75 (2.05)	Porfirio Díaz	14.8	5.13 (1.73)
Gabriel García Márquez	8.9	6.70 (0.48)	Hernán Cortés	8.5	3.00 (2.71)	Augusto Pinochet	13.0	1.14 (0.38)
Pope Francis	8.9	6.78 (0.44)	José Mujica	8.5	6.25 (0.96)			
D. Pedro I	8.9	4.60 (1.78)	Juan Domingo Perón	8.5	4.00 (0.00)			

Note. (%) = Percentage of participants who spontaneously mentioned the historical figure; Impact = average perceived impact (and standard deviation); Impact Scale: 1 = very negative; 7 = very positive. For Brazil and Chile, more than ten personalities are listed, since different personalities were mentioned in equal frequency.

The perceived impact of Simón Bolívar was very positive in the three samples, probably due to his role as one of the main leaders of the independence movements in different Latin American countries throughout the nineteenth century. As for Christopher Columbus, his average perceived impact was near the mid-point of the scale. This is possibly due to debates in recent decades about “America's discovery,” which we will discuss later.

Three other personalities were commonly remembered by the Mexican and Chilean samples: the Argentinian leader of independence struggles in different countries of Latin America, *José de San Martín* (with positive impact),

the Spanish conqueror *Hernán Cortés*, and the former president and Chilean dictator *Augusto Pinochet* (both with negative perceived impact). The latter received the most negative evaluations among all historical figures mentioned in the three samples.

The presence of *Hernán Cortés* and *José de San Martín* among the main personalities chosen by Chilean and Mexican participants, and their absence from the Brazilian “Top 10” is probably connected to the fact that the first two countries share an experience of Spanish colonization, which contributes to the existence of common “villains” and “heroes” within their narratives. This narrative does not apply to Brazil due to its Portuguese colonization.

Former Venezuelan president *Hugo Chavez* was named in the Brazilian and Chilean “Top 10.” Former Brazilian presidents Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (better known as *Lula*) and *Getúlio Vargas*, Portuguese explorer *Pedro Álvares Cabral*, Argentina's former First Lady and activist *Eva Perón* (usually referred to as *Evita*), Colombian writer and Nobel Prize winner *Gabriel García Márquez*, Argentinian pontiff *Pope Francis*, and Brazil's first emperor, *D. Pedro I*, were only named in the Brazilian “Top 10.”

The personalities named only in the Chilean “Top 10” were: former Chilean president *Salvador Allende*, poet and Chilean diplomat *Pablo Neruda*, former Uruguayan President *José Mujica* (or *Pepe Mujica*, as he is best known), and former Argentinian president *Juan Domingo Perón*.

Finally, the revolutionary *Miguel Hidalgo*, who played an important role in the struggle for Mexican independence, former Mexican presidents *Benito Juárez* and *Porfirio Díaz* were only present in the Mexican “Top 10.”

### **On Personalities and Events: When, Where and How?**

When taking into consideration the total number of events and people nominated by the respondents, what did the results show? As explained in the methodological section, we conducted a categorization of all events and personalities according to place, time, and subject.

Regarding the periods in which the events occurred, or in which the personalities had higher performance, the results corroborated previous studies (e.g., [Liu et al., 2005, 2009](#); [Pennebaker et al., 2006](#)) on social representations of world history. More concretely, there was a recency effect in the collective memories regarding Latin American history, with a prominence of events – especially of people – from the twentieth century ([Liu et al., 2005](#)). Moreover, there were very few references to events and personalities prior to the “discovery” of America.

As to the places where the events took place, most were coded as “Latin America in general” in all three samples because they referred to events that happened in multiple Latin American countries, such as colonization and independences. Furthermore, there was a certain sociocentrism in the selection of events and personalities, which corroborates previous studies (e.g., [Liu et al., 2005, 2009](#); [Pennebaker et al., 2006](#)). Of all the events named by Brazilian, Chilean and Mexican participants, 22.9%, 7.1% and 12.6%, respectively, happened within, or directly concerned, each of these countries. This pattern of sociocentrism increases when we consider the personalities mentioned in each country: 39.2% for the Brazilian sample, 20% for the Chilean sample, and 39.3% for the Mexican sample.

It is also interesting to note that aside from the Treaty of Tordesillas (which was signed in 1494 between Portugal and Spain in order to divide the newly discovered lands), there was no mention of any other events that took place in these two European countries. As for the historical figures from these countries, they were mostly remembered

as “villains,” such as discoverers/conquerors (i.e. *conquistadores*), which is clear from the types of personalities with Portuguese origins evoked in the Brazilian sample and the Spanish personalities evoked in the Chilean and Mexican samples. In the three samples, the category “other countries/regions” was primarily formed by elements referring to the European continent. In turn, the category “North America,” especially in the Brazilian and Chilean samples, presented more references to the USA, with the exception of references to the Mexican Revolution and the Zapatista movement, which are both linked to Mexico.

Next, we categorized the events and personalities evoked in accordance to the types of issues and themes to which they are linked. We observed (see Table 3) a centrality of events related to *wars and conflicts* and *other political events*, replicating the results of previous studies about social representations of world history (e.g., Liu et al., 2005, 2009; Pennebaker et al., 2006).

Table 3

Content of Important Events in Latin American History (In Percentages)

Theme/Type of Event	Brazil	Chile	Mexico	Overall Mean
Wars and conflicts	21.3	22.5	21.5	21.7
Other political events	20.2	25.4	11.5	19.0
Discoveries, exploration and colonization	18.6	18.2	17.6	18.1
Independences	11.9	11.9	18.8	14.2
Economic issues	9.0	4.2	9.2	7.5
Rights claims/social achievements	6.5	3.0	4.2	4.5
Social issues	3.7	5.5	5.4	4.9
Social groups/society	0.6	4.2	2.7	2.5
Art, culture, sport and tourism	2.7	2.1	1.5	2.1
Science and technology	2.0	1.3	2.3	1.8
Disasters	1.2	-	2.7	1.3
Births and deaths	0.6	0.8	1.5	1.0
Environmental issues	1.0	0.8	0.4	0.7
Other	0.8	-	0.8	0.5

Note. These results refer to the percentage of participants that spontaneously mentioned events related to these issues; Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Still, in this study, the overall percentage of these two categories of events combined for the three samples (40.7%) was lower than what was found in previous studies. This is probably due to the distribution of events in other categories, especially in the two concerning *discoveries, exploration and colonization* and *independences*, which together accounted for an average of 32.3% of all the events mentioned.

In addition to the four previously mentioned categories, which accounted for 73% of the total of the evocations, there were events concerning: *Economic issues* (7.5%) – for example, the various free trade agreements; *Rights claims/social achievements* (4.5%) – such as the abolition of slavery, women's leadership in governments, and dictatorship resistance movements; *Social issues* (4.9%) – such as drug trafficking, poverty, social inequality; and *Social groups/society* (2.5%). The latter category alludes to the existence of different population groups prior to the “discoveries,” and includes responses such as “human presence in America,” namely the Aztecs, the Mayans and the Incas. We created this category because, through the open-ended questions, it was possible to determine that participants named these events as a means of defining a sense of belonging, as an identity claim, a reassur-

ance that there were people from different groups in this territory prior to its colonization by European powers<sup>vi</sup>. Other categories included *Art, culture, sports and tourism* (2.1%) – involving events such as folklore festivals, literary awards/movements, World Cups, and the Olympic Games; *Scientific and technological achievements* (1.8%) – such as industrialization and the construction of the Panama Canal; *Disasters* (1.3%) – for example, earthquakes and floods; *Births and deaths of individuals* (1.0%) – for example, the deaths of Pablo Escobar, Salvador Allende and Hugo Chávez; and *Environmental issues* (0.7%) – such as deforestation and water scarcity. Finally, the category *Other* (0.5%) included aspects that were not very clear, and therefore difficult to include in any of the above categories, such as “the present-day” or “size of Latin America.”

Regarding the areas of achievements of the historical figures (see Table 4), personalities with a *political leadership* role (not necessarily implying conflict) were most commonly named. For example, different presidents, in democratic and dictatorial governments, were mentioned. This category, together with *conflict and wartime* achievements, accounted for an average of 54.3% of the responses in the three samples.

Table 4

*Realms of Achievements for Important Figures in the Latin American History (In Percentage)*

Theme/Realm of Achievement	Brazil	Chile	Mexico	Overall Mean
Political leadership	33.7	28.1	23.7	28.5
Conflict and wartime	23.4	24.7	29.2	25.8
Independences	11.3	18.6	20.2	16.7
Discoveries, exploration and colonization	11.3	10.8	13.8	12.0
Art, literature, music, philosophy	8.5	13.4	8.7	10.2
Humanitarian work	3.4	2.2	3.2	2.9
Athletics, dance and physical beauty	2.4	1.7	0.4	1.5
Spiritual leadership	2.4	0.4	-	0.9
Science and technology	1.6	-	-	0.5
Other	2.0	-	0.8	0.9

*Note.* These results refer to the percentage of participants that spontaneously mentioned important figures related to these realms/themes of achievement. Columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.

The *independences* category, together with *discoveries, exploration and colonization*, accounted for an average of 28.7% of the areas of achievement of the important figures. There was a greater appreciation for local (e.g., Miguel Hidalgo in Mexico; San Martín in Chile; Pedro I in Brazil) and supranational “heroes” (such as Simón Bolívar) involved in independence processes than for historical figures involved in the “discovery” and conquest of the region (such as Christopher Columbus; Hernán Cortés for Mexican and Chilean participants; and Pedro Álvares Cabral for Brazilian participants).

The other categories of achievements were: *Art, literature, music, philosophy* (10.2%) – including different writers, singers, actors, painters, among others, with a particular emphasis on literature, especially Gabriel García Márquez and Pablo Neruda; *Humanitarian work* (2.9%) – for example, people like the Guatemalan Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú, Brazilian doctor Zilda Arns, nominated for the same award, and the Argentinian First Lady and activist Eva Perón; *Athletics, dance and physical beauty* (1.5%) – especially the football players Pelé and Diego Maradona; *Spiritual leadership* (0.9%) – namely Pope Francis, among Brazilians; *Scientific and technological achievements* (0.5%) – mentioned only in the Brazilian sample, with the aeronaut Santos Dumont, the

architect Oscar Niemeyer and the doctor and neuroscientist Miguel Nicolelis; and *Other* (0.9%) – including figures who were difficult to classify within the previous options, such as the drug dealer Pablo Escobar, and other “generic” figures like “cartels” or “indigenous.”

There was a predominance of male figures among the personalities considered to be most important for Latin American history, which evidenced a forgetfulness of female personalities. Female figures were usually named for their involvement in humanitarian work or arts/music – a result also found in studies about social representations of world history (Liu et al., 2005).

## Discussion

With regard to the most frequently mentioned events in the three samples, our results show that there are still ambiguous and controversial understandings and evaluations concerning the *discovery*, *conquest* and *colonization* of Latin American countries. Despite recent debates criticizing the use of the term *discovery* to refer to the process of invasion and conquest that happened in the region, there was a positive evaluation of this term, especially among Brazilian participants. These debates occurred mainly during the celebrations of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “the discovery of America” in the year 1992 and, later on, with the celebrations of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “discovery of Brazil” in the year 2000 (Sá, Oliveira, & Prado, 2004). While some participants seemed to share a more positive representation regarding this event, others preferred to name it as *conquest* as a means of emphasising the negative impact it had on Latin American history, in line with the content of the abovementioned debates. As for *colonization*, there seemed to be more consensus across the samples regarding its negative impact.

Another result that merits discussion is the controversial evaluation of the event *democracies* among Brazilian respondents. This event had an almost neutral (near the mid-point of the scale) evaluation and had a higher standard deviation than *end of dictatorships*. This rating for *democracies* in the Brazilian sample may be linked to that fact that data collection took place during a period of intense political and social instability in Brazil, namely during the beginning of the impeachment process of former President Dilma Rousseff, which started in December 2015 and was implemented in August 2016.

Finally, within the Chilean sample, the extremely negative evaluation of the event *extermination of native/indigenous peoples* could be a means of drawing attention to this issue, in order to avoid the forgetfulness of the exclusion and extermination of native peoples that took place in the region. While this occurred mainly during colonial time, it still has significant relevance in terms of the need to highlight the difficulties faced by indigenous people in present-day society (Barabas, 2014).

Regarding the most important personalities in the three samples, our results add to the discussions about the role of “heroes” and “villains” in social representations of history. Previous studies (e.g., Hanke et al., 2015) have argued that historical figures can embody values, inspiring actions. Therefore, in their research about “heroes” and “villains” of world history across different countries, Hanke and colleagues (2015) argue that these historical figures can help us understand “the values and achievements that humanity aspires to and humanity, as a whole, rejects” (p. 4). In our study, as debated earlier, participants’ narratives regarding Latin American history were permeated by the antagonism between different “villains” and “heroes”: conquerors and colonizers *versus* independence leaders, until the nineteenth century; dictators *versus* democratic and revolutionary leaders, in the twentieth century. Despite

the changes in the specific historical figures, their roles/functions remain similar: facing different oppressors, liberation leaders stand out, in order to resist oppression and pursue freedom.

The results of our study replicate those of previous research about social representations of world history in different countries (e.g., Liu et al., 2005, 2009; Pennebaker et al., 2006). There was a recency effect, especially regarding the historical figures mentioned and, despite the prominence of the events referring to Latin America in general, there was a sociocentric bias in the three samples, which was stronger for the personalities than for the events named.

When taking into consideration the temporal dimension of the narrative (László, 2008) of Latin American history, our results across the three samples indicate that history seems to “begin” around the end of the fifteenth century and the start of the sixteenth century – at the time of the region's conquest. Then, different “villains” and “heroes” come into play. Centuries of colonization go by, a period from which few events or personalities are remembered. During the nineteenth century, there is a new “peak” in the narrative plot, in which most of the processes of independence in these countries take place, with the involvement of different national and supranational “heroes.” Finally, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, new events boost the plot of history, along with other “heroes” (e.g., revolutionary leaders) and “villains” (e.g., dictators) that keep providing continuities and transformations to the narrative of the region. The scarcity of references to the pre-colonial history of Latin America might be related to the prominence of oral means of transmission of this part of history, the “erasure” of materials and evidence of the previous civilizations living in this territory, and a Western bias that imposes a European point of view (Said, 1978/1985) by also opposing the West and the Rest (Hall, 1996).

When analysing the location of the events and personalities, we observed that among Brazilian participants, there was a prominence of events and people concerning Brazil. This might be related to the socioeconomic status of the country in the superordinate group (Latin America). Brazil is marked by a historical, political and cultural distance from its neighbouring countries as a result of not having shared the same colonizer as other Latin American countries, and having experienced a different independence process compared to Chile and Mexico (Onuki, Mouron, & Urdinez, 2016). In addition, there is a difference in terms of the official language of the countries (Portuguese in Brazil and Spanish in Chile and Mexico), as well as a dissimilar population composition and history of development, in which Brazil preferred to turn its face to Europe and its back to Latin America (Onuki et al., 2016).

Lastly, with regard to the categorization of the events named, great importance was given to political issues, conflicts, and revolutions. There was also a prominence of issues concerning colonization and independence, both in the free recall questions and open-ended questions, where participants also referred to the maintenance of a coloniality of power. Respondents mentioned a greater number of elements concerning different social problems, such as poverty and social inequality, and social achievements such as abolition of slavery, and fewer elements regarding scientific and technological achievements, when compared to data from European countries (Liu et al., 2005). This pattern of results is similar to that found in studies concerning social representations of world history conducted in several African countries (Cabecinhas et al., 2011). This is probably the result of the socio-economic situation of these countries and their relative status in world relations. In addition, there was an attempt to enhance the value of the ingroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), through the emphasis on areas in which people of the region stand out, such as literature.

However, a central aspect of the history that these Latin American participants reveal is the struggle and the sense of overcoming, which unfolds itself through three fundamental moments: colonization, independences, and dicta-

torships (their beginning and their end, followed by a redemocratization process). So, it is a narrative that goes from exploitation to independence, from repression to freedom. This narrative, considering the extent of the region, its economic disintegration and its socio-cultural diversity (Canclini, 1999), brings together different countries because of the liberation from common oppressors: firstly, the colonizers; and then, the dictators. This is a way of strengthening the sense of belonging to these “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1983/1991), not only in each country, but also within Latin America as a supranational group. While sharing crucial moments, this narrative contributes to the construction of this supranational identity and the increase in its cohesion, not only by presenting common oppressors, but also by valuing the agency of individuals, their capacity for struggle and resistance, and their active role in past and future changes in the region.

## Connections With Intergroup Relations

As we discussed earlier, collective memories share intimate connections with present-day intergroup relations. Previous studies have shown that collective memories help define and protect social identities (e.g., Liu et al., 1999), and are associated with group-based emotions (e.g., Branscombe & Doosje, 2004), victimization (e.g., Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012), reconciliation (e.g., Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi, & Lewis, 2008), and acculturation processes (e.g., Figueiredo, Oldenhove, & Licata, 2018).

Furthermore, when functioning as charters, collective memories can also influence political action (Liu & Hilton, 2005; Liu et al., 1999). Considering that individuals may draw “moral” lessons from their interpretations of past events, charters can help define how different groups should react to present-day situations, as well as the status and position of such groups in their relations with other groups (Liu & Hilton, 2005; Páez et al., 2016). Hence, in our study, we believe that the events *colonization*, *independences*, and *dictatorships* can be understood as charters regarding the social representations of Latin American history.

According to Liu and Hilton (2005), the existence of a charter in the representations of a group’s history seems to be linked to hegemonic social representations (Moscovici, 1988). However, despite being considered hegemonic, there are no uniform and homogeneous representations and, for this reason, they may be (re)negotiated over time and changed according to different circumstances in order to provide the group with ways to deal with new challenges (Liu & Hilton, 2005).

In contexts like the present time, where there is greater intercultural contact between different groups, social representations of history become even more plural, challenging the already acknowledged charters within a group (Liu & Hilton, 2005). This is the case, for example, for supranational groups such as the European Union and Latin America. Despite having their specificities and differences, it is important that the countries that are part of a supranational group share some common elements regarding the social representations of this group’s history. These shared representations can promote cooperation between the different countries that make up the larger group, enhancing superordinate group cohesion. It is also worth noting that political leaders may take these representations into account to formulate policies that allow for better political and social relations between different countries (Liu & Hilton, 2005; Sakki, 2016).

Accordingly, just as the construction of national and supranational identities occurs in the midst of differences, contradictions and power relations (Hall, 1992), the construction of collective memories may constitute a disputed and contested field (Cabecinhas et al., 2006). Thus, social representations of history may serve as a tool to segregate and reinforce stereotypes, by prioritizing the construction of conflicting stories, and thereby reinforcing past

and present intergroup conflicts and discrimination. Nevertheless, social representations of history can also serve as a mechanism of regaining positive self-esteem, challenging negative stereotypes and the legitimacy of the current social order, furthering intercultural dialogue, and fostering the reduction of intergroup conflicts (Liu & Hilton, 2005).

The results of our study provide us with interesting material to discuss intergroup relations within Latin America and between Latin America and other parts of the world. Taking into consideration the main functions of collective memories, the prominence of events and personalities concerning colonization and independence processes in our results might be an attempt by some participants to denounce the long process of violence and exploitation the region experienced. It could also be a way of blaming the Other (in this case, the countries that were once the colonizers) for the difficulties that the individuals from this region face today, serving as a means of identity protection for the ingroup (Latin America) (Páez et al., 2016).

Hence, social psychological research cannot neglect the weight of historical colonial experiences in present-day intergroup relations. As synthesised by Volpato and Licata (2010):

The way this violent past is collectively remembered today is therefore a crucial factor for understanding contemporary instances of intergroup conflict, prejudice, stigmatization, and racism. Conversely, collective memories of the colonial times could also be instrumental in promoting intergroup reconciliation, mutual respect, and mutual recognition in and between contemporary societies (p. 5).

Our results reaffirm the need to address the continuities of colonial relations, which remain present in current times in the form of a coloniality of power (Quijano, 2005), of being and knowing (e.g., Maldonado-Torres, 2007), which influence the way people with different backgrounds (e.g., previous colonizers vs. previously colonized people) interact.

Furthermore, as argued by Liu and Hilton (2005), “a group can use its collective wisdom to manage present crises through its memory of past ones, often with the aim of preventing history from repeating itself” (p. 549). Therefore, through analogies with past experiences, individuals relate new events to what they already know, to what is more familiar to them, hence anchoring (Moscovici, 1961/2004) these new events in those already experienced by their ingroup. This anchoring process was probably the reason why some Brazilian participants mentioned *democracies* and *end of dictatorships* among the most important events in Latin American history. At the time of data collection, the country was going through a political crisis and the fear of a new dictatorship was represented in the media, which enhanced the cognitive salience of such events. Therefore, the importance given to these events by Brazilian participants might be a way of remembering what once happened in the country, and highlighting the need to prevent this from happening again.

Given the interconnections between present-day intergroup relations and collective memories, it is also interesting to reflect on some questions left unanswered by our research: What would be the results if this study was conducted after the elections of the current president of the USA (Donald Trump)? Which events and historical figures would be named by participants then? Would participants activate more memories of conflict between Latin America and the USA and/or more memories that enhanced the superordinate group's cohesion? Especially, in the case of Mexico, which shares a border with the USA and is in a direct context of social comparison (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) with this country, would Mexican participants nominate events and personalities that further emphasize their own role as self-determining actors and not as passive victims (Bulhan, 2015) as a means of facing the threat



caused by this dominant outgroup (USA)? These are some of the numerous questions that leave us with possibilities for future studies about the interconnections between collective memories and present-day intergroup relations.

## Limitations and Further Research

This study had some limitations, namely the sizes of the samples and their characteristics: individuals with high educational levels, ranging from 18 to 35 years old, mostly politically left-wing oriented (among those who said they had some preference). Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the population of these three countries nor to Latin America as a whole. Furthermore, our study only used basic statistical analyses based on qualitative data from the free-recall tasks, following protocols of previous studies on social representations of world history (Liu et al., 2005). In the future, more sophisticated statistical models, such as Correspondence Analysis (Doise, Clémence, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1992) or Multidimensional Scaling (Spini, 2002), can also be used to analyse this kind of data.

Considering the exploratory nature of this research, future studies could be developed with larger samples from different Latin American countries, and using different procedures of data collection and analysis. It is also important to highlight that the (re)constructions and (re)appropriations of the past in the present-day context involve remembering some types of content and forgetting others. Therefore, future studies focusing on potentially “forgotten” aspects of a group’s collective memories are necessary. Finally, further studies should analyse the existence and configuration of inter-generational effects of collective memories of Latin American history and the role that the media play in reinforcing or challenging hegemonic social representations of the region’s history.

## Concluding Remarks

This exploratory study contributed to the literature on social representations of history by providing further data regarding supranational groups. It also contributed to a discussion on the links between social representations of history and present-day intergroup relations, especially regarding postcolonial relations. Therefore, our research can serve as a starting point for further studies to explore different questions regarding social representations of Latin American history, present-day intergroup relations, and perspectives for the region’s future.

To conclude, we would like to stress that further studies about collective memory and postcolonial relations can offer important contributions to future dialogues between different countries of the Latin American region, and between them and their neighbouring countries, as well as their former colonizers. As a result, it may be possible to reduce (old and new) intergroup conflicts across and beyond the region. Finally, as claimed by Liu and Hilton (2005), social psychology, together with history, can provide subsidies for these dialogues, through an integrated analysis of historical events themselves, and the interplay between these and the social representations and social identities constructed by different groups.

## Notes

i) In addition to the inaccuracies regarding the origin of the term Latin America, its concept is also controversial. It is understood that all definitions are arbitrary and that, depending on the framework that is adopted, different configurations are possible. For the purposes of this paper, we use the United Nations (2016) delimitation present in the International Migration Report 2015. According to this document, the countries or areas that are part of the region called “Latin America and the Caribbean” are subdivided as follows: *Caribbean countries/areas* – Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Bonaire,

Sint Eustatius and Saba (part of the former Netherlands Antilles), British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten (Dutch part), Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands; *countries/areas of South America* – Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Falkland Islands (Malvinas), French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela; *countries/areas of Central America* – Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama.

ii) The periods were: 1) Prehistoric times (before 10,000 BC); 2) Ancient history (10,000 to 1000 BC); 3) Classical period - Part 1 (1000 BC to 500 AD); 4) Classical period - Part 2 (500 to 1000 AD); 5) Second millennium (1000 to 1500 AD); 6) Sixteenth century (1500s) (in Liu and colleagues' study (2005), the sixteenth century is included in the "second millennium"; however, we separated it to highlight its great importance in the history of Latin America); 7) Seventeenth century (1600s); 8) Eighteenth century (1700s); 9) Nineteenth century (1800s); 10) Twentieth century (1900s); 11) Twenty-first century (2000s); 12) Non classifiable period – events that lasted for over a century, such as colonization, or events which cannot be restricted to a time identification of a particular century.

iii) As in previous studies (e.g., Liu et al., 2005), different sources – from books about the history of Latin America (Bethell, 1990; Burns & Charlip, 2002; Williamson, 2009) to journalistic texts available online – were consulted to provide elements for the classification of events and personalities in different categories.

iv) The phrase "native peoples" (*pueblos originarios* in Spanish) is an affirmative expression "that these people in struggle found to name themselves and overcome the Eurocentric generalization of 'indigenous peoples'" (Porto-Gonçalves, 2011, p. 40). However, considering that there are participants who use the term "indigenous" (especially in Brazil) and others use "native peoples" (especially in Chile), we will use both terms interchangeably in this paper to refer to these indigenous/native groups and/or their descendants.

v) We do not use the full names of the personalities, but only the names by which they are best known and which were reported by the participants.

vi) It is noteworthy that the references to the conquest/extermination of these pre-Columbian peoples during the colonial period were coded within *discoveries, exploration and colonization*.

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## Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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