CALL FOR PAPERS

Exploring change in Cuba: invention, innovation, renewal, renovation and new integrations.
Towards an understanding of the process in Europe

Academic conference organized for 11 and 12 June, 2015, in Paris, France

Organization: Blandine Destremau (CNRS, EHESS IRIS); Nils Graber (EHESS, Cermes 3); and Jérôme Leleu (EHESS, CEMI)

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS OF WORK

Cuba is going through an intense period of change, driven by reforms to lift the country out of the economic crisis that began in the 1990s. This process of change accelerated with the arrival to the presidency of Raúl Castro in 2008. In the same period, Cuba’s international integration has increased, through the role it plays in international organizations, the multiplication of bilateral agreements with countries in South America but also with Russia and China, and the re-negotiation of relations with the European Union within a context of questioning the ‘Common Position’.

Social science research on Cuba carried out in France and in Europe, is multiplying, although remains scattered. Our ambition is to propose a multidisciplinary forum for exchange and reflection, including young and senior researchers from France and Europe, about the ways in which the changes in Cuba can be analysed. Through this meeting, we will try to generate a dialogue between quantitative and qualitative approaches, micro and macro, ‘committed’ research and that integrated into the academic setting, in a thoughtful approach to the changes in Cuba based upon field work. We will also welcome work from historical perspectives, and other branches of the social sciences, which are interrogating the current dynamics in Cuba.

Our thoughtful approach will adopt two orientations:

At the methodological level, this conference will question the practice of research in the social sciences. How does the researcher access data, and how does his/her own experience affect their analysis? How is macro and micro research articulated, transparently or hidden? What of case studies, personal testimonies and stories of the small and ordinary? Is there a significant gap between ordinary practices and policy decisions and how to approach to epistemological and methodological level?

In the analytical and conceptual field, we will try to reflect on the interpretations of what, it is said that changes in the light of the key words of the debate in Cuba: Is it only ‘invention’, a term in Cuba in the daily practices aimed more generally at solving very specific problems? Can we talk about ‘innovation, social, political, economic, ecological, etc., referring to a creative adaptation of structural frameworks, which have kept changing and adjusting since their introduction in the 1960s? Later, we will consider these initiatives, in themselves and their effects. Are they effecting a ‘renewal’ – or ‘update’ to use an official term – of the Cuban socialist system? How are research and development positions built? Are they constructed on epistemological and methodological grounds or upon conviction? To whom they are intended?

This conference will have three levels of analysis:
1) The experiences of the actors in the context of current changes: inventions, innovations? What people do, what initiatives – daring, investment, solidarity, participation, cooperation, culture – to take advantage of open spaces for institutional change? What are the means to achieving that? How do the actors found during field work set out their experiences,
initiatives and projects? How does they position themselves relative to social change in Cuba and relative to the reforms promoted by the government? Do they make reference to 'new' values and norms or values and norms that might call 'revolutionary'? What are the expressions of response; can we talk about creativity in terms of political and cultural participation? How can the researcher interpret what they hear, see and observe? How does this stand out against other scales of change?

2) The political-economic, legal and social reforms, their effects and modes of enunciation: renovation and update? How are the reforms designed and implemented by the political and economic actors? What are the legal texts that accompany them? What are the effects on social cohesion, economic entities and balance of political power, and how are these effects considered? What are the forms of solidarity, cooperation and integration that arise and develop to address, among other things, the restructuring of the labour market and forms of economic production, the increasing inequality and situations of poverty, the needs of the elderly and the dislocation of families? What are the innovations in the field of social policy and assistance? Is the research responding to these reforms? In this case, on what basis? Can one place oneself at the service of public policy?

3) Regional and global integration. What is the foreign policy of Cuba in its international agreements, scientific and medical collaborations, humanitarian development aid programmes and cultural programmes and how are they built locally by specific actors and institutions? How do these contribute to producing, accompanying and influencing the ongoing transformations? What is the role of regional and international organizations in these exchanges? What is the researcher’s work at this level?

Calendar
Please send your paper proposal no later than January 10, 2015, giving us:

- An extensive curriculum of about 5000 characters mentioning the research work done in/on Cuba and proposing a reflective perspective according to the guidelines set described above (methodological, analytical and conceptual);
- About ten lines of bio-bibliography (in French, Spanish or English)

Responses will be sent on February 20, 2015, with a programme proposal. Oral presentations will be in English or Spanish.

It is considered to publish the conference proceedings in the International Journal of Cuban Studies. A call for texts to be sent at the end of the conference.

Contact: conf.cubaparis2015@gmail.com

Scientific Committee: Janice Argaillot, Université de Grenoble 3 –Stendhal; Claes Brundenius, Research Policy Institute, University of Lund, Sweden; Sabrina Doyon, Université de Laval, Québec, Canada; Hortense Fairev d’Aricer, UMR 8138 – IRICE – université Paris 1; Marie Laure Geoffray, IHEAL-CREDA-CNRS UMR 7227; Janette Habel, Institut des relations internationales et stratégiques (IRIS); Marta Nuñez Sarmiento, Centro de Estudios de Migraciones Internacionales (CEMI), Universidad de La Habana, Cuba; Pedro Monreal, UNESCO; Karel Negrete, Universidad de La Habana et Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense; Pierre Salama, Centre d’économie de Paris Nord, CEPN/CNRS-UMR 7115; Jacques Sapir, CEMI-EHESS; Yves Sintomer, Université Paris VIII; Nelson Vallejo Gomez, Programme scientifique Amériques FMSH ; Ana Vera Estrada, Instituto Cubano de Investigación Cultural Juan Marinello, Cuba; Angelica Wehrli, University of Lucerne, Switzerland; Stephen Wilkinson, King’s College London, Institute for the study of Cuba, Great Britain.

Organisational committee: Blandine Destremau, IRIS EHESS ; Nils Graber, EHESS-CERMES 3; Jérôme Leleu, EHESS-CEMI ; Marie-Laure Geoffray, IHEAL-CREDA-CNRS UMR 7227; Janette Habel, Institut des relations internationales et stratégiques (IRIS); Stephen Wilkinson, King’s College London, Institute for the Study of Cuba.