



Australian
National
University



Knowledge, Struggles, and Transformations in Latin America

Inaugural Conference on Social Science and Humanities
Perspectives on Latin America

Program

DATE / TIME Friday 20 May 2022

9 am to 3.30 pm

VENUE RSSS Auditorium, 146 Ellery Crescent, Canberra

ORGANISERS Sponsored by the Australian National University's Australian National Centre for Latin American Studies (ANCLAS) and the ANU Gender Institute.

20 May 2022

9.00 am	Opening Remarks by Dr. Caroline Schuster, Co-Director of the Australian National Centre for Latin American Studies (ANCLAS)	RSSS Auditorium
9.15 am - 10.30 am	PANEL I: Social inequalities and state regulatory frameworks <i>Discussant: Associate Professor Tracy Beck Fenwick, School of Politics and International Relations</i>	
9.15 am	Memory and imagination among Chilean exiles in Australia <i>Nicolás Villarroel</i>	
9.30 am	Chileans' anger at inequality boils over: The 'Estallido Social' and the role of perceptions and the legitimacy of economic inequality in social protests <i>Miguel Lattz Lara</i>	RSSS Auditorium
9.45 am	Security and development in Latin American countries: Challenges and opportunities for Colombia <i>Oscar Parra</i>	
10.00 am	Latin American solidarity in times of crisis <i>Vic Riveros</i>	
10.15 am	Discussant's remarks, Q&A	
10.45 am - 11.15 am	Morning Tea	RSSS Foyer
11.15 am - 12.30 pm	PANEL II: Natural resources governance and society-environment interactions <i>Discussant: Professor Vladimir Canudas Romo School of Demography</i>	RSSS Auditorium

	11.15 am	“Ni a favor ni en contra”: Ambivalence, dissent and resignation in everyday life with mining <i>Elena Tjandra</i>	
	11.30 am	Unruly Amazonian fruit: Resisting commercialisation in the post-Covid economy <i>Diana Tung</i>	
	11.45 am	Changing institutional frameworks of water governance in Chile <i>Pablo Aranda Valenzuela</i>	
	12.00 pm	Discussant’s remarks, Q&A	
12.30 pm - 2.00 pm	Lunch		RSSS Foyer
2.00 pm - 3.30 pm	KEYNOTE PANEL: Reflecting on epistemic extractivism and imagining Australian-Latin American research otherwise <i>Dr. Laura Rodriguez Castro</i>		
	2.00 pm	Keynote Panel <i>Dr. Laura Rodriguez Castro</i>	RSSS Auditorium
	2.45 pm	Q&A	
	3.15 pm	Concluding remarks	

Book of Abstracts

PANEL I:

Social inequalities and state regulatory frameworks

Discussant:

Associate Professor Tracy Beck Fenwick
School of Politics and International Relations

Nicolás Villarroel
Centre for Heritage
and Museum Studies,
ANU

i. Memory and Imagination among Chilean Exiles in Australia

During the 70's and 80's, more than 20,000 Chileans forcibly migrated to Australia due to the civic-military dictatorship that was taking place in Chile (1973-1990). After the restoration of democracy, thousands stayed and settled in different parts of Australia, creating different Chilean communities in multiple Australian cities. In my doctoral thesis, I explore the social memories of the dictatorship among some of these Chileans. As part of my fieldwork, I interviewed 46 participants and attended to some of the events that they organised. In this paper, I argue how the memories of the dictatorship of Chilean exiles in Australia, more than 30 years after the official end of Pinochet's rule, are still alive in the present.

By analysing different interviews with first- and second-generation participants, I explore how emotions related to the political violence and exile, as well as joyful and ambivalent emotions related to the memory of activism, configure their experience of the present. These ways of engaging with the past correlate with the ways participants engage with the present of the Chilean society, especially considering the social uprising of 2019. I analyse how pessimism and hope become two salient positions regarding the social uprising, and how both positions dialogue when Chileans in Australia envision and imagine the future of the Chilean society. I conclude this paper arguing about the relevance to consider, in general, how the memories of the dictatorship still configure the ways of thinking and feeling in the present, and the relevance to consider the memories of the diaspora in the Chilean memory culture.

Nicolás Villarroel is a Chilean researcher based in the Centre for Heritage and Museum Studies, at the Australian National University. His research interests focus on the relations of social memory, ideology, and emotions. In his current research project, Nicolás is researching how Chileans that were exiled in Australia during Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-1990) remember the dictatorial years and how their emotional engagements shape the memory of this period as well as the imagination of possible futures.

Miguel Lattz Lara
School of Sociology,
ANU

ii. Chileans' anger at inequality boils over: The 'Estallido Social' and the role of perceptions and the legitimacy of economic inequality in social protests

In October 2019, the "Estallido Social" demonstrations began in Chile. The protests originated from a growing critique of the government's economic development model and the levels of inequality in the country. Within the

protests, the social demands were varied, ranging from writing a new constitution to improving gender disparities. These Chilean demands for a more equalitarian country would lead to a 2020 referendum and the later creation of the Constitutional Assembly.

Using International Social Survey Programme data from 2009 and 2019, and a theoretical framework based on Social Justice and Relative Deprivation Theory, I argue that the protests that started in 2019 were a consequence of a process that began years ago. Initial analysis pointed out that the 2019 demonstrations stemmed from earlier public discontent based on a perception that inequality was increasing, generating a more socially segregated society. Thus, the “Estallido Social” is based on the perception of an unequal country and a lack of trust in the institutions that should prevent it.

However, my research also shows that the Estallido has a counter-intuitive origin, namely it happened at a time when almost every macroeconomic result have been improved in the last decade in the country, and Chileans perceived less economic inequality than in the past. Thus, why did the Estallido begin in 2019 and not before when perceived inequality was greater and all objective macroeconomic conditions were worst? The research concludes that at the base of the demonstrations was an imbalance between what Chileans perceived and what they tolerated as a fair level of economic inequality.

Miguel Lattz Lara is a sociologist from Universidad Central of Chile. He has a Masters (MSc) of Social Policy (research) at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and is a current PhD student in Sociology at the Australian National University (ANU). He has at least ten years of professional experience designing, organizing, implementing and leading both qualitative and quantitative research projects in both the public and private sectors. In this work, he has worked in research teams for the evaluation of public programs as well as market research and marketing evaluation for different centres of studies and private companies. His doctoral thesis analyses the subjective perceptions of inequality and its effects on today's society. His subjects of interest are inequality, subjective perceptions of society, social classes, social stratification and social mobility. He is a very passionate football (soccer) fan, Oasis fan and beer enthusiast. He strongly believes Universidad de Chile is the best team in the world.

Oscar Parra
Coral Bell School of
Asia & The Pacific
and the Strategic &
Defence Studies
Centre, ANU

III. Security and Development in Latin American countries: Challenges and Opportunities for Colombia

Latin American countries have been characterised by possessing internal development challenges and being affected by long-lasting security issues. While some Latin American countries are considered middle/high-income economies, a closer look at their internal distribution of wealth and quality of life shows interesting contrasts. Some of these are associated with the prevalence of violence and the State's inability to exercise territorial control. By analysing Colombia's Pacific Region, I will demonstrate how different security challenges and multi-layered development issues can disrupt national efforts to increase the quality of life and economic progress in Latin American countries. Regarding

Colombia, I will show how they are undermining the entire country's ability to benefit from further market integration with the Asia Pacific.

The Pacific Region of Colombia is an interesting case study for multiple reasons, including wide development asymmetries between urban and rural areas, a diverse cultural and ethnic composition, and the prevalence of security challenges and 'hybrid' threats. These elements have compromised relevant investment opportunities focused on increasing the quality of life of its eight million inhabitants. Also, the modest progress achieved during the last twenty years was hampered by the last COVID-19 Pandemic. A greater understanding of the nature of these challenges could provide some light on how Latin American countries face multi-layered development issues, and explore how to address them in more effective ways through policy and international cooperation.

Ultimately, the so-called 'Asian Century' represents development challenges and opportunities for Latin American countries in various degrees. If not properly addressed, security and underdevelopment conditions might compromise Latin American efforts to integrate with the markets and economies of Asia Pacific, potentially widening the development gap within some of their most vulnerable communities.

Oscar Parra: Political Scientist from the Pontifical Xavierian University – Colombia. Master of Strategic Studies from the Australian National University – Australia (ANU). Academic staff at the ANU Coral Bell School of Asia & The Pacific and the Strategic & Defence Studies Centre. Former Socio-Political Analyst of ProPacífico Foundation in Colombia. Main areas of expertise: International and regional security, geopolitics, and development.

Vic Riveros
Centre for Heritage
and Museum Studies,
ANU

IV. Latin American Solidarity in Times of Crisis

There are diverse Latin American communities residing in Australia, with different historical and cultural backgrounds. While some of them had to migrate due to socio-political circumstances in their countries of origin, others migrated looking for better life opportunities. These diverse trajectories and personal histories create rich and complex Latin American diasporic communities.

Despite this diversity, on different occasions the Latin American diaspora has come together to help and support Latin American countries in times of crisis. Focusing on their motivations, repertoires and goals, we research experiences of participation from the Latin American diaspora, in solidarity with their countries of origin in recent years. We consider as well the challenges and social benefits of being involved in projects of solidarity. Analysing different interviews, in this paper, we present the ways in which Latin Americans living in Australia view and appraise their country's present and past. Particularly, we analyse different frames that explain their motivations to engage in solidarity. These frames are not necessarily exclusive, and present some tensions and relations between each other.

Thus, we focus on how Latin Americans in Australia frame their countries

as places in need, with different precarious situations that vary from political circumstances, to social and cultural ones. Others frame their countries as part of a post-colonial history, which situates them as part of a larger history of abuse that carries ongoing challenges in the present. Among these challenges, human rights violations are an issue that becomes salient in the interviews. Finally, we explore how participants view some of these issues as part of Australia's present as well, and how they see with hope the future of Latin America, in response to the most recent social movements.

Vic Riveros is a Chilean social psychologist with a master's degree in social and community psychology from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, and is currently a research assistant in this project. Their research deals with social and political participation, as well as paths to foster social cohesion, promote human rights education and prevent discrimination of minorities.

PANEL II:
Natural resources governance and society-environment interactions

Discussant:
Professor Vladimir Canudas Romo
School of Demography

Elena Tjandra
School of Geography,
Earth and
Atmospheric
Sciences
University of
Melbourne

i. 'Ni a favor ni en contra': ambivalence, dissent and resignation in everyday life with mining.

In the last two decades, research on the extractive industries in Latin America has examined extractive struggles and socio-ecological impacts, the movement of extractive capital, issues of sovereignty, territory, and governance, and more recently, corporate-community relations and social licenses to operate.

This paper builds upon an emerging area of research in the extractive industries, extraction and everyday life, to understand the range of positions people take towards mining, over time. This paper is based on doctoral field work I conducted in Oaxaca, Mexico in 2019-2020. I focus on ambivalence and resignation as two primary positions and responses that residents of a town in Valles Centrales, Oaxaca, adopt towards underground silver mining.

I draw on emotional geographies and the work of Farhana Sultana and Sara Ahmed to make sense of these emotional and affective dispositions. In doing so, this paper offers insight into the lesser-examined positions of those who are ambivalent and resigned, and those who engage in muted dissent, through ambivalence and resignation in everyday life with mining.

In other words, this paper shows how ambivalence and resignation are part of the in-between and everyday moments of life when people are not actively demonstrating support, nor are in direct contest with mining, and

must simply live with extraction. Thus, this paper follows Auyero & Swistun, Valdivia, and Gilfoy who show the complex interactions between everyday lives, economies and aspirations at sites of extraction, and addresses a tendency of political ecology and social sciences research that focuses on extractive struggles through resistance and acquiescence or being 'for or against' extraction.

Elena Tjandra is a PhD candidate in human geography at the School of Geography, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, University of Melbourne. Her research cuts across cultural geographies, science and technology studies and feminist political ecology. Elena's doctoral research considers everyday life with mining in Oaxaca, Mexico. Elena is also the Editor-in-Chief of the literary magazine, Debris.

Diana Tung
School of
Archaeology and
Anthropology, ANU

ii. Unruly Amazonian fruit: Resisting commercialisation in the post-Covid economy

During the coronavirus pandemic, Peru registered one of the highest per capita Covid-19 death rates in the world, with some of the worst outbreaks occurring in the Amazonian region. Iquitos, the largest city in the Peruvian Amazon, made global headlines for its dire situation, which included the collapse of its fragile healthcare system. Two years since the onset of the pandemic, concerns over Covid-19 in the Amazonian region have largely been surpassed by other issues such as a dengue outbreak, economic difficulties, and widespread discontent with political institutions.

Within this context, a wide array of actors such as bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, and conservationists in the Amazonian state of Loreto are working frantically to 'reactivate the economy' through commercialising the aguaje palm fruit (*Mauritia flexuosa*). A widely-shared perspective is that by placing commercial value on this semi-wild Amazonian species, better conservation practices will follow, and a win-win outcome for all will be guaranteed. The fruit is currently at the center of two multi-million dollar projects, one from the private sector and another from the state government.

Based on twenty months of ethnographic research, my research examines the ways in which the aguaje has come to embody a hopeful climatic and economic future for the region, and the tensions between this projection and the material ways in which the fruit seems to resist domestication and commodification. My research also grounds the contemporary attempts to transform the aguaje into a global superfood commodity within the historical, environmental, and geographical context of the Peruvian Amazon.

Diana Tung is a PhD candidate in anthropology at the Australian National University. Her research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Stipend Scholarship and the Australian National Centre for Latin American Studies (ANCLAS) Bernard Wheelahan Latin American Travel Grant. Diana currently serves as the inaugural Associate Editor for Visual Content at the Journal of Latin American Geography and the English-language Editor of the journal Folia Amazónica. Her reflections on the fieldwork experience during the coronavirus pandemic have been published

in Antipode and SBS Australia. Her academic interests include geography, infrastructure, society-environment interactions, visual anthropology, and the intersections between food, labour, and gender.

**Pablo Aranda
Valenzuela**

*Faculty of Humanities
and Social Science,
University of
Queensland*

iii. Changing institutional frameworks of water governance in Chile

Due to the current global climate change crisis, the variability of the water cycle is increasing, making it more difficult to forecast water availability, decreasing water quality, further exacerbating water scarcity, and threatening sustainable development worldwide. Unfortunately, Chile is not an exception, Chile stands in 24th place of the countries facing extreme high-water stress future. According to a recent report, 44% water gaps and water risk problems in watersheds originate from failures in water management and governance that generate distrust among stakeholders. Furthermore, the current Chilean water management framework is consistent with the neoliberal principles of Constitution of 1980, water rights are private, and water is exchanged as any other market asset. In this context, population increases and water demand over ten years of drought, mainly in the Chile Central Zone, have generated conflicts and difficulties, mainly for rural communities. In response to this challenging situation and others, Chile is currently drafting the proposed new constitution, one of the central aspects of which is the regulation of water.

The proposal for the conference aims to identify the challenges, effects and opportunities of the transition from a neoliberal framework of water regulation to water governance that combines local democratic decisions, and social, cultural, and environmental factors for sustainable water use, legitimised by historically excluded groups. However, little is known about how to move from a privatised neoliberal system to one more public that balances social, economic, and environmental concerns and involves excluded groups in decision-making in the context of climate change. This phenomenon is contrary to most reforms implemented at the level of national systems worldwide. It will involve addressing complex issues challenging and difficult to resolve concerns like the individual or silo vision of water rights owners, vulnerable groups excluded in water governance.

Pablo Aranda Valenzuela is a law graduate from the University of Chile, Master of Integrated Water Management (IWM), Queensland/Griffith Universities, lecturer in Environmental Law and Regulation at the School of Engineering of the University of Chile. He has professional and research experience spanning a range of policy and regulatory topics, including water, natural resources, infrastructure, engagement of rural communities, and renewable energy. Currently, he is a Director of Water Governance of the Chilean NGO Newenko and a PhD student at the University of Queensland researching water governance, water justice, and IWM.

**Dr. Laura
Rodriguez Castro**

KEYNOTE PANEL

Reflecting on epistemic extractivism and imagining Australian-Latin American research otherwise

Research about and in Latin America is deeply rooted in colonial power. This power is evident in how epistemic extractivism is deployed in research through a process which objectifies, instrumentalises and exploits the politics, struggles and knowledges of the Global South (Cusicanqui 2010; Grosfoguel 2016). In dialogue with Colombian women social leaders' desires, I reflect on doing research otherwise so as to centre geopolitical commitments and epistemic questioning. Based on these reflections, I open a dialogue on how Australian-Latin American research can be imagined from the epistemic power of Southern places.

Dr Laura Rodriguez Castro is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Alfred Deakin Institute of Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University and the Membership Secretary for the Association of Iberian and Latin America Studies of Australasia. Her research focuses on decolonial feminisms, critical heritage, memory and rurality. She is also interested in arts, visual and participatory methodologies including methods such as zine-making, photo-elicitation and co-curating photographic exhibitions. Laura's book with Palgrave Decolonial Feminisms, Power and Place: Sentipensando with Rural Women in Colombia (2021) explores how rural women enact and imagine decolonial feminist worlds. Her most recent project 'Fostering South-South Dialogues on difficult memories between Australia and Latin America' seeks to foster dialogues among Australia and Latin America on memory-making from the 'Southern' perspectives of Latin American post-conflict migrants, artists, activists and scholars.

In 2019 she was awarded the Australian Academy of the Humanities Travelling Fellowship for a project entitled 'Advancing Peace and Conflict Studies from The Ground: Women's Oral Testimonies and Historical Memory in Colombia', from which she has published in the International Journal of Heritage Studies and in Museum Management and Curatorship. In 2020, she co-organised the workshop 'Geography and Collective Memories Through Art', which brought together scholars, activists and artists from Colombia and Australia. More recently, she explored the dialogic potential of memory-work from Southern places through the seminar 'The Colombian Peace Process: Truth-telling in Times of Continuing Conflict' as part of the 'Decolonising Truth Globally' seminar series led by Dr Vanessa Barolsky and supported by ADI and the Institute for Postcolonial Studies. Recent publications also include a journal article entitled 'We are not poor things': territorio cuerpo-tierra and Colombian women's organised struggles' in Feminist Theory's Special Issue On Coloniality.
