

EVENTS 2015

Centre for Latin American
Research and Documentation



18/12/15 After the gang: post-delinquent youth in Nicaragua

Dennis Rodgers, University of Glasgow/UvA

Gangs are one of the few true global social phenomena, present across time and space in almost every society on the planet, including very prominently in contemporary Central America. Although significant variation can be observed between contexts, a universal distinguishing feature of gangs is their intimate association with violence. Numerous academic studies have explored how and why gangs are violent, proposing a range of theories that variably locate explanation at the individual, the organisational, or the contextual level. A frequently overlooked fact is that most youth who join a gang will eventually leave it, as there is a universal natural “desistance” process from youth gangs. Most individuals who leave gangs are generally assumed to become less violent, but how and why such a “pacification” might take place is not well understood, partly because surprisingly little research has been conducted on gang desistance and its consequences. Drawing on ongoing longitudinal ethnographic research that I have been carrying out since 1996 on gang dynamics in barrio Luis Fanor Hernández, a poor neighbourhood in Managua, the capital city of Nicaragua, my presentation will explore the motivations for, as well as the variable consequences of, leaving a gang. Drawing in particular on a set of representative gang member life histories, I will explore typical post-gang occupational trajectories in order to highlight how and why gang desistance can lead to highly variable violence outcomes.

16/11/15 Corruption and Governance in Latin America

Edgardo A. Buscaglia (Columbia University)

Edgardo Buscaglia is a Senior Scholar in Law and Economics at Columbia University (NY, USA), the Director of the International Law and Economics Development Centre and the President of the Institute for Citizens Action in Mexico. He is an internationally renowned expert in the field of economic and judicial analysis of organized crime and associated corruption. He studies the impact of legal and judicial frameworks on economic development, initially in Latin America and since 2000 worldwide. He has advised 114 countries and has often served as an anti-corruption advisor for the UN. In his book "State Vacuums in México: A Path Towards Human Security." ("Vacíos de Poder en México: El Camino hacia la Seguridad Humana") he presents one of the most in-depth blueprints of Mexico's current safety crisis.

30/10/15 The Weight of Obesity: Hunger and Global Health in Postwar Guatemala

Emily Yates-Doerr (UvA)

A woman with hypertension refuses vegetables. A man with diabetes adds iron-fortified sugar to his coffee. As death rates from heart attacks, strokes, and diabetes in Latin America escalate, global health interventions increasingly emphasize nutrition, exercise, and weight loss—but much goes awry as ideas move from policy boardrooms and clinics into everyday life. This talk, which is based on years of intensive fieldwork in highland Guatemala, explores how obesity is lived by people who have recently found their diets – and their bodies – radically transformed. The stories offered suggest that when it comes to dietary health, an emphasis on metric conversions tethers ontological violence to violence that is structural. The violence of political and economic systems that unduly burden certain (poor, indigenous) bodies was obvious in the long lines of Guatemala's massively-defunded public clinics. But there was also violence in knowledge systems that frame illness as the domain of the body, as if the body is a natural entity with universally measurable parameters. The metrification of the body – how much it moves, eats, or weighs – does more than elide deep inequalities in access to decent food and healthcare services. It also privileges some types of bodies over others, while ignoring approaches to health that don't conform to global standards. In this talk, anthropologist Emily Yates-Doerr challenges the widespread view that health can be measured in nutrients and pounds, offering an innovative understanding of what it means to be healthy in postcolonial Latin America.

02/10/15 From Developmentalism to Neo-Developmentalism: Historical Development of the Brazilian Process of Capital Accumulation'

Nicolas Grinberg. Referent: Kees Koonings (UvA/UU)

This presentation will analyse the trajectory of Brazilian society between the times of populist developmentalism and the emergence of neo-developmentalism. Challenging mainstream accounts, it will be argued that the various policy regimes consolidating and disappearing throughout the period have been forms of realisation of the autonomously regulated process of capital accumulation on a global scale. More concretely, it will be claimed that Brazilian capitalism has developed under a specific form which sprung from its particular original subsumption in the international division of labour as producer of primary commodities; capital has accumulated there through the recovery of a portion of the abundant local ground-rent. This specific form of capital accumulation has come about through specific developmental patterns and state policies and political processes. Through the analysis of the historical development of the Brazilian process of capital accumulation, the presentation will show the inherent unity amongst the various policy regimes.

18/09/15 La crisis como ruina. Literatura argentina de principios de siglo XXI

Adriana Rodríguez Pérsico (UNTREF-CONICET). Referent: Michiel Baud

Toda crisis supone un punto de inflexión, un cambio drástico que puede separar la vida de la muerte. En su libro *El sentido de un final. Estudios sobre la teoría de la ficción*, Frank Kermode sostiene la tesis de que existe “un nexo entre las formas de la literatura y otras maneras en las que, citando a Erich Auerbach, ‘tratamos de conferir algún tipo de orden y diseño al pasado, el presente y el futuro’. Una de esas maneras es la crisis”. Para pensar el concepto de crisis en la cultura moderna, Kermode recupera el paradigma apocalíptico organizado en torno a los terrores incesantes ante una situación crítica, al sentimiento de vivir una época de transición y a la esperanza de la renovación. Al mismo tiempo, prevalece la idea de que lo sólido se desvanece en el aire y de que cada elemento está imbuido de su contrario. El sentimiento de crisis fue generalizado en el fin de siglo XIX; la literatura de la época ofrece ejemplos tan diversos como claros. El siglo XX conoce varias coyunturas que se podrían definir como de crisis, en las que se conjugan conflictos sociales, políticos, económicos y culturales.

En el caso de la Argentina, la última gran crisis aconteció a principios del siglo XXI. La literatura, máquina que deglute y transforma todo tipo de materiales, ha elaborado de distintos modos la coyuntura. El presente trabajo se propone analizar un conjunto de textos publicados durante la década de 2000 que ponen en movimiento una idea de crisis en la que no hay lugar para la esperanza de la renovación, ni apertura hacia el futuro. Por el contrario, lo que prevalece en ellos es la representación de un mundo arruinado y plagado de anacronismos, definitivamente vuelto basura.

En colaboración con CRIC Amsterdam Research Seminars

22/05/15 Crime and Deforestation in the Amazon Rainforest

Tim Boekhout van Solinge, Universiteit Utrecht. Referent: Fabio de Castro

The Amazon Rainforest is by far the largest tropical rainforest on the planet that sprawls across nine countries. It represents some 40% of the remaining tropical rainforest. Around 20% of the Amazon rainforest has been deforested since the 1960s. 80% of this deforested occurred in Brazil, where two-third of the total Amazon Rainforest is found. A large part of the deforestation in the Amazon is actually illegal. It thus concerns crime. This illegal deforestation is also connected to other forms of crime, such as violence and corruption. The violence is committed against forest inhabitants, as well as against environmental or human rights protectors. The perpetrators are usually large landholders, or pistoleros (gunmen), who act on their behalf. In his lecture, Tim Boekhout van Solinge approaches Amazonian deforestation from a (green) criminological perspective. Although it is rare to take a criminological perspective on Amazonian deforestation, there is every reason to do so, considering the many associated crimes and harms. The main focus will be on the Brazilian Amazon, in particular the lower Amazon (near the town of Santarém in Pará state), where he has been doing research as part of NWO-funded project on conflicts and cooperation on natural resources (CoCooN). The presentation will also be visual, as he will show some pictures and short films.

17/04/15 Políticas públicas y reformas en América Latina y España

Gemma Ubasart, Universitat de Girona / PODEMOS

10/04/15 INTERNATIONAL MEETING organized by ISS and CEDLA

The Political Economy of the Extractive Imperative in Latin America:

Reducing poverty and inequality vs. ensuring inclusion and sustainability?

Keynote speaker: José Antonio Ocampo (Columbia)

Other confirmed invited speakers: Jean Grugel (Sheffield), Alfredo Saad Filho (SOAS), Eduardo Silva (Tulane), Rob Vos (FAO), Carlos Zorilla (DECOIN-Intag, Ecuador).

In addition, there will be parallel paper sessions and a featured panel on Open Access and Citizen Science to monitor extractive industries.

Theme: In recent years, an 'extractive imperative' came into being in Latin America as natural resource extraction came to be seen simultaneously as source of income and employment generation (through investment in extractive facilities, infrastructure, etc.) but also of financing for increased social policy expenditure. According to this imperative, extraction needs to continue and expand regardless of prevailing circumstances (be it low/high prices of commodities, protests of indigenous groups, or environmental concerns), with the state playing a leading role in facilitating the process and capturing a large share of the ensuing revenues. A vibrant debate has since emerged regarding the best way to characterize these attempts, with some commentators hailing the birth of a post-neoliberal paradigm and others asserting that we are witnessing reconstituted neoliberalism. Various continuing or new dynamics – such as increased investment from China and other forms of 'South-South' flows – further complicate the overall picture. This international meeting aims to move beyond facile dichotomies to address the political economy of the 'extractive imperative' and the tensions it increasingly generates in Latin America.

Organizing team: Murat Arsel (ISS), Barbara Hogenboom (CEDLA), Lorenzo Pellegrini (ISS)

27/03/15 Military and Civilians after the Brazilian Truth Commission

João Roberto Martins Filho, Universidade Federal de São Carlos /LAS, Leiden

Referent: Kees Koonings, UU, CEDLA & UvA

On November 2011, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff - she herself victim of torture under the military dictatorship in the 1970s has sanctioned a law creating in the sphere of her Civilian Household, the National Truth Commission (Comissão Nacional da Verdade), with the aim of examining and clarifying the "grave violations against human rights", which took place basically in the period 1964-1985. Installed in May 2012, the Commission delivered on December 2014 its final report to the President, in a moving ceremony in the Palace of Planalto, seat of the Brazilian Executive. In the 4328 pages report, CNV established as 434 the number of deaths and disappearances in the period and mentioned the name of 377 civilian and military responsible for HR violations, including the five generals who run the country from 1964 to 1985. In the talk, we will examine the repercussion of the episode in the barracks and its place in the history of civil-military relations in Brazil in the last 30 years.

31/03/15 Screening of the documentary Burden of Peace

Organized by The War Reparations Centre and CEDLA

The documentary 'Burden of Peace' tells the impressive story of Claudia Paz y Paz, the first woman to lead the Public Prosecutor's Office of Guatemala. The country that has been ravaged for years by a devastating civil war, in which nearly 200,000 Mayan Indians were systematically massacred, is today one of the most violent countries in the world. Claudia starts a frontal attack against corruption, drug gangs and impunity and does what everyone had hitherto held to be impossible: she arrests former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt on charges of genocide. His conviction becomes the first conviction for genocide in a national court in the world history.

After the screening there will be a Q&A session with the documentary-makers Sander Wirken and Joey Boink, who met while studying political sciences at the UvA. Sander is currently writing his PhD in the field of international criminal law and co-founded the NGO Niños de Guatemala and Joey works as a director, photographer and producer at Framework. Dr. Barbara Hogenboom (CEDLA) will chair the Q&A.

If you want to sign up for this event please send an e-mail to aanmelden.burdenofpeace@gmail.com.

For more information please check: <http://www.burdenofpeace.com/>

20/03/15 Screening of the documentary "The Lithium Revolution" by Andreas Pichler and Julio Weiss (in coproduction with Polar Star Films; in cooperation with WDR/arte; development funded by the Media Programme and EED; production funded by NRW Filmstiftung and EED)

The documentary analyses the rising energy consumption trend (especially in China), and the global market for Natural Resources, focusing on traffic and transportation, which causes 25% of global CO2 emissions. It touches on the local visions of Bolivia's Salar de Uyuni (where 50% of the world's Lithium can be found), the industrialization process that has been taking place under President Evo Morales, and on different global strategies for "cleaner" energy, looking into what Germany, China, USA and other countries have been doing concerning energy policies and trends. Under a more technical lens it looks at the limitations and challenges regarding the efficiency of Lithium Carbonate extraction, storage of energy, recharge of batteries, infrastructure to charge e-cars (replacement of batteries vs. recharge), and storage capacity of batteries and smart grids. The documentary questions the global benefit from Lithium-ion batteries.

Programme:

15:30 Screening of the documentary

16:30 Q&A with director and writer Julio Weiss (from Bolivia via skype)

13/03/15 Illicit Networks in Latin America: tracing the paths of criminal influence in politics

Ivan Briscoe, Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael

Referent: Willem van Schendel, UvA

Numerous states in Latin America have been exposed in recent years to the influence of criminal networks. Despite the great diversity in the gateways used by illicit networks to influence public policies or the actions of officials, and the purposes to which this collusion and co-optation is put, a certain number of shared historical processes and characteristics can be identified. These may also point the way to new approaches that might curb this systemic threat to democratic governance.

20/02/15 Qué pasa en Chile: ¿crisis de la modernización capitalista?

Carlos Peña, Universidad Diego Portales / LAS Leiden

Referent: Patricio Silva, UL

Uno de los fenómenos más llamativos de la arena política y social del Chile de hoy es el fuerte desencanto existente entre muchos ciudadanos con el proceso de modernización puesto en movimiento algunas décadas atrás. Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo varios estudios indican que los chilenos poseen altos niveles de satisfacción con respecto a sus vidas personales. ¿Cómo explicar esta paradójica situación? ¿Está pasando el modelo chileno por una profunda crisis o simplemente estamos siendo testigos de un cambio de expectativas a consecuencia del mismo proceso de modernización?