Welcome

Welcome to all new and returning colleagues, students and friends of CLACS, and to the fourth edition of our Newsletter for the 2018-19 academic year. You will also receive an e-version of this, so please circulate it to your colleagues, students, and all who may be interested, as widely as possible. Thanks for spreading the word!

CLACS is a University Research Centre, set up in 2014 to support and promote research that focuses on Latin America and the Caribbean, across all our Faculties. This time last year we reported the successful renewal of CLACS, and we have had a busy and productive year, with colleagues involved in projects and activities across the University and beyond, all of which has increased our national and international reputation as a dynamic and forward-looking research environment for Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

A quick look back at 2017-2018 reminds us of many high level and significant events, which enjoyed support from the University Research Committee, as well as from the UK Society of Latin American Studies, the University’s International Partnership Fund, Newcastle
University’s Postcolonial Research Group, and Newcastle University’s School of Modern Languages. Our thanks to them all.

The CLACS Mobility Fund was put to good use again in 2017-18 with 6 awards being made; congratulations to all the recipients. Their reports are included here.

This year also saw Newcastle host the Standing Conference of Directors of Centres of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, which took place outside of London for the first time. The Standing Conference is a space to exchange information and discuss the concerns of our discipline at a national level, and to agree strategies for protecting and promoting our interests in the wider arena. Professor Jens Hentschke, as outgoing President of the Society of Latin American Studies (SLAS), convened the meeting. We look forward to further meetings of this group at Newcastle this year, with invited guests from the British Academy and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Our thanks to Jens for his hard work on this.

This year we face an altered landscape as far as central University budget support is concerned, while the University’s research infrastructure is under review. We are nonetheless putting together a full and diverse events calendar (see the end of the Newsletter). More will be announced! We look forward to seeing you at our events and an excellent year for CLACS.

Rosaleen Howard, Director

Past Events Report 2017-18

Professor Matthew Restall from Penn State University gave the Vanessa Knights Memorial Lecture. Prof. Restall is a leading scholar of Maya history and the impact of the Spanish Conquest on the indigenous populations of Mexico.

The Maya were also the subject of a fascinating lecture by Professor Norman Hammond (Boston University), which we co-sponsored with History. Other CLACS seminar papers, from a range of external and internal speakers, covered such diverse topics as Labour politics in Brazil, indigenous language politics in lowland Ecuador, art collectives and political dissent in Peru, and gender violence and indigeneity in Central Mexico. Some speakers unable to come due to the strike action in 2017-18 will be joining us this coming session instead.

A number of conferences and symposia were highlights in our calendar:

- ‘¿La paz es ahora? Examining the question of peace and violence in Colombia’ with keynote speaker Rory O’Bryen, brought together scholars from different disciplines and backgrounds to discuss what we really mean when we talk about peace, and about violence, in the Colombian context.
- ‘Researching everyday geopolitics in Latin America’ brought together ten international scholars working on geopolitical issues to reflect on topics including youth (counter) cultures in Lima and Bogota, the ‘war on drugs’ in Mexico, popular geopolitics and memory in Argentina, border contestations in Chile-Peru and the ‘geopolitics of the periphery’ in Chilean Patagonia.
- ‘Abolition of the Army in Costa Rica, 70 years on: Issues of Institutional Violence, Power, and Political Economy’, marked the 70th anniversary of the abolition of the
Costa Rican Army, and hosted speakers from Costa Rica and the Costa Rican Ambassador to the UK.

- 2018 ‘Decentred / Dissenting Connections: Envisioning Caribbean Film and Visual Cultures’ was a two-day conference that hosted speakers from around the UK and featured a keynote talk by Professor Charles Forsdick (University of Liverpool) and a screening of A Winter Tale and a Q&A with the director, Frances-Anne Solomon, at Tyneside Cinema. The conference was co-convened by Dunja Fehimović and Francisco-J. Hernández Adrián [Durham University] with the support of the Institute of Modern Languages Research [IMLR], AHRC OWRI, and Newcastle University School of Modern Languages)

CLACS Mobility Fund Reports

Laura Pinzón Cardona, PhD Candidate - School of Architecture Planning and Landscape

Report of activities and preliminary findings after fieldwork pilot, Manizales, Colombia

Between September and October 2017 I completed a five-week pilot for my fieldwork in Manizales, as a necessary empirical step in my research project. I was a recipient of a CLACS Mobility award in 2016-17, and it was thanks to it that I could fund this fundamental part of my fieldwork.

This pilot was conceived as a strategic early step in a research trying to address the question: What are the roles and potentialities of digital media practices, as well as traditional media, in improving – or degrading – conditions of inclusion, representation and democracy in the different strategies of citizen participation, in relation to the urban development of Manizales? This pilot aimed to test out the proposed methodology in the field and to get a first approximation in situ to the situation of local participation and collective action, concerning urban development in the city, and the role of social media and digital media in such processes.

Manizales is a medium size city that has become a role model for digital innovation, education, quality of life and social progress during the last five years. Having said this, it is important to highlight that Manizales is not an exemplary global case, it might be arguably, a model case only in the context of Colombia. Manizales is also the place where I lived for eighteen years. This explains my personal interest in studying this city. The familiarity with the context becomes a crucial fact, and it was indeed a significant advantage for doing this first part of my fieldwork in such a short time.

In general, the pilot served as an excellent opportunity to test fieldwork methodology, refining and adapting it for the next field trip of four months. Despite
only having 5 weeks to develop the pilot I made sure to test all the methods I had proposed for the research during fieldwork such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews as conversations (with a total of 12 interviews), and two sessions of group exercises on perceptions on participation. For this last one I used JigsAudio, a device and technique developed in OpenLab at Newcastle University, which allows you to link the explanations of participants in the form of audio, with a photograph of the graphic representation of their idea during the exercise, so they can be quickly sorted to be shared in a website. (See images) This exercise sought to find more about participants’ perceptions concerning participation, and the strategies they would use to improve people’s involvement in city planning and neighbourhood collective action.

The experience of doing the pilot for the fieldwork proved to be a valuable experience for the developing of this research. It helped me test initial assumptions while gaining new and different knowledge about my hometown. During the pilot, I managed to establish essential contacts and relations with key groups and actors, who will do ethnographic exercises, and interviews, to run more spontaneously in the next fieldwork.

Despite it not being in my plans, learning from legal offices for participation, during two seminars I attended in Manizales, was crucial to better understand legal frameworks for participatory strategies at a national and local level.

**Marin Marinov, Rail Education Group Manager, School of Engineering**

A new study on waste management and logistics in Rio de Janeiro

A study on Waste Management and Logistics funded by the CLACS (Centre for Latin American and Caribbean Studies) Mobility Fund Awards is being organised.

The aim of this study is to better understand the Brazilian National Plan set in 2008 to deal with solid waste. We would like to create a long lasting cooperation in waste management with institutions from Brazil. Our academic partner is Universidade Federal de Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). We focus on identifying sustainable measures for waste handling in Brazil. These measures will cover all aspects of waste logistics, including collection, transport and sorting of solid waste as well as preparation of solid waste for recycling.
Activities completed so far include:
Preparation of study - collection of material and state of the art surveys on waste management and logistics in Brazil;
Trip to Rio de Janeiro - a waste management workshop has been organised by UFRJ to discuss and formulate a few critical issues and imminent problems associated with the current policies and practices of waste management and logistics in Brazil;
Technical visits have been organised to engage with a waste management company operating in the region of Rio de Janeiro; Next we will also approach local communities in poor areas where waste collection, handling and logistics are poorly managed; hence visits to these areas will be organised to collect information and data form the real world. The information and data collected will be analysed and discussed to form a single view on the critical issues identified. As a final result a list of recommendations of what would need to be improved and changed in the current policies and practices of waste management and logistics will be produced and avenues for future work and further research will be drafted and summarised in the end of this study.

For further information, please contact: Dr Marin Marinov: marin.marinov@ncl.ac.uk

Carolyn Taylor, School of Modern Languages
PGR Student Research Report. CLAS Mobility Fund / Santander report. Representation and self-representation of Maya Cultural Tourism in Guatemala and Mexico

My MLitt research focuses on the representation and self-representation of Maya Cultural Tourism in Guatemala and Mexico, with particular emphasis on Homestay tourism. Issues such as performance, authenticity and commodification of culture are significant in my dissertation. My research is based on case studies of two community-based companies who promote themselves online, and through the support of 'responsible travel' agents. They are Ta'akbil-Ja in Mexico, and Bio-Itzá in Guatemala. Between May and August 2018 I visited Ta'akbil-Ja, in the village of Nuevo Xcán thanks to a mobility award from Santander, and Bio-Itzá in the village of San José with generous funding from CLACS.

In Nuevo Xcán I connected with Ta'akbil-Ja, a community-based company have recently expanded their business so that they can also accommodate tourists overnight in their village, with a Homestay project. Ta'akbil-Ja are keen to promote
sustainable tourism in their area, and share their culture with tourists, therefore they used the opportunity of having me stay longer than the usual tourists to assist with their promotion. I was pleased that I was able to help the Ta'akbil-Ja project, even if in a small way.

In Guatemala I stayed with the Asociación Bio-Itzá in San José, El Petén. Bio-Itzá are an indigenous community group who use the internet and Facebook to promote their activities and cultural heritage. Their primary reason for mobilisation was to preserve the ancestral knowledge and traditions of the Itzá Maya culture, and protect the nearby forest area which they were granted ownership of (Equator Initiative, 2012). As a non-profit organisation who run community projects, funds are raised by engaging with international tourists. I was very fortunate to have the support of Bio-Itzá in my data collection and I conducted semi-structured interviews with the host family, language school teachers and the School Director, Aderito Chayax Tesucún.

Other activities at Bio-Itzá included a visit to the offices of the Academia de Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala (ALMG). Their headquarters are in Guatemala City but they have many offices in different parts of the country and one in San José, fascinatingly located just steps away from Ma’okol konol ti’k’ulwitz a sacred Maya site on top of ruins which the people of San José use for ceremonies. I also had the chance to view the decorative table from the Cabeza de Coche which is an important ceremony for Itzá Maya people who honor the tradition every year on May 2nd and 3rd. I was told the story of the Cabeza de Coche in detail as it is important to the Itzá people in the village, more so than Las Calaveras celebration on November 1st and 2nd (a San José specific take on the day of the dead, where three skulls from the local Catholic church are paraded around the village).

During my time in both Nuevo Xcán and San José I received very generous hospitality and was introduced to Maya life, language, customs and the issues faced by indigenous people in Central America. Participant observation was crucial to allow me to gain a better understanding of the Nuevo Xcán and San José resident’s connection to their home, community and region. Since returning to England, I have kept in contact with both Ta’akbil-Ja and Bio-Itzá and they continue to assist me with follow up questions in my data collection. I am extremely grateful to CLACS and Santander for their funding awards, without which my fieldwork trips would not have been possible.
Thanks to a CLACS mobility award I was able to travel to Jamaica in the April 2018 to look at the archives of two remarkable Jamaican women: Una Marson and Louise Bennett. Marson and Bennett were both mid-twentieth century poets, and pioneering figures within Caribbean literature. Both worked at the BBC during the 1940s and 1950s, and it is this area of their lives that I am researching for my forthcoming OUP monograph, Scripting Empire: West Indian and West African Writing at the BBC.

Their archives gave me unique access to radio scripts and correspondence that is not held by the BBC’s own Written Archives at Caversham, or indeed anywhere else in the world. It also allowed me to consult materials relating to their wider radio work both within the Caribbean region, and in the United States. These materials will undoubtedly add volume, texture and authority to my book and I am immensely grateful to CLACS and Rosaleen for their generous support.

The National Library of Jamaica is located in downtown Kingston and feels (in ways both good and bad) like a relic of another era. Calling up and sifting through materials can be a time-consuming process and perhaps it was for the best that there was no time left to visit beaches or trek in the Blue Mountains.

But on the final day I was fortunate enough to have lunch with Jamaica’s former Poet Laureate, Mervyn Morris. During the 1950s, Mervyn contributed to the now legendary ‘Caribbean Voices’ (1944-1958) programme at the BBC, and remains the leading Louise Bennett scholar. It was talking to him over curried goat and Red Stripe that brought the archive alive!
CLACS Members’ Reports

Rosaleen Howard, School of Modern Languages.
The role of indigenous female ´social interpreters´ in rural Peru

Rosaleen Howard is currently working on a collaborative project with partners in Peru to highlight the part played in rural areas by bilingual indigenous women (speakers of Aymara or Quechua and Spanish), who facilitate communication between their fellow community members and Spanish-speaking officials in formal spaces – particularly health- and justice-related settings –, by spontaneously acting as translators and interpreters. The project follows on from Rosaleen’s previous work on the Peruvian state training of indigenous language speakers to work in translation and interpreting in public services.

Rosaleen is Co-Investigator on the project; other team members are Raquel de Pedro, (Principal Investigator, Stirling), Luis Andrade (Co-Investigator, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú) and Raquel Reynoso (Project Partner, Servicios Educativos Rurales – SER). In support of the project we have attracted a Follow-on-Funding grant for impact and engagement from the AHRC’s GCRF allocation (£100K; award: AH/R004579/1).

The project will bring the social interpreters’ activity to public attention, reinforcing their roles as leaders in their communities, local associations and indigenous federations, and, overall, enhancing the social inclusion of Peruvian indigenous women and their access to human rights. We are working with 14 Quechua and Aymara social interpreters in Puno and Ayacucho departments. In March and April 2018 we conducted an initial workshop, followed by a series of filmed interviews, recording the personal testimonies of each of them. The filming took us to the rural communities where the leaders live. In the next few months we will use this audio-visual material as a basis for several activities:

- A multilingual (Aymara, Quechua and Spanish) piece of testimonial theatre, in collaboration with the high-profile political theatre collective Yuyachkani, to increase awareness of the importance of linguistic and cultural mediation in contemporary Peru, a country where indigenous languages and cultures are subordinated to Spanish and its social manifestations. Yuyachkani has created the script from the themes arising in the interviews, using the words of the women themselves. They are running rehearsals with them, and some of the interpreters will take part in the play, to be performed in Lima on 10 November 2018. We will be filming the performance and screening it in locations in Ayacucho and Puno at a later date.
An exhibition of audio-visual materials (videos and photographs) and texts generated by the filmed testimonies and photographs taken with the interpreters. This will be hosted by the prominent Lugar de la Memoria, la Tolerancia y la Inclusión Social (LUM), in Lima. A launch is planned for 12 December 2018 and the exhibition will run for 3 months. It will then become the basis for an itinerant exhibition. The exhibition will reach audiences who do not have first-hand experience of the communication issues that indigenous women face in their daily lives, or of the role of the social interpreter.

- The interpreters will travel from Ayacucho and Lima to take part in the events; we will invite representatives of relevant institutions (e.g. Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture, Ministry for Women) to attend.
- The creation of a digital archive to make publicly accessible the audio and visual materials collected in the course of the project.
- The creation of a set of training materials, to support the bilingual leaders in their future work as social interpreters.

**Young people and the everyday geopolitics of the Argentina/Chile border in Patagonia**

Matthew Benwell, Lecturer in Human Geography, Geography, Politics & Sociology

I spent the summer (or winter in the southern hemisphere!) doing research in Patagonia building on collaboration with colleagues at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. As a human geographer I have an interest in how things like borders, nations and geopolitics are experienced by young people. What drew me to this region was the border separating Argentina and Chile which has been a source of both conflict and cooperation in the last 50 years. I spent many days biking between two towns on either side of the border, in order to speak to young Argentines and their teachers about how they view their national identity and relations with neighbouring Chile. The rides brought me into contact with the kinds of objects and signs that are typically scattered across border landscapes and which mark and distinguish national territories. My interviews allowed me to explore how these dividing ‘lines on the map’ affect young people’s everyday lives.
Surviving Urban Regeneration: Neoliberalism and International Urbanisation
Dr Matt Davies, Senior Lecturer in International Political Economy, Geography, Politics & Sociology

I was invited to give a seminar at PUCRS by the Economics Department to speak on “Surviving Urban Regeneration: Neoliberalism and International Urbanisation” on 18 September 2018. The second photo was taken at the talk and the first photo just after. In the photo are Augusto Mussi Alvim (Coordinator for the Postgraduate Programmes in Economics at PUCRS; he was also a visiting professor here in Newcastle in 2012); myself; Priscila Susin (a PGR in Social Sciences at PUCRS and, Robin knows, a former colleague/student here); Naida Menezes (that is spelled correctly – she’s also a PhD student in Social Sciences at PUCRS); Hermílio Santos (coordinator of the Centro de Análises Econômicas e Sociais da PUCRS); and Federico Rangel (an undergraduate student in Social Sciences at PUCRS).

Newcastle University Latin American Association: Statement of Purpose

Newcastle University Latin American Association (NULAS) is a student-led community striving to foster Latin American cultural identity within Newcastle University, offering an opportunity for Latin American students to come together, but also to share and create spaces of cultural interchange that raise awareness about Latin America, seeking to break stereotypes and demystifying first-hand our own reality. We believe in diversity as our biggest strength, hence we intend to explore the different facets of our multiculturality through music, food, dance, and by sharing creative and academic contents that reflect not only the enrooted Latin American struggles- acknowledging the historical fragmentation of our social fabric and how this has driven us to be what we are today, but attempting to recognise and locate Latin America as a fundamental part and point of reference in a global context. As part of our job, this year we are working to develop a network of cultural exchange with the different international student societies on campus. We are looking forward to establishing a dialogue with our multi-ethnic heritage, recognising the role of colonial influence, migration, and slavery, and what that has entailed in the construction of our cultural identity. We intend to showcase that experience as a means to engage with a community that still sees Latin America as distant, whereas we consider it to be an integral melting pot, which can be translated into transferable and replicable knowledge in our local and regional communities.

Contact: Felipe González Zapata felipe.gonzalezz@outlook.com
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 3rd October</td>
<td>Armstrong Building 1.04</td>
<td>Research Seminar</td>
<td>Christopher Bannister, University of Manchester</td>
<td>From Senate House to the River Plate - the British Ministry of Information in Argentina, 1939-1946</td>
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<td>Tuesday 9th October</td>
<td>Armstrong Building 1.03</td>
<td>SML/CLACS Research Seminar</td>
<td>Lori Oxford and Alberto Centeno Pulido, Western Carolina University</td>
<td>Teaching Against Politics: Cuba in an American Classroom and La Metástasis Videotópica de Breaking Bad: A Hybrid Look at Film Noir Fiction for TV</td>
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<td>Monday 15th October</td>
<td>3:00-4:00pm, Old Library Building 2.01</td>
<td>RENEWAL exhibit Launch. (The exhibit will run until 26th October)</td>
<td>You are cordially invited to visit the photo exhibition Renewal by the Spanish collective NOPHOTO. Renewal is an essay of creative writing and photography. It is the result of a process of restoration in a dictionary that had 65 pages missing. The open wound has devastated the meaning of hundreds of words, such as “renewal”. As imagined, the volume presents a production defect. The Spanish collective NOPHOTO <a href="http://nophoto.org/">http://nophoto.org/</a> aims to restore the mutilated dictionary. This seemingly fantastic but real occurrence encourages us to imagine a world without words such as “remuneration”, “reportage”, “representation”, “recovery”. The objective is to create an inventory of lost words as survival strategy for words threatened with extinction such as “renewal”.</td>
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<td>Wednesday 24th October</td>
<td>Armstrong Building G.08</td>
<td>CLACS Welcome Event and Research Round-up</td>
<td>We invite you to join us for drinks and nibbles to welcome all new staff, students and friends of CLACS to the new academic session. We will also be highlighting some of our work with a Research Round Up.</td>
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<td>Friday 9th November</td>
<td>Armstrong Building G.69/G.70</td>
<td>Standing Conference of Latin American Studies in the UK (Autumn meeting)</td>
<td>Convened by the Past President of SLAS and Chair of the Standing Conference (Jens Hentschke) this meeting is a chance for Directors of Latin American Research Centres to update each other on their activities. Philip Lewis from the International Unit of the British Academy will be joining as a special guest.</td>
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<td>Monday 26th November</td>
<td>Agriculture Building 3.05</td>
<td>Research Seminar</td>
<td>Silvia Miranda, University of São Paulo</td>
<td>Agricultural and food trade between Brazil and the UK</td>
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<td>Co-Convenered with School of Natural and Environmental Sciences</td>
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<td>Wednesday 12th December</td>
<td>Percy Building G.13</td>
<td>Research Seminar and Book Launch</td>
<td>Jens Hentschke, School of Modern Languages</td>
<td>Philosophical Polemics, School Reform, and Nation-Building in Uruguay, 1868-1915: Reforma Vareliana and Batllismo in Transnational Perspective</td>
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<td>Wednesday 19th December</td>
<td>Politics Building, G.22</td>
<td>Research Seminar co-convened with Politics and Postcolonial Research group</td>
<td>Gustavo Alvim de Góes Bezerra, Pontificia Universidade Catolica (PUC)-Rio</td>
<td>Slavery in 19th Century Atlantic: How History Can Widen the Horizon of International Relations</td>
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<td>Wednesday 30th January</td>
<td>Armstrong Building 1.04</td>
<td>Research Seminar convened by History, Classics and Archaeology</td>
<td>Diana Paton, University of Edinburgh</td>
<td>The Driveress and the Nurse: Childcare and Other Work under Caribbean Slavery</td>
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<td>Please note, this talk will be in Spanish</td>
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<td>Wednesday 20th February</td>
<td>Armstrong Building G.08</td>
<td>Research Seminar</td>
<td>James Scorer, University of Manchester, Centre for Latin American and Caribbean Studies</td>
<td>Cities of the Undead: Zombies in Latin American Comics</td>
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<td>Friday 8th March</td>
<td>Armstrong Building G.69/G.70</td>
<td>Standing Conference of Latin American Studies in the UK (Spring meeting)</td>
<td>Jeremy Hobbs, Head of the Americas Research Group, Chris Bradley and Martin Garrett, Foreign and Commonwealth Office will be joining as special guests.</td>
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<td>Friday 3rd May</td>
<td>Armstrong Building 2.16</td>
<td>CLACS Conference</td>
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