



Latin America  
Specialty Group

# CLAG/LASG NEWSLETTER

Conference of Latin American Geography (CLAG) and AAG's Latin America Specialty Group (LASG)

*Timothy B. Norris - Editor*

## CLAG 2021 – TUCSON, ARIZONA

**May 2021**

The next CLAG meeting will be in Tucson, Arizona May 20th-22nd 2021! The University of Arizona School of Geography, Development, and Environment will host the meeting with the help of other Latin Americanists across campus and colleagues from ASU and universities in Sonora. The conference venue will be the LEED platinum Environment and Natural Resources building which is designed to echo a Southwest desert canyon. We hope to have some great field trips (contact us with ideas) and to welcome you to Baja Arizona and the border. For more information contact Diana Liverman ([liverman@u.arizona.edu](mailto:liverman@u.arizona.edu)).



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*\* terms end on June 30 of year indicated*

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Beth Bee

Ben Gerlofs



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## Letter from the Executive Director

Michael Steinberg

Colleagues,

As we enter 2020, I feel a great sense of confidence in CLAG's near and long-term future. We just celebrated our 50th anniversary with a very successful meeting in Antigua, Guatemala where more than 180 people registered and participated in the conference. We also continue to support graduate students through travel and field research funds – more than any other geographical organization or specialty group. And our journal continues to reach new heights in terms of readership and rankings (and revenue based partly on that readership). All this success is due of course to our active and committed membership, board, editorial staff, etc.

So, as we move into our next half century, let's not take for granted our current successes. Continue to use JLAG in your classes, download articles, and encourage graduate students and others to join the

organization. Our community is unique and very special, so let's all act as ambassadors in promoting it as such. Also, it's time to start planning for our next meeting in Tucson in May 2021, and possibly Peru and/or Ecuador thereafter. It's never too early to think about paper sessions, field trips, and logistical support. More information on those meetings will be available shortly via the listserve.



Happy New Year and happy new semester!

Michael Steinberg  
CLAG Executive Director  
University of Alabama

## Latin American Studies Book Series

### Call for book proposals and manuscripts

Please remember that CLAG collaborates with Springer-Nature to publish "[Springer Briefs in Latin American Studies](#)." It is a great place for manuscripts too short for a lengthy book but too long for a journal article to submit to JLAG. Several CLAG members have published graduate theses and other short manuscripts in it, as you can see at the following link:

<http://www.springer.com/series/14332>.

Another option, for longer manuscripts, is the "[The Latin American Studies Book Series](#)." (<http://www.springer.com/series/15104>).

To submit a proposal or manuscript, please contact [mksteinberg@ua.edu](mailto:mksteinberg@ua.edu) – Michael Steinberg – CLAG Executive Director



## LETTER FROM THE CLAG CHAIR

Brad Jokisch

Dear CLAG colleagues!

Greetings! It was great to see everyone in Antigua—and so many new faces! We had about 160 papers with four concurrent sessions. The attendance, quality of the papers, discussions, and mix of younger and more seasoned scholars gives me a lot of confidence in the future of CLAG. Of course, the news from JLAG's editor, Johnny Finn, that article downloads set a record in 2019 also bodes well for the future. Thanks to Matthew Taylor and Mike Steinberg in particular for organizing the conference, but also to Catherine Nolin for her field trip and keynote lecture. Thanks also go to Johnny Finn for getting the impressive 50th anniversary special issue of JLAG published in time for the meeting and to all the session organizers, discussants, and presenters who made the conference so memorable.

At the Antigua meeting I had the pleasure of presenting the Carl O. Sauer Distinguished Scholarship Award to Kent Mathewson of LSU and Kendra McSweeney of Ohio State University. The Preston E. James Eminent Latin Americanist Award went to Gregory Knapp of the University of Texas at Austin. Congratulations to these deserving recipients and thanks to the nominators, especially those who spoke at the meeting.

At the CLAG board of directors in Antigua a few important issues were considered. First, we can look forward to the next CLAG meeting (#37) in May 20-22 2021. The board unanimously approved Diana Liverman's proposal to host the next meeting in Tucson, Arizona. She and colleagues at the University of Arizona have graciously volunteered to host the meeting around May 20-23. Continuing with the CLAG tradition of alternating conference sites between the US and Latin America, the board is already working with geographers considering hosting the 2023 event.

In other important news CLAG has completed the transition of taking on the membership functions from the University of Texas Press. Renewing your membership now takes place at CLAG's website, and it occurs on a rolling basis rather than on the annual calendar (Jan.—Dec.). Tim Norris deserves recognition for leading this effort and special thanks

go to the membership committee for their feedback and assistance.

Financially CLAG is doing well, due in large part to the health of JLAG. We hear a great deal about the problems of the academic publishing model where private companies earn profits from the published work of academics (See Dave Kaplan's AAG President's Column). It is important for everyone to understand that JLAG does not fit that model. Rather, JLAG is an independent scholarly journal owned and controlled by CLAG, not a commercial publisher. CLAG receives about 80% of its revenues from royalties generated from JLAG downloads, mostly from Project Muse. The vast majority of CLAG revenues are then used to support JLAG and student research (field study awards) and student travel to CLAG conferences. So, rest assured supporting JLAG is supporting CLAG, especially students. In other financial news we are pleased and grateful that Christian Brannstrom agreed to serve as CLAG's treasurer; he replaces Rob Kent, who served in that capacity for seven years and did a tremendous job.

The call for the 2020 field study proposals (MA/MS and Ph.D.) just went out (see website); the committee will consider the applicants this spring for upcoming field/archival work. This past fall, the CLAG Honors Committee, consisting of six board members and headed by Christian Abizaid, reviewed about 20 student travel grant applications and awarded four \$500 grants to MA/MS students and four to Ph.D. students. It was great to see their work and other student papers/posters at the meeting.

Thanks again to everyone for their dedication to CLAG; it's a pleasure to work with such a fine group of scholars and activists. Keep an eye out for an email from Catherine Nolin, Vice-Chair of CLAG; she will solicit nominations for the CLAG board elections scheduled for early June.

Brad D. Jokisch  
Chair



## LETTER FROM THE LASG CHAIR

Ben Gerlofs

Dear LASG and CLAG readership,

Saludos from a borderline-balmy Brooklyn. It's once again my pleasure to write to you as Chair of the LASG. 2019 was an eventful year in our hemisphere, to say the least, and I write you all with best wishes for a safe, productive, and enjoyable 2020, wherever you and yours may be.

There are some changes coming for the LASG, of which I should like to make you all aware. Importantly, the terms of our Chair (myself), Vice-Chair (Johnny Finn), and Secretary-Treasurer (Beth Bee) are all coming to an end at the close of this academic year. An announcement to this effect and a call for nominations (including self-nominations) will be circulating in the coming days. For those of you disturbed by the direction or quality of the current regime, take heart in the inevitability of change and the promise of new leadership in the year to come. For those of you awed or inspired by the current regime, stray not into Buendían nostalgia. Whatever your motivation, steel your courage and drop your name in the proverbial hat for a chance to put your hand to the wheel.

In addition, we hope to see you all at our annual AAG meeting in Denver, CO in April. We have confirmed our sponsorship of a number of exciting sessions promising empirical and theoretical contributions that should be of great interest to our membership, and we hope to sponsor yet more before the show kicks off on April 6. LASG sponsorship is a great way to increase your session's exposure, create 'buzz' around the great

things our members are working on, and, importantly, avoid overlapping time slots among sessions. If you are interested in having your session sponsored by the LASG, please contact me at [bgerlofs@princeton.edu](mailto:bgerlofs@princeton.edu) at your earliest convenience, as there may still be time to add your work to our illustrious rolls.

Our joint business meeting with CLAG will take place, per custom, just after our JLAG keynote address—which, contrary to custom, is happening on Tuesday, April 7—and just before our annual AAG party. Details regarding the party are pending, and should circulate in the coming weeks. For this year's JLAG lecture, we'll have the privilege of hearing from representatives from the Mexico City-based feminist activist collective, GeoBrujas (page 19 of this newsletter). Please do come and enjoy these events with us. Also be aware that calls are currently circulating for our best paper and field research graduate student awards for this year (deadline February 21). We are also seeking 2-3 volunteers to serve on our ad-hoc awards committees. Inquiries and submissions may be directed to Secretary-Treasurer Beth Bee ([beeb@ecu.edu](mailto:beeb@ecu.edu)).

Thanks and good wishes to all for taking part in and supporting the LASG, we hope to see you all in Denver.

Sincerely,

Ben A. Gerlofs  
Postdoctoral Research Associate  
Princeton University



Salar Grande in Argentina (August 2019) - Christian Brannstrom

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR - JLAG

Johnny Finn

Camaradas:

The *Journal of Latin American Geography* begins 2020 on strong footing. Volume 18 included three issues spread across nearly 700 pages, including 18 peer-reviewed articles, 15 Perspectives essays, one JLAG Retrospective, and 21 book reviews. There were a grand total of 86 different authors and reviewers from institutions in 13 different countries and semi-autonomous regions, including United States, Mexico, United Kingdom, Canada, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Catalonia, Hong Kong, Ireland, Sweden, and the Tohono O'odham Nation. Then, in January 2020 we went to press with vol. 19, No. 1, a special issue celebrating CLAG's 50th anniversary. This issue consisted of 20 Perspectives essays and two Portuguese-to-English translations for the inaugural *JLAG em Tradução* section (See pp. 13-15 of this newsletter for the full table of contents.)

As evidence of the journal's increasing profile and reach, in 2019 there were 29,493 full-text downloads via Project Muse, the highest number of annual downloads in the journal's 18-year history. Furthermore, JLAG is currently the 8th most cited journal on Google Scholar's interdisciplinary Latin American Studies list.

JLAG editorial team's is working on several new initiatives for 2020 and beyond. First, in *JLAG* vol. 19, no. 1 we launched *JLAG em Tradução*, a new section of the journal that will feature translations of articles—published in the same issue of *JLAG* as the original translated article—that have the potential to make broad and long-lasting contributions to theoretical, methodological, and topical debates in Latin American geography. We aim to publish three to four translations in this new section per year. Our full rationale for creating this section is available here (<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/744026>).

Second, we continue to experiment with temporarily opening access to articles from the JLAG archive that have the potential to inform breaking news or unfolding current events. Readers should be on the look-out for several planned open access “events” in 2020. Third, we will soon be adding several new associate editor positions to the journal's editorial team. We will be issuing a call for applications to these important editorial positions in March 2020.

Eric Carter will be stepping down as JLAG's Book Review Editor at the end of this year. On behalf of JLAG's editorial team and the entire JLAG readership, I'd like to thank Eric for five years of service, by the end of which time he will have edited close to 100 book reviews. Eric's service to JLAG, the CLAG, and more broadly to Latin American geography is invaluable.

Finally, the *Journal of Latin American Geography's* ongoing success would not be possible without the continuous efforts of JLAG's editorial team including Martha Bell, Jörn Seemann, and Gabriela Valdivia (Associate Editors), Eric Carter (Book Review Editor), Yulia Garcia Sarduy (JLAG Editorial Assistant), and our copy editing and design team. Many thanks to all for everything you do.

Sincerely,  
Johnny Finn  
Editor, *Journal of Latin American Geography*



## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### NEW PUBLICATIONS: PAPERS

- Adame-Campos, Rita L., Adrian Ghilardi, Yan Gao, Jaime Paneque-Gálvez & Jean-François Mas. 2019. Variables selection for aboveground biomass estimations: a comparison between relative importance approach and stepwise AKAIKE's information criterion. *ISPRS international Journal of Geo-Information* (8) 6: 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijgi8060245>
- Aguilera, Anahi, Cynthia Armendariz, Patricia Quintana, Felipe García-Oliva & Francisco Bautista. 2019. Influence of Land Use and Road Type on the Elemental Composition of Urban Dust in a Mexican Metropolitan Area. *Polish Journal of Environmental Studies*. (28) 3: 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.15244/pjoes/90358>
- Álvarez Larrain, Alina & Michael K. McCall. 2019. La cartografía participativa como propuesta teórico-metodológica para una arqueología del paisaje latinoamericana. Un ejemplo desde los Valles Calchaquies (Argentina). *Antípoda. Revista de Antropología y Arqueología*. 36: 85-112. <https://doi.org/10.7440/antipoda36.2019.05>
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- Borrego, Armonia & Margaret Skutsch. 2019. How socio-economic differences between farmers affect forest degradation in Western Mexico. *Forests*. (10) 893: 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.3390/f10100893>
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Bollo Manent, M., Espinoza Maya A; Hernández Cendejas G; Santana Hernández (coordinadores). 2019. *Las Regiones físico-geográficas de Michoacán de Ocampo*. UNAM- CIGA, México. ISBN: : 978 607 30 1028 3 .

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## NEW PUBLICATIONS: SPECIAL ISSUES

*Development and Change* - Volume 51, Issue 1

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/14677660/2020/51/1>

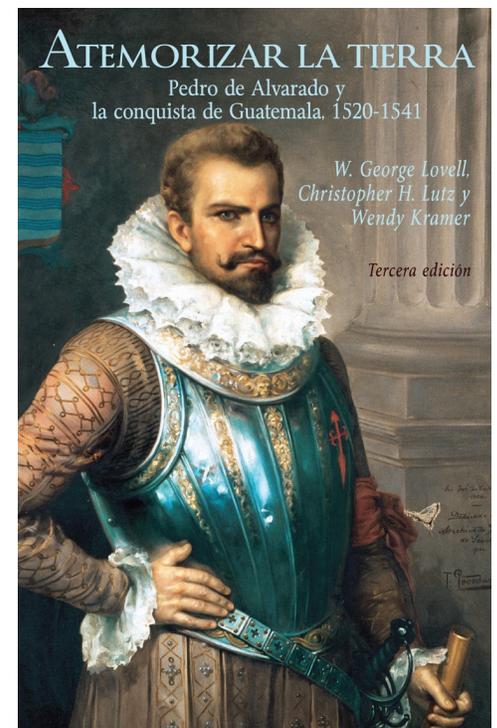
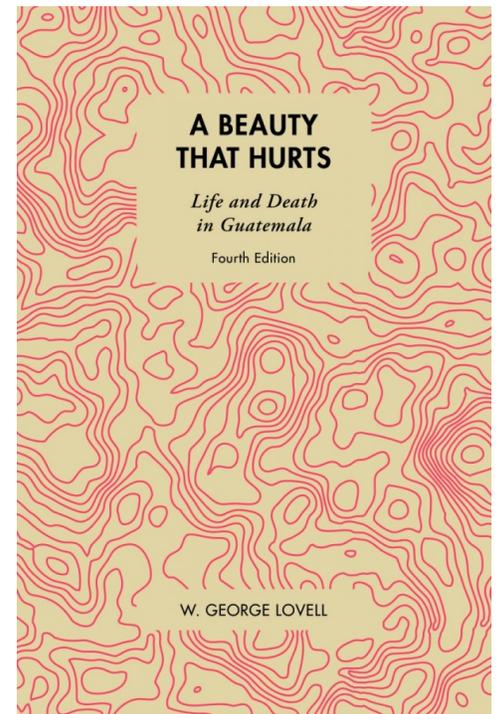
Beyond Market Logics: Payments for Ecosystem Services as Alternative Development Practices in the Global South  
 Editors: Elizabeth Shapiro-Garza Pamela McElwee Gert Van Hecken Esteve Corbera

*Geographical Review* – Volume 100, Issues 1-2

Fieldwork in the 21st Century

Editors: Kendra McSweeney & Antoinette WinklerPrins

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# JOURNAL OF LATIN AMERICAN GEOGRAPHY, No 19(1) 2020

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*Michael Steinberg*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0017>

Fifty Years of Latin American(ist) Geography

*John C. Finn, Jörn Seemann*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0016>

## HISTORIES

Early Days with the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers: Some Very Selective, Irreverent, and Personal Reminiscences

*Tom Martinson*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0008>

CLAGistas: The Rise of Women in Latin American Geography

*T. Shawn Mitchell*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0022>

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*Andrew Sluyter, Brett Spencer*

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*Gregory Knapp*

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El lugar de la ecología política dentro de la geografía latinoamericana: el caso de CLAG

*Melissa Moreano, Diana Vela-Almeida*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0009>

The Sauer Tree in Time and Place

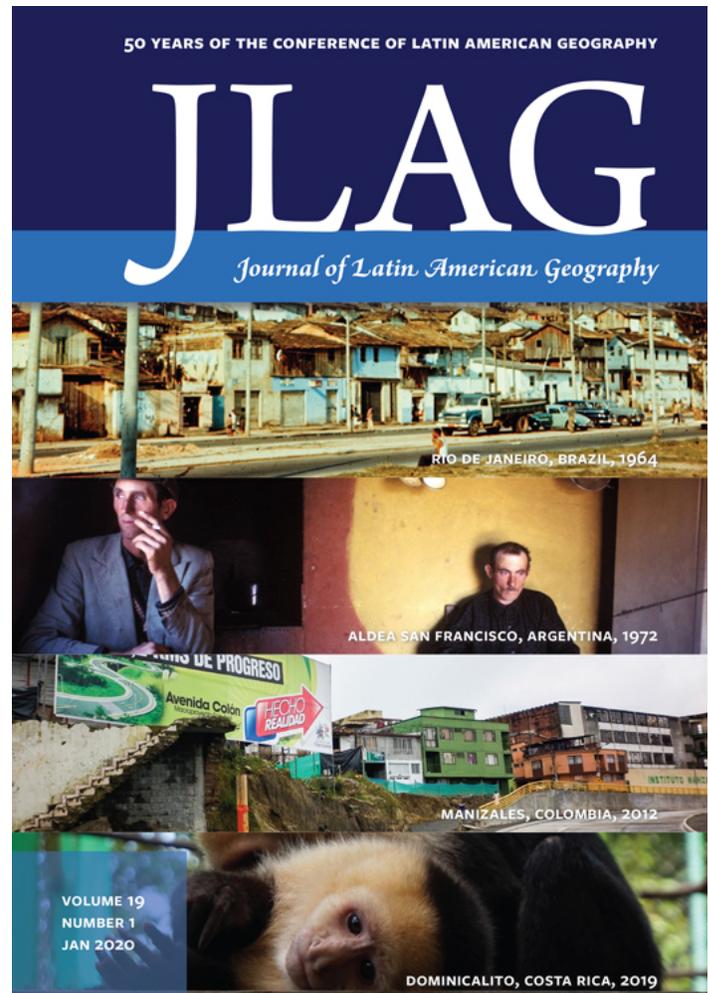
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<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0012>

Geografía latinoamericanista en México: balance histórico a partir de la Escuela de Berkeley

*Pedro S. Urquijo Torres, Paola C. Segundo, Gerardo Bocco*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0020>



## PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE FIELD

### Fifty Years of Fieldwork in Latin America

*Rick Bein, Richard Wilkie, W. George Lovell, Bill Doolittle, Jim Biles, Karl Offen, Matthew Taylor, Tom Perreault, Román Mamini, Case Watkins, Ashley Coles, Felipe Magalhães, Federica Bono, Yulia Garcia Sarduy, Christian Brannstrom, Dayna Cueva Alegría, Kenneth D. Madsen, Jeffrey S. Smith, Sisimac Duchicela, Jorge Ruiz, Kristen Conway-Gómez, Nicolás Vergara-Arribas, Speiran Siobhan, Joel E. Correia, Jorge Choy-Gómez, Patrick CoatarPeter, Jordan Brasher, Julie Cupples, Daniel Zayonc, Gisselle Vila Benites, Patricia Wood Dickerson*

[HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1353/LAG.2020.0011](https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0011)

## CRITICAL ENGAGEMENTS

### Territories of Latin American Geography

*Joel E. Correia*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0018>

### Território(s) numa perspectiva latino-americana

*Rogério Haesbaert*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0007>

### Desigualdad y fragmentación territorial en América Latina

*Pablo Paolasso*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0000>

### Geografias feministas na América Latina: desafios epistemológicos e a decolonialidade de saberes

*Joseli Maria Silva, Marcio Jose Ornat*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0019>

### Geographies of the Underground in Latin America

*Matthew Himley, Andrea Marston*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0024>

### Subsidy from Nature: Green Sea Turtles in the Colonial Caribbean

*Karl Offen*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0025>

## RESEARCH AGENDAS:

### Where Are the Cities? On Not Excluding (Much More Than) Half of the Latin Americans in Latin Americanist Geography

*Nikolai A. Alvarado*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0006>

### Real Estate and the Production of Urban Space: A Pervasive Debt of Latin American(ist) Geography

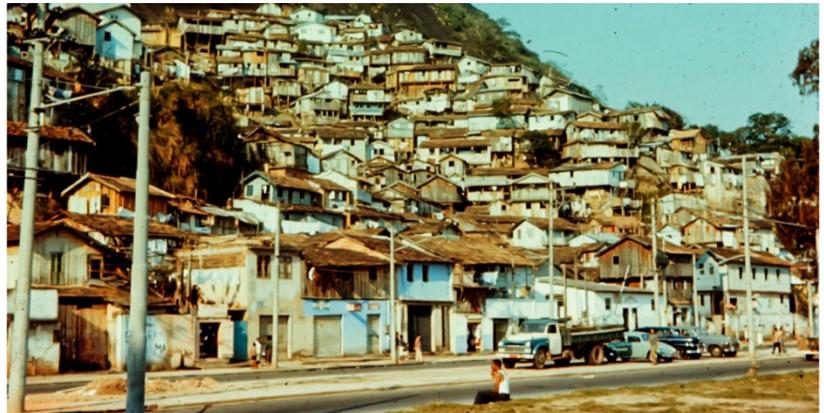
*Nicolás Vergara-Arribas*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0013>

### Feminist Futures in Latin American Geography

*Anne-Marie Hanson*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0010>



Rio de Janeiro (photo Rick Bein, 1964)



Brasília (Photo Rick Bein 1971)



Avenida Colón, Manizales, Colombia (photo Ashley Coles 2012)

Dinámicas socioambientales contemporáneas y las nuevas oportunidades para realzar la geografía latinoamericana

*Edgar Espinoza-Cisneros, Isabel Avendaño-Flores*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0015>

Racialized and Identity-Based Inequalities as (New?) Frontiers for Academic Discussion: Future Agendas around Land Issues

*Diego Andrés Lugo-Vivas*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0023>

### JLAG EM TRADUÇÃO:

Introducing JLAG em Tradução/JLAG en Traducción

*John C. Finn, Martha Bell, Jörn Seemann, Gabriela Valdivia, Eric Carter*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0001>

Territory/ies from a Latin American Perspective

*Rogério Haesbaert, Liz Mason-Deese*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0005>

Feminist Geographies in Latin America: Epistemological Challenges and the Decoloniality of Knowledge

*Joseli Maria Silva, Marcio Jose Ornat, Liz Mason-Deese*

<https://doi.org/10.1353/lag.2020.0004>

### JLAG: CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

The JLAG seeks contributors for our book review section. Writing book reviews can be fun and rewarding: for starters, you get a free book. You'll have the opportunity to use your knowledge and expertise to put your spin on what's happening in a specific scholarly field. And some find that it's also a chance to write in a different voice for a more general audience.

Please contact the Book Review Editor, Eric Carter ([ecarter@macalester.edu](mailto:ecarter@macalester.edu)), with a summary of your scholarly interests, if you'd like to volunteer to write a book review, or if there are specific titles we should know about.

## CLAG/LASG MEMBER NEWS

### AWARDS AND HONORS:

**Gerardo Bocco Verdinelli.** 2019, Reconocimiento. Internacional. "Reconocimiento como Miembro Correspondiente". Sociedad de Geografía de Cuba, Cuba.

**Gerardo Bocco Verdinelli.** 2019, Reconocimiento. Internacional. "Reconocimiento como investigador correspondiente". Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, Argentina.

**Joel E. Correia** was awarded the 2019 Global Fellows distinction by the University of Florida International Center in support of his research "New frontiers of environmental justice: Indigenous rights, resource politics, and resistance in the Gran Chaco."

**Ivan Ramirez and Jieun Lee's** paper "Mapping ecosyndemic and social vulnerability in Guatemala during the 2014-16 El Niño: An exploratory GIS analysis." (see above) received the best conference paper recognition at The 2nd International Electronic Conference on Environmental Health Sciences, November, 2019, organized by the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.

**Miguel Angel Salinas Melgoza.** 2019. Distinción. Nacional. "Mejor tesis de doctorado". Sociedad científica Mexicana de Ecología y la Facultad de Ciencias Naturales de la Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro, México. Tutor: Margaret Skutsch.

**Karina Bautista Tovar.** 2019. Premio Institucional. "Premio Fernando J. González Villarreal a la mejor tesis en Recursos Hídricos". UNAM, México. Tutor: Jaime Paneque Gálvez.

**Yared Cortina.** 2019. Internacional. "Segundo lugar del Master's Oral Paper Competition". Reunión de la West Lake AAG Conference. , Estados Unidos de América. Tutor: Gerardo Bocco Verdinelli.

**Gabriela Ramírez Hernández.** 2019. Primer Premio a la mejor tesis de maestría en cartografía, geodesia y/o información geográfica. Instituto Panamericano de Cartografía e Historia. Tutor: Jean Francois Mas Causse y Janine M. Ramsey.

**Gabriela Fenner.** 2019. Segunda mención a la mejor tesis de maestría en cartografía, geodesia y/o información geográfica. Instituto Panamericano de Cartografía e Historia. Tutor: Michel McCall y Andres Camou.

**Jaime Octavio Loya Carrillo.** 2019. Tercera mención a la mejor tesis de maestría en cartografía, geodesia y/o información geográfica. Instituto Panamericano de Cartografía e Historia. Tutor: Jean Francois Mas Causse.

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD:

Queen's University's Department of Geography was well represented at the 50th anniversary meeting of the Conference of Latin American Geography (CLAG), which convened at the former Dominican convent in the old colonial capital of Central America, La Antigua Guatemala, January 2-4, 2020. In attendance were Robert Huish (BAH 2001, MA 2003), Catherine Nolin (MA 1995, PhD 2000), Krista House (BAH 1997, MA 1999), and George Lovell. Catherine, who assumes the presidency of CLAG on July 1, delivered a moving address at the conference banquet, "Documenting Violence in Guatemala: Insurgent Geographical Research for Change," before leading a field trip to parts of Guatemala most affected by the country's brutal armed conflict, which raged from 1960 to 1996.

### Post-CLAG Field Trip to Rabinal & Maya Achí territory:

Catherine Nolin (University of Northern British Columbia, UNBC) and Grahame Russell (Rights Action & UNBC) – with support from CLAGista Nathan Einbinder – co-led a post-CLAG field trip to Rabinal & Maya Achí territory from January 5-8, 2020. In 1999, the United Nations' Commission of Historical Clarification (CEH) determined that genocide happened in Guatemala, in four particular areas of the country, with Rabinal being one of those regions. The people we met with are primarily Maya Achi survivors of / family members of victims of the Achi genocide and government repression. The objective of this fieldtrip was to introduce participants to the Maya-Achí region of Baja Verapaz, with a specific focus on local indigenous initiatives that aim to recuperate Achí culture and society through popular education and sustainable/traditional agriculture.

Eleven people joined Catherine and Grahame, including: Joel E. Correia (University of Florida), Max Counter (University of Colorado Boulder), Brian Gorlick (University of London, UK), Aaron Malone (Colorado School of



Robert Huish, Catherine Nolin, Krista House, George Lovell (left to right)



Mines), Maureen Hays-Mitchell (Colgate University), Dan O'Shea (semi-retired), Karl & Antonia Offen (Oberlin College), Kathleen Schroeder (Appalachian State University), Kate Swanson (San Diego State University), and Andrew Wight (science journalist, Medellin). In addition to meetings with local victims/survivors/protagonists in Rabinal, the group participated in community visits to the small communities of Xesiguán & Chich'upaq to witness local organization Qachuu Aloom's agroecology projects in action which revealed deep pride and knowledge; they sharing a beautiful vision of food sovereignty in this complex Guatemalan context. By chance, we arrived to Chich'upaq while the community was preparing for commemoration of January

8, 1982 massacre at the community's medical clinic: a site of torture, trauma & later exhumation. Two women survivors, Patricia & Antonia, recounted some of what happened that day. The intense few days with this delightful group will long be remembered and cherished.

### UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS:

#### CLAG + RIGHTS ACTION Field Trip 2020

Based on a very positive experience organizing the post-CLAG conference field trip for faculty and graduate students, Catherine Nolin and Grahame Russell of Rights Action are busy planning another CLAG-focused field trip/delegation for May 2020. This 8-day/8-night field trip is focused on the root causes of migration from Central America and is titled: No End in Sight: The Root Causes of Forced Migration from Honduras and Guatemala, running Saturday, May 16 – Sunday May 24, 2020. We are excited to create this opportunity for CLAGistas who work in this region, on these issues, or who want to incorporate on-the-ground experiences into their classroom teaching. Cost = \$1000US [based on 10 participants to make this financially viable]. Please contact ASAP to secure your spot before the 29 February 2020 deadline! Full details are available at: <https://www.unbc.ca/catherine-nolin/guatemala>. Please contact Catherine at [nolin@unbc.ca](mailto:nolin@unbc.ca) with any questions.



## RECENT GRADUATES AND NEW POSITIONS

### SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED THESES AND DISSERTATIONS:

#### PhD

**Carlos Humberto Troche Souza.** Doctorado en Geografía, UNAM. Tesis: "Evaluación geoecológica de humedales costeros como almacenes de carbono". Bajo la dirección del Dr. Angel Guadalupe Priego Santander.

**Sofía Monroy Sais.** Doctorado en Geografía, UNAM. Tesis: "Estrategias de manejo y valoración económica de los recursos naturales en dos sitios de región Costa Sur de Jalisco". bajo la dirección de la Dra. Margaret Skutsch.

**America Alejandra Navarro.** Con el gusto de saludarte te comparto la noticia de que el pasado 17 de enero, obtuve el grado de Doctora en Geografía en el Centro de Investigaciones en Geografía Ambiental (CIGA) de la UNAM, con la tesis: "Construcción de un espacio. La frontera septentrional del obispado de Michoacán, 1536-1650", bajo la dirección de Pedro Urquijo Torres.



America Alejandra Navarro

#### Master

**Erick Rodriguez Silva.** Maestría en Ciencias de la Sostenibilidad, UNAM. Tesis: "Nuevos arreglos institucionales para la implementacion y sostenibilidad de REDD+ en Mexico". Bajo la dirección de la Dra. Margaret M Skutsch.

**Paola Andrea Sepulveda Grisales.** Maestría en Ciencias de la Sostenibilidad, UNAM. Tesis: "Sustentabilidad y ambiente en los planes de estudio de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México". Bajo la dirección de la Dra. Armonia Borrego.

### NEW POSITIONS:

**G. Thomas LaVanchy** accepted a position as an assistant professor in Geography at Oklahoma State University.

**Nikolai Alvarado** at the University of Denver accepted a tenure track position in the Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science in the School of Earth, Society and Environment at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Nikolai's research focuses on migrant-led urbanization in the Global South and the everyday political strategies that migrants use to acquire urban rights and navigate exclusionary migration regimes from under-resourced urban spaces. His empirical work takes place in Central America, the second fastest urbanizing region in the world behind Africa.



## 3RD ANNUAL JLAG LECTURE

featuring:

# GeoBrujas

*A Mexico-based community of women geographers*

**Tuesday, April 7, 4:00 PM**

(Tuesday of the AAG meeting)

Grand Ballroom 1, Sheraton

IM Pei Tower, Second Floor Level

Denver, CO

This year's JLAG Lecture will feature six members of **GeoBrujas**, a community of women geographers from Mexico that offers critical and counter-cartographic perspectives on bodies, territories, and landscapes in Latin America. The collective is designed to challenge and transform patriarchal production of geographical knowledges, understanding that cartography is a tool loaded with ideology, which their work aims to deconstruct, decentralize, and socialize at the collective and community level. With their work, GeoBrujas aims to generate spaces for reflection, practice, and critical analysis that can contribute to geographical thinking around our reality on different spatial scales, from the global to the local, from the home to the body-territory. Their work ranges from traditional academic publishing to highly praised interactive performances that seek to intervene in academic and advocacy realms, disrupting their divides, and offering new insights into dominant understandings of bodies, territory, and power.

**Giulia Marchese**

*National Autonomous University of Mexico*

**Valeria Ysunza**

*Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-  
Xochimilco*

**Gabriela Mariana Fenner Sánchez**

*Centro De Estudios Superiores De México Y  
Centroamérica*

**Karla Helena Guzmán Velázquez**

*Universidad Autónoma De La Ciudad De  
México*

**Frida Itzel Rivera Juárez**

*Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana*

**Nadia Matamoros Aguirre**

*Independent Scholar and Activist*

## 2020 CLAG FIELD STUDY AWARDS

### Deadline March 6, 2020

The Conference of Latin American Geography (CLAG) invites applications for the 2020 CLAG Student Field Study Awards. Each year CLAG confers named awards at the Ph.D. level (Bernard Nietschmann, Robert C. West, and James J. Parsons awards) and at the master's level (Clarissa Kimber, William M. Denevan, and Oscar Horst awards).

These awards are intended to support graduate student members of CLAG in their thesis or dissertation research in Latin America or concerning the Latin American diaspora. The awards are not intended to cover all fieldwork costs, but rather to assist students working towards the Master's degree or Ph.D. in their field and/or archival research in Latin America. The award for the **MA/MS recipients** will be approximately **\$1,000** and for **Ph.D. recipients** about **\$1,500**.

#### Eligibility:

- Member of CLAG before the application deadline;
- Registered as a graduate (M.A., M.S., or Ph.D.) student in a geography department or related discipline;
- Regional area of research in Latin America, including the Caribbean, is given priority. If the regional area of research is outside of Latin America/Caribbean, a clear justification of how the study relates to dynamics in Latin America must be provided. CLAG Field Study Awards are for field and archival research, not for attendance at academic meetings or language acquisition;
- Recipients of previous CLAG Field Study Awards are ineligible to apply with the exception that previous winners at the Master's level may apply for the Ph.D. level award if they are enrolled in a Ph.D. program;
- Fieldwork must be conducted during the dates specified in the proposal. Any anticipated significant changes must be reported to the CLAG Chair;
- All awardees must provide a home address;
- US awardees must supply a US social security number to the CLAG Treasurer .

Please see the full instructions at: <https://clagscholar.org/awards-funding/student-field-study-award/>

A selection committee will review all applications and make a recommendation to the CLAG chair. Awardees will be **notified by April 1, 2020**.

#### More Information

Please direct your questions to Brad Jokisch ([jokisch67@gmail.com](mailto:jokisch67@gmail.com)), CLAG Honors Committee chair.

We look forward to reviewing your innovative proposals.



## CLAG FIELD STUDY REPORTS, 2019

### PH.D. FIELD STUDY REPORTS

**Ainhoa Mingolarra**, PhD Student, Geography Department, Syracuse University

**Project:** *Uneven water geographies between Haiti and the Dominican Republic*

My research explores transboundary water governance in the northern border area between Haiti and the Dominican Republic (DR). The sharing of water resources of the Massacre watershed in the Northern border region has followed the power asymmetries existing between two countries, rooted in colonial and postcolonial histories. At present, water allocation continues to contribute to further socioeconomic asymmetries in the two countries. However, transboundary water allocation of the Massacre river for agriculture and household purposes is becoming more contested due to an intensification of agriculture in Haiti, as well as to ecological factors, such as a high rate of deforestation in Haiti affecting the water catchment in the watershed and water stress caused by a drier climate in the island. All this is challenging water availability for farmers and households that ultimately affects binational relations and water rights among citizens.

The cities of Ouanaminthe in Haiti and Dajabón in the DR, where I based my fieldwork, are separated by the Massacre River and make use of its surface and ground water. Water justice within this area differs depending on space, nationality, race, gender and class. Thus, water shortages from the water tap are common in certain low-income neighborhoods in the city of Dajabón, while in Ouanaminthe, where the

grid does not reach every household and connection prices are expensive for many, the majority of the citizens rely on private vendors or water kiosks.

During my fieldwork on the summer of 2019, a constitutional decree withdrawing the park status of the Dominican National Park Fernando Tavares Vásquez, located about 30 miles to the East of my research area, was approved. The justification made by the government for this withdrawal was that within the park area there exist some settlements which need to make use of the surrounding natural resources. The further existence of a national park which per law prohibits any kind of resources extraction was then non-viable. Environmental associations from the region, together with the public Autonomous University of Santo Domingo and the Dominican Academy of Sciences protested against this decision, claiming that the real motives for the withdrawn of the park are economic interests from the timber industry. In the meetings that I attended in June and July 2019, representatives of these organizations and institutions argued that the effects that this decision will have in terms of water availability will be disastrous. Hence, the park forms the catchment area of several rivers and streams that draw their waters in the Monción Dam, which supplies water to five Dominican provinces in the northwest, including partially the city of Dajabón. In this sense, the repercussions that the elimination of this protected area will have in the country will affect also my research site, complicating the current water politics and uneven geographies.



Last but not least, I want to thank CLAG for this Field Study Award. In the same way, I want to thank all the people that I have encountered during my fieldwork in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. They have made me feel welcome every single day, have shared their knowledge, laughing, sadness and stories with me, and have supported me along the way. ¡ Mesi anpil !, ¡Muchas gracias!



**Akemi Inamoto Orellana**, PhD Student,  
Department of Geography, Syracuse University

**Project:** Gender and Environmental Governance among Rice Farmers in Tolima and Valle del Cauca, Colombia

The rice farming sector in Colombia has undergone vast changes over the past 20 years. Factors in this change include rapidly changing biophysical conditions associated with climate change; increasing imports of low-cost, foreign-produced rice; and the reconfiguration of land tenure following decades of the armed conflict. In 2006, the government of Colombia signed a bilateral free-trade agreement with the US government (TPA). Between 2012 – when it first went into effect – and 2018 the rice sector was granted a grace period in which tariffs were maintained. Since 2018, however, the tariffs have been gradually decreased, leading to a growth in the low-cost US-produced rice imports. In order to “defend themselves against the threats that surround them”—threats identified as climate change and the TPA—rice farmers have been advised by the National Rice Farmers Federation (Fedearroz for its Spanish acronym) to increase mechanization and adopt climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices.

These changing circumstances have created space for the redefinition of gender norms in these

communities, and, simultaneously, changes in environmental governance processes and structures. Drawing from the feminist political ecology framework, my dissertation research explores the gendered impacts of these transformative processes, with special focus on land and water governance in two rice farming regions of Colombia.

With the CLAG Field Study Award I was able to visit Colombia this summer to begin the first phase of my dissertation research. Between the months of June and August of 2019, I was able to engage in participant observation, conduct semi-structured interviews, workshops, and focus groups, as well as connect with local water and land governance institutions in the departments of Tolima and Valle del Cauca. Research participants included women and men farmers, extension agents, government officials at the environment/sustainability and the agricultural development ministries, irrigation district representatives, and local researchers. During this time, I was also able to access land tenure and water user data through government officials and irrigation districts.

Following this summer’s research, I became interested in carrying out a comparative study analyzing two rice farming regions in Colombia with differing environmental governance structures; the departments of Tolima and Valle de Cauca. Historical and cultural contexts differ across the two departments. Access to water and land as well as the participation of women farmers in the land and water governance structures appeared to vary in both research sites. For example, in Valle del Cauca, where there is no formally organized irrigation district, more women appear to be involved in the communal management of the informal irrigation

district. In Tolima, however, although the irrigation districts have been set up since the 1950s, only three women have participated in management positions at the irrigation districts (called junta directiva in the study sites). Regarding land, preliminary data analysis demonstrates that land tenure has indeed changed over the past 20 years, with women ownership increasing over this time period.

For this dissertation research I am collaborating with local researchers at Fedearroz, who serve as the farmers' representative to the national government and carry out research and development for rice farming in Colombia. Thanks to the CLAG grant I was able to complete this first round of my dissertation research and achieve my goals for the summer. The work completed during this summer will also be used to develop other external grant proposals to support my long-term fieldwork, and dissertation. ¡Gracias CLAG!

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**Audrey Denvir**, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Geography and the Environment, University of Texas at Austin

**Project:** Avocado in Mexico and Peru: A Global Commodity Chain Analysis

In the past 20 years, the demand for avocados has increased in the United States, Europe, and most recently, China, and this has caused a fast-paced expansion of cultivation in the avocado-producing regions of the world. With the expansion of avocado agriculture comes a number of environmental, social, and political considerations. My research investigates the ecological, spatial and socioeconomic aspects the two largest avocado-producing regions in Latin America – Michoacán, Mexico and coastal Peru – in order to understand

how consumer demands and interests of global capital impact these landscapes on a local level.

The purpose of this mixed methods study is to understand the ecological and social variables that have directed the expansion of avocado production as well as the ecological and social impacts of such expansion in Mexico and Peru. Fieldwork in the summer of 2019 included qualitative interviews and surveys to understand how stakeholders throughout different sectors of the commodity chains make management decisions and connect to the market. Subsequent ecological studies in the following summers will investigate the magnitude of forest and carbon sequestration loss across a gradient of increasing habitat fragmentation in the avocado landscape.

For this past field season, my overarching research question was: What factors influence the expansion of avocado cultivation in Mexico and Peru? Within this larger question were four sub-questions: (1) How do growers decide whether to grow avocado? (2) How do avocado growers connect to the global market? (3) How do changes in the avocado market affect growers? and (4) How does government policy shape the avocado commodity chain?

With the support of the CLAG Field Study Award, I was able to travel to both Peru and Mexico during the summer of 2019 and conduct 23 interviews with relevant stakeholders. Interview subjects were recruited from all sectors of the industry, including growers, packers, buyers, producer organizations, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

In Michoacán, Mexico, I worked with collaborators at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in Morelia. From a base of Morelia, my



research assistant and I traveled to avocado orchards across central Michoacán to conduct interviews. The farms we visited were located within varying levels of fragmentation across the montane forest landscape of the state, and they included a variety of management styles from irrigated to rainfed, from organic to conventional. In Peru, I interviewed some of the large agro-industrial companies that dominate the production of avocados for export. I conducted these interviews in Lima and Ica, some of the largest areas of Hass avocado production in the country.

Preliminary findings suggest that while profits from avocado trade have noticeable positive impact on the local economy, the extent of that impact is impeded by certain political and economic structures. In Mexico, the avocado industry dominates the economy of Michoacán, and it brings with it jobs for local laborers, reduced migration out of the state, and increased disposable income for producers. Yet, large producers, who make the majority of avocado profits, have largely moved out of the region due to security concerns. Though they continue to own large orchards within Michoacán, they take their earnings with them outside the region. In Peru, the production of avocado for export is dominated by large agrobusiness, and it exists almost completely separate from smallholder avocado agriculture for the national market. This creates an even more stark division of profits, where the money from the avocado boom only reaches large companies. In both places, the neoliberal policies that spurred the explosion of avocado trade are the same policies that prevent equitable benefit across the economy.

A subsequent ecological analysis in the summer of 2020 will focus on the ecological impact of land use change caused by avocado expansion in the two regions.

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**Caroline Tracey**, PhD Student, Department of Geography, University of California Berkeley

**Project:** “The Soul Will Fly Home on its Own Accord:” Postmortem Infrastructure and the New Geography of Migrant Death

The sugar beet industry provides a case study for the way that Mexican immigrants in the United States are not only a case of “imported colonialism,” but one whose bureaucratic and enforcement mechanisms change and gain complexity over time. It also highlights immigration and its enforcement as a site in which interpretation and enforcement, rather than major changes to laws, are determinant. In my ethnographic fieldwork, my interlocutors speak frequently of the current situation of migration toward the United States and return/deportation to Mexico using ideas about levels of citizenship, the right to have a family, and the authority of the Mexican government to take care of Mexicans living in the United States. These facets of the relationship between the two countries, and the way that state power—and disempowerment—act upon individuals, are crucial to understand in their historical context. While we might say that the historical concerns are surprisingly current, I argue that the converse also holds: that our current challenges, however novel their horrors may seem, are surprisingly historical.

The CLAG field study award generously provided me a period of time in the archives of Mexico’s *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores*. This primary-source research will contribute crucial historical background to my ongoing ethnographic research about migration. One of the collections with which I have spent the most time is that of the Mexican Embassy in the United States. This case study proved most interesting, equally for the geography it spans (the US plains states), its duration (from the early twentieth century through the Bracero Program), and the way it exemplifies the complexities of the US’ incorporation of immigrant workers into its economy. Two moments from documents contained in the Archivo de la Embajada de México en Estados Unidos exemplify this complexity:

In December of 1911, two hundred Mexicans were cast onto the streets of Lamar, Colorado. They had been hired by a contractor to work in the region’s sugar beet fields, which fed the American Beet Sugar factory in Rocky Ford, Colorado. When the contractor died suddenly, there was no authority to ensure the payment of the workers on time. A month later, no help had come, and town officials

were getting angry. They wrote to the consulate at Denver:

“We have already supplied them with groceries and clothing to the amount of from \$200 to \$300 ... and will say that it is high time for the Mexican government to take some action and look after its subjects.”

There are two interconnected striking aspects of this event to me: first, the complexity of the pyramid of contractors, as early as 1911, made it very difficult to understand who ought to assume the responsibility for paying the Mexican workers. Secondly, the quickness and ease with which the Prowers County clerk blames the Mexican government for not caring for its citizens reflects a pattern of externalization of responsibility that continues today.

Fast forward to the Bracero Program, which from 1942 to 1964 provided much sugar beet labor necessary in the Rocky Mountain and Plains region. The archives show the same manipulation of the levels of contracting- and sub-contracting to absolve beet companies responsibility towards workers—as well as a new recourse to the binational agreement. Starting in 1948, the Mexican consuls at Salt Lake City and Portland are inundated with complaints of violations by the Amalgamated Sugar Company. The conflicts began in June 1948, when the company deported a group of workers telling them that it was per the orders of the Mexican Consulate. The workers had begun a strike as they were making \$1.50 per day, but being deducted \$1.80 for room and board. What ensued is a year (plus!)-long debate turning on whether piecework can be understood to qualify for the minimum wage of the contract; whether the American company can demand that the worker (or the Mexican

government) pay return passage if the company decides they are incompetent; and whether the workers have the right to curtail their contracts.

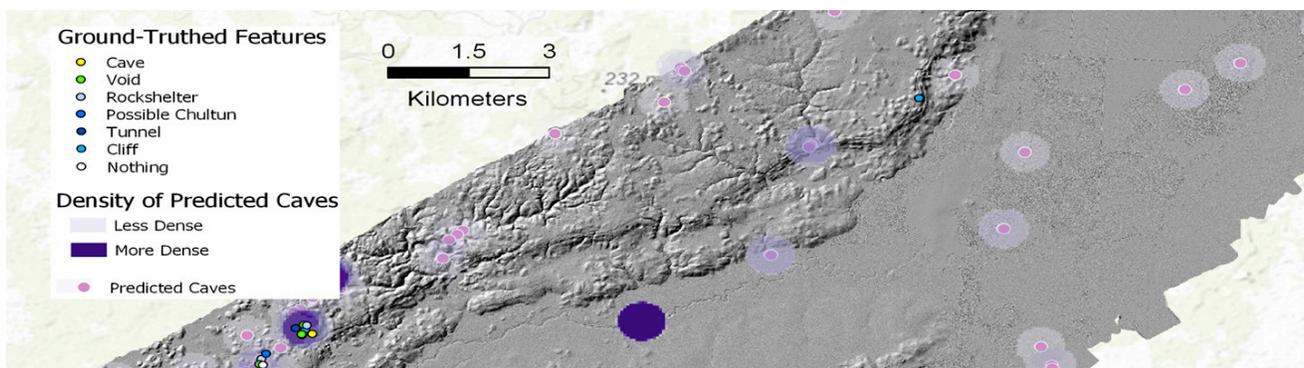
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**Leila Donn**, PhD Student, Department of Geography and the Environment, University of Texas at Austin

**Project:** New machine-learning computer program to find and study caves, karst, and climate in the Guatemalan tropical forest of the Maya Lowlands

The main objective of my summer 2019 fieldwork was to ground-truth the results of a LiDAR-based machine-learning computer program designed to identify potential cave entrances. The secondary fieldwork objective was to collect a stalagmite climate record, if an appropriate one was identified. I was able to comprehensively address the first objective, but I was not able to address the second objective. My field season was a great success, despite an unexpected change of location immediately before the start of the season. Three days before travel I received notice that our permit to work in Guatemala was severely delayed due to the upcoming presidential election. Therefore, my advisor helped me to quickly get permission to work at the Programme for Belize Biosphere Reserve (PFB) in northwestern Belize and stay at an archaeological field camp inside of the Reserve. I was able to run the already-written computer program over the LiDAR imagery for PFB and quickly generate a map of predicted cave entrance locations for my new study site.

My cave entrance-finding program, which I will hence refer to as ‘The Program,’ enables the efficient identification of caves in hard-to-access areas located under dense tropical forest canopy.



The Program identified about 50 potential cave entrances within the approximately 250,000-acre PfB (Figure 1). These individual points were concentrated in four main areas within which the density of potential cave entrances was highest.

One point identified by The Program turned out to be a 30-foot-high x 60-foot-long bedrock cliff that contained several fairly large voids (1.5 ft-long) that terminated too shallowly to be called caves. Over the next few days (6/7-6/10) we ground-verified about 8 cave points, of which 7 were cave-like features. This included 2 rock shelters, 3 of which appeared to be chultuns (underground storage containers constructed by the ancient Maya, usually carved into an existing space in the rock), and 2 voids or holes in rock faces. On 6/11 we found our first true cave (Figure 2), right where one of my Program points predicted. With two days of fieldwork left we found the most impressive cave-like feature identified during the field season: a 200-foot-long x 100-foot-wide x 160-foot-deep collapsed cave complex (a type of sinkhole; Figure 3). The feature was composed of two adjoining sinkholes, connected in the center by a giant arch with a land bridge above it (this was part of the ancient cave roof that had not yet collapsed).

The Conference of Latin American Geography PhD Field Study Award helped make this work possible. The ground-truthing that I completed this summer confirms that my machine-learning cave entrance identification methodology works. It also made it clear that integrating the LiDAR point cloud into the model will help to make it more accurate. Though I did not find any stalagmite climate records, I will continue this portion of the project at two different sites in Guatemala next year. The

machine-learning methods that I am developing will be geographically transferable and have the potential to be of service outside of academia across a range of uses such as natural hazard identification (faults, sinkholes, landslides), forest inventory mapping, and planning and development work.

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**Megan Mills-Novoa**, PhD Candidate, School of Geography, University of Arizona

**Project:** After Adaptation: A Multi-Scalar Study of Climate Change Adaptation Projects in Ecuador

My research focuses on the afterlife of climate change adaptation projects in the Ecuadorian highlands. Since 2001, climate funds in partnership with international agencies and governments have been funding and implementing the first generation of climate change adaptation projects. As the global community invests more in adaptation projects, it is critical that we learn from this first generation of projects. Ecuador is an ideal case study as it has been the site of multiple ongoing and completed climate change adaptation projects that were funded and implemented by the multi-lateral climate funds and international organizations shaping climate change adaptation efforts across the Global South.

In particular, I study 1) how these projects live on and inform future projects in the institutions that implement them and 2) how they are rejected, remade, and/sustained by the communities that receive them. Little is known about the long-term impacts of climate change adaptation projects. By studying the enduring impacts of climate change adaptation projects, I seek to inform the design of the future adaptation efforts.



With the support of the CLAG, I am conducted fieldwork from August 2019 to December 2019. This is my second fieldwork phase. In total, I have conducted 72 semi-structured interviews with adaptation professionals and community leaders about climate change adaptation projects across Ecuador. Community leaders have provided insight into the complexities of defining success in adaptation projects. I also collected crucial (and hard to access) adaptation project documents for a systematic review from the Ministry of the Environment, consultants, and academics who have participated in climate change adaptation projects.

For this phase I have focused on researching the grounded, enduring impacts of a particular climate change adaptation project, “Adaptation to Climate Change through Effective Water Governance in Ecuador” (PACC). In 2009, PACC was funded by the Global Environment Facility’s Special Climate Change Fund. This 3.5-million-dollar project was implemented by the United Nations Development Program and became a model for regional climate change adaptation.

To study PACC, I am led a five-person team to conduct quantitative surveys in communities that formerly participated in PACC. This survey tool is providing us insight into the way in which communities have continued to use implemented climate change measures (or not) and why. I am also conducting extended interviews with local leaders of irrigation associations and parish governments during which we visit the site of project interventions and talk at length about the history of the community, the interventions of PACC, and how things have changed (or not) since the implementation of PACC. My research team includes students from Wageningen University, Universidad de Cuenca, Technical University of Munich, and Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar. These students are all developing complimentary master’s and undergraduate theses with my mentorship and logistical support.

Based on my ongoing research, my preliminary findings are that adaptation in Ecuador is being managed across highly fragmented institutions with a low capacity for knowledge sharing over time. Additionally, technical project staff who have close

relationships with communities are subject to a high-level of labor precarity, jeopardizing the sustainability of adaptation projects.

Additionally, community involvement in project design and implementation is limited to confined, formalized participation spaces. However, my site visits illustrate that over time adaptation interventions have become important socio-political tools for communities in solidifying local control and autonomy over water resources management.

CLAG’s support was crucial to the success of this project. THANK YOU!

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**Talia Mills**, PhD Student, Department of Geography, King’s College London

**Project:** Gender Based Violence Induced Displacement Among Central American Adolescent Girls in Mexico

My postgraduate research examines both the conceptual and empirical relationships between gender based violence and displacement among Central American adolescent women who are on the move in Mexico. Increasingly it has been reported that sexual and gender-based violence is a main factor in women’s decisions to move. The correlation between transnational mobility and gendered violence becomes evident when considering the realities that women and girls from Central America face every day. For example, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, have the highest levels of violence against women in the world, apart from those countries in zones of declared armed conflict. Both young migrant women’s gender and age render them in a particularly unique position in their displacement process in Mexico that needs further consideration. In order to do so, my field research seeks to speak to young women at various points along their displacement journey in Mexico, including Tapachula, Chiapas and the outskirts of Mexico City.

The CLAG Field Study Award has been essential in helping me initiate my investigations by enabling me to travel and move to Tapachula, Chiapas, the Mexican border city with Guatemala, where I have



been based as of October 2019. I have begun to volunteer at a grassroots organization, *Iniciativas para el Desarrollo Humano*, that serves youth and adolescents in accessing their human rights. This work includes the diffusion of information and support to migrant youth who are in Tapachula. This has enabled me to get involved in migrant activist work on the ground while gaining greater insights of the current context. Additionally, I have been able to conduct some initial key informant conversations as well as participant observation.

Upon arriving in Tapachula, there have been two major findings that will influence the ways in which I continue and move forwards with my field research. The first being, that *La Bestia*, the train which migrants ride through Mexico no longer leaves from Tapachula. It leaves further north in the state of Chiapas from a city called, Arriaga. However, Tapachula still remains a strategic location to conduct this field research, as the detention center Siglo XXI, one the largest detention centers in Latin America is based here, as well as a plethora of international organizations and NGOs.

The second major finding relates to the context and characteristics of displacement at this point on the border. In the past year, the ‘migrant caravan’ has dominated migration issues in the region. More specifically, the agreement signed between Trump and Mexico’s president, AMLO, this past summer in order to stop these flows has greatly impacted what currently exists in Tapachula. This agreement has led to what some have described as migrants being ‘trapped’ in Tapachula, awaiting documentation that either enables them to travel through Mexico or documentation for refugee status. The central square, Parque Miguel Hidalgo,

is filled with migrants daily, waiting for the outcomes of these processes. The shelters are all at capacity and many migrants have set up camp with tents outside the detention center also waiting to have an outcome of their case.

What has been most notable are the amount of displaced individuals from around the world that make up the current demographic of people in Tapachula. This includes communities from Cuba, African countries such as Cameroon and Uganda, Haiti, and most recently some people from the Middle East. While I have been told that migration in Tapachula is constantly in flux, the diverse makeup of the displaced population that are in the region has catalyzed a reworking of my field of study to more broadly consider adolescent women as opposed to solely focusing on those from Central America.

It is through CLAG’s support of my first month in Tapachula that has enabled me to refine and reconsider this research and gain a deeper understanding of the context of displacement in this location, for which I am truly grateful.

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**Anaïs Zimmer**, PhD Student, Department of Geography and the Environment, University of Texas at Austin

**Project:** Alpine ecosystems and deglaciation in the Tropical Andes and French Alps

My long-term research goals are to examine the future of the periglacial environment and how land management and ecosystem rehabilitation can reduce risk vulnerability and enhance climate resilience. Part of my doctoral dissertation focuses on the study of primary succession in recently

deglaciated landscapes (70-80 years) and periglacial ecosystem formation. This work is a biogeographical comparison between two mountain systems: The Peruvian Tropical Andes and the French Alps and relies on both empirical and experimental approaches. I examine how physical, ecological, and social processes interact to drive ecosystem changes in alpine proglacial landscapes and what these tell us about adaptation to sustain livelihoods and downstream services in future glacier free valleys.

The empirical approach is applied in both mountain systems and at multi-scale. We combine in situ observations and measurements (i.e., floristic survey, soil moisture, soil temperature, roughness, and landform identification) with high-resolution aerial imagery acquired by a drone, i.e., unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). The experimental approach is a grazing experiment set up at the foot of the Uruashraju glacier in the Cordillera Blanca, Peru, using Lama Glama, an Andean Camelid.

Last summer to start my first field campaign as a Ph.D. student, I led research teams to both the Andes and Alps. We performed floristic and geomorphological inventories in our seven glacier forelands: Uruashraju, Yanamarey, and Broggi in the Cordillera Blanca in Peru, and the Gebroulaz (Vanoise massif), Glacier Blanc (Ecrins massif), and the Tour and Pelerins (Mont-Blanc massif) in the French Alps. Across postglacial soil/ ecosystem chronosequences—from a series of plots differing in age—starting in 1970 at the acceleration of glacier retreat, we surveyed a total of 396 plots (2x2m). From these plots we have collected floristic data (i.e., species, height, cover, fertility, and spatial association), took Red-Green-near-Infrared

Photographs, and surveyed geomorphological characteristics (i.e., slope, aspect, landform, geomorphic processes, coarse elements). Several grants, including the CLAG Field Research Award, made this work possible.

The first part of this fieldwork campaign was carried out in the Cordillera Blanca in Peru. We were based in the city of Huaraz for 2 months, between May and July 2019. There we carried out the sampling in our three Andean Postglacial chronosequences: Broggi, Yanamarey, and Uruashraju, and we set up the Lama Glama grazing experiment at the foot of the Uruashraju glacier. Similar work was carried out in the French Alps between July and August, where we studied four glaciers forelands: the Gebroulaz Glacier in the Vanoise National Park, the Tour and Pelerins glaciers in the Mount Blanc Massif, and the Glacier Blanc foreland in the Ecrins National Park.

I am incredibly grateful for CLAG's support, which makes this first field campaign possible.

I am now analyzing the data collected this summer and I hope to obtain preliminary results for our publications at the beginning of 2020. As well we start to work on the soil samples from the French Alps in the laboratory. The soils from the Cordillera Blanca are stored in the Ecology department of the History National Museum of Lima and have to be sent this week to the University of Austin Texas.

Additionally, I will travel to Peru at the beginning of January, following the CLAG Conference in Antigua, to supervise the llama grazing experiment and collect some additional soil samples for environmental DNA analysis. In the Alps, we worked in collaboration with the University of



Milan, Italy, where I learned how to sample proglacial soils for eDNA analysis. I will replicate the sampling method in our proglacial terrain in Peru this winter and send the sample to Milan for analysis.

Relocated families are offered a small house to be equipped with running water, electricity and sewage; public amenities in Nuevo Belen will include a school, a health center, and a market. Despite these incentives, the project is highly



## MASTERS FIELD STUDY REPORTS

**Dena Coffman**, Masters Student, Department of Geography & Planning, University of Toronto

**Project:** Urban Livelihoods, Flood Vulnerability and Resettlement in Iquitos, Peru

My fieldwork was conducted in Belen, a low-income, informal neighborhood in the city of Iquitos Perú, situated on the Amazon floodplain. During the flood season, roughly February to May, most of Belen is underwater. Residents use traditional flood adaptations such as building their houses on stilts or rafts and using canoes to move around when the water is high. Belen is considered one of the poorest areas of the country, and many residents lack essential services such as running water and sewage in their homes. Despite this, Belen has strong, cohesive community groups: residents regularly participate in neighborhood celebrations, meetings and mingas, or cleanups. Belen is also home to a vibrant market, where many residents make their living as vendors.

In December 2014, the Peruvian federal government declared a public emergency in order to relocate residents of Belen, citing environmental and sanitation risks from repeated flooding. Residents will be relocated to a site located about 14 km outside of Iquitos, dubbed “Nuevo Belen.” Since 2015, 400 households have relocated; further construction is anticipated in the coming year.

contested. Relocation is voluntary, but many residents feel that they are being pushed out. Furthermore, many of the promised amenities in Nuevo Belen have not materialized.

Nuevo Belen is one of a growing number of proactive resettlement projects around the world. Proactive resettlement is seen as a pragmatic way to prevent disaster and reduce vulnerability by moving people out of risky areas before disaster strikes. In some areas, resettlement may be the only feasible option to cope with the effects of climate change. However, poorly planned resettlement projects can leave vulnerable populations isolated and impoverished. Further discussion is needed to guide future projects, grounded in the experiences of people who are directly affected. In this context, my research seeks to understand the impacts of the Nuevo Belen relocation on residents’ day-to-day lives. How has the relocation affected residents’ livelihood strategies, economic activities and income; and has it changed their vulnerability to floods?

To answer these questions, I conducted 60 household surveys: 30 in Bajo Belen and 30 in Nuevo Belen. These surveys included questions about residents’ livelihoods, community organizations, floods and other environmental problems, and opinions on the Nuevo Belen relocation. I also conducted 8 open-ended

interviews with key informants, such as elected community leaders and public health officials.

My findings indicate that relocation has reduced residents' exposure to floods; Nuevo Belen is inland, where flooding is rare. Interestingly, however, not everyone in Belen felt that flooding was a significant problem. In fact, the flood season is a boon to some people, such as fishers and boat-taxi drivers, who structure their livelihoods around the flood. My results also suggest that relocation has left many households economically isolated. More than half the households surveyed reported that their income decreased after relocating. I hope that my research emphasizes the importance that livelihood security and access to economic opportunity must play in the planning of such projects.

The fieldwork travel grant from CLAG was vital in allowing me to complete my research. There has been little scholarly research on the Nuevo Belen project, so traveling to Peru allowed me to produce new data on the subject. The CLAG award helped to offset my many expenses such as flights, housing in Iquitos, and hiring a local research assistant. In addition, having the support of the CLAG grant also made me feel more confident in the importance of my research – and for that I am especially grateful.

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**Jamie Gagliano**, Masters Student, Geography, Syracuse University

**Project:** Agroecology Feminisms: Paraguay's Conamuri in a sea of soy

Paraguay has been shaped by a global agricultural system that rearranges land access regimes to favor

large corporations. Since soy's introduction in the 1980s, Paraguay has become the fourth largest exporter of soy in the world, outpaced only by Brazil, Argentina, and the USA (World Bank Group, 2018). Rural people reliant on subsistence agriculture are being dispossessed as soy monoculture increasingly dominates the Paraguayan landscape. As a result, many rural peasants (campesinos) are organizing in their communities in order to protect rural livelihoods, even as many elect to migrate into urban areas in search of remunerated work. As the ability to sustain rural livelihoods declines and few rural wage labor opportunities emerge, people move to urban centers in search of work, nevertheless.

The growth of soy production is contested by multiple social movements, including Conamuri. A women's peasant and indigenous social movement, Conamuri envisions agroecology as an alternative model of rural development that will protect campesino livelihoods and improve the situation of women in Paraguay. The movement is especially active in areas of rapid soy expansion, such as the departments Caaguazú and Itapúa. The ongoing situation in Paraguay presents a paradox for Conamuri: As the recent expansion of soy in the area renders its agenda more pertinent, this very same process drives many young adults into urban centers. It becomes harder for Conamuri to advance its vision as the rural population declines.

The objective of my research is to understand how Conamuri is reproduced in this context. My research asks the following questions: (1) how do the long-term effects of dispossession shape the possibilities of alternatives to soy development?; (2) how does rural-urban migration effect Conamuri



organizing, and what strategies do they use to deal with migration?; (3) do these strategies effect how young adults in urban centers do or do not participate in Conamuri?

My research followed two of Conamuri's major ongoing projects: their seed exchange house in Caaguazú and their agroecological yerba mate production facility, called Onoiru, in Itapúa. These two departments represent two distinct levels of soy production. Caaguazú is on the frontlines of contemporary soy expansion, whereas Itapúa has been a major soy producer for thirty years.

My research began with a few weeks in Asuncion, Paraguay's capital, where I took Guarani language courses, conducted interviews with Paraguayan scholars and human rights NGOs, and performed archival work in Conamuri's offices. I then traveled to Caaguazú and Itapúa where I conducted 30 interviews with individuals involved in Conamuri projects. My interviews were supplemented by participant observation as these projects operate in daily life. I also attended a day-long workshop meeting in Asunción with Oxfam-Paraguay for Onoiru, and through invitation, I attended three Conamuri seed fairs, including two district-level seed fairs, and the national seed fair.

This summer's fieldwork would not have been possible without the support of the CLAG Field Study Award. These funds supported my ability to travel to Paraguay, my housing and food costs during the three months, and ground travel. In addition, these funds helped pay for an intensive Guarani course to facilitate communication across various communities. This research was also supported by the Syracuse University Geography Department, Roscoe Martin Award from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, and the PLACA Award from the Moynihan Institute at Syracuse University.

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**Thomas Saleh**, Masters Student, Department of Geography and Planning, University of Toronto

**Project:** The Rupunini Savannah, Guyana

The Rupununi is a savannah in the far south of Guyana along the border with Brazil. Most

outsiders have never heard of it, even many coastal Guyanese. The Rupununi is predominantly inhabited by the Indigenous Macusi and Wapishana peoples, who hold title to about 30% of the land under Guyana's "Amerindian Act".

I would never have been there if I had not been sent as a volunteer with the Peace Corps. When I was a volunteer, my host community's land title bordered a large new protected area and I was tasked with promoting conservation. What I soon found of course was that the community members are well aware of the problem of habitat loss, but this is only one among many social, economic, and ecological challenges which they have to contend with.

Perhaps the most significant challenge many Indigenous communities of the Rupununi currently face is water access. When a two-year drought hit in 2015-2016 and was followed by a major flood, the government of Guyana set to work funding a number of water management and climate change adaptation programs, the largest of which was the Sustainable Agricultural Development Program (SADP).

During my two years as a volunteer projects for well drilling and a large dam came to the community. Nearby, construction began on a research station – this was to be the operational center for the SADP. These projects were designed for the benefit of the Indigenous communities, so many government officials were dismayed when community leaders drove over 12 hours to Georgetown to protest. It seemed that many decisions that impact the Indigenous inhabitants of the Rupununi are made by individuals on the coast. A postcolonial dynamic might explain some of the communities' resistance to seemingly benevolent development projects.

While there is no solving this issue, I can at least say that the financial assistance from the CLAG field study award has helped me to cover the costs of some important mitigating measures. Getting meaningful participation from communities required establishing free, prior, and informed consent, and building trust. To that end, rather than simply contacting communities remotely (by mail or radio) to request their written consent to conduct research, I decided to follow-up on my outreach

efforts with in-person visits, before asking to conduct any kind of research work.

I was able to use the remaining funds to pay for a voice recorder and GPS which I later donated to local individuals. Lastly, I carried with me a folding flipchart with markers, so that I could explain and illustrate the purpose outcomes of my research at community meetings. This flipchart was also donated to one of the host communities for their own use at the end of my fieldwork.

Preliminary results show that while investment in water infrastructure was welcome, the projects which I was studying were in many ways out of touch with the needs, ambitions, and social realities of the communities which they were intended to benefit. This is chiefly because consultation had not been timely, meaningful, or respectful in most cases. However, I also understood the objectives of

the project planners and the constraints they faced. These constraints were in many ways similar to my own, and the added funds which I was able to commit to community outreach, consultation, and compensation, made a substantial difference in the way I was received and the quality of my interactions.

In short, the costs associated with consultation, community compensation, and dissemination of information can be easily overlooked (or underestimated) when budgeting for work with Indigenous communities. However, they are necessary to engaging communities in an equitable and responsible way. The water infrastructure projects which I set out to study all fell short in this regard, and I think this can likely explain many of the projects' broader problems as well.




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## Note from the CLAG Communications Coordinator

This is the fifth newsletter that I have edited for CLAG! As always, it is a pleasure to reach out into the CLAG community and pull together this amazing collection of work, news and communicative action. Thank you for all of the contributions.

I am pleased to announce that the online membership system is now available at <https://clagscholar.org>. On January 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 at the CLAG business meeting in Antigua the system was made public and you can now login, check your membership status, and renew all in one place. We

all hope that this will be an improvement on the previous subscription system with UT Press. Please pay attention to the renewal reminders (and check your spam folders) and let me know if you have any problems.

Kind regards  
Timothy B Norris  
CLAG Communications Coordinator





## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

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### BEING ON EARTH: TERRITORIES, SOUNDSCAPES, BIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY, AND RELATIONSHIPS Gainesville Florida, March 20-22 2020

The University of Florida Center for Latin American Studies will host its 69th annual conference, “Being on Earth: Territorios, soundscapes, biocultural diversity, and relationships,” from March 20-22, 2020. The event includes contributions from academics, artists, activists with a focus on Indigenous and Afro-descendant struggles for justice and decolonization, building from our 2018 conference “Buen Vivir and Other Post-development Pathways.” For information, see <http://www.latam.ufl.edu/annual-conference/>.

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### 2020 RACE, ETHNICITY, AND PLACE CONFERENCE Baltimore Maryland, October 21-24 2020

#### **Call for Papers:**

For over seventeen years, the Race, Ethnicity, and Place (REP) Conference has brought together diverse groups of scholars to facilitate research on race and ethnicity and has provided a critical gathering place of support and collaboration for underrepresented scholars. The REP Conference provides important opportunities for faculty, professionals, and graduate students to engage in discussions of timely and critical issues regarding race and ethnicity in multiple places and spatial contexts worldwide.

Under the current political climate of fear and exclusion, undergirded by racism, xenophobia, and white supremacy, it is critical that scholars from a broad range of perspectives develop transformative research to foster inclusive policy, advocacy, and action. The 2020 X REP Conference in Baltimore aims to create common ground across multiple ways of studying race and ethnicity and to broaden participation of scholars in geography and related social and spatial sciences whose research furthers scholarship relating to race, ethnicity, and place

The theme of the 2020 REP conference, Justice and the City in an Age of Social Division, ties in strongly with current and ongoing struggles for civil and human rights in Baltimore. We call for original papers and panel submissions that further our understanding of social, environmental, and community justice issues that intersect with race, ethnicity, and diversity.

Key themes include but are not limited to:

- Ethnicity (Pan-Africanism, Indigenous Identity, Ethnic Identity, Institutions and Neighborhoods, Census Geography)
- Race (National and Racial Identity, Intersectionality, Whiteness, Segregation, Racism, Anti-Racism, Racial Profiling)
- Civil Rights (Policing, Justice, Diversity in Higher Education, Discipline of Geography, STEM)

- Place (Geo-Narratives, Housing and Neighborhoods, Landscapes, Suburbanization, Urban Policy, Gentrification, Community Engagement)
- Gender (LGBTQIA Rights, Gendered Intersections, Sexuality, Feminisms)
- Human Rights (Human Rights and Science, Governance, Democracy, Civil Society)
- Immigration (Immigrant Rights, Policing & Enforcement, Detention, Integration, Settlement, Gateways, Labor Migration, Transnationalism)
- Health (Modeling, Racial Disparities in Access to Services, Health Outcomes)
- Crime (Mass Incarceration, Prisons and the Criminal Justice System)
- Environment (Climate Change, Community Ecology, Green Infrastructure, Sustainable Development, Water Access, Environmental Justice, Environmental Racism, Critical Physical Geography)

Submit your paper, panel or poster by **July 1, 2020** at [www.repconference.org](http://www.repconference.org)




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CONFERENCE OF LATIN AMERICAN GEOGRAPHY  
Tucson Arizona, May 20-22 2021

The next CLAG meeting will be in Tucson, Arizona May 20th-22nd 2021! The University of Arizona School of Geography, Development, and Environment will host the meeting with the help of other Latin Americanists across campus and colleagues from ASU and universities in Sonora. The conference venue will be the LEED platinum Environment and Natural Resources building which is designed to echo a Southwest desert canyon. We hope to have some great field trips (contact us with ideas) and to welcome you to Baja Arizona and the border. For more information contact Diana Liverman ([liverman@u.arizona.edu](mailto:liverman@u.arizona.edu)).