

6TH COLLOQUIUM ON LATIN AMERICA

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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University of Bayreuth
Winter Term 2025/26

CONTACT & ORGANISATION

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Tuesday, November 25th 2025 – 18:00 CET

Prof. Dr. Marieke Riethof

University of Liverpool, UK

Graphic art and resistance to dictatorship in Chile: Centro Cultural Tallersol's Digital Archive of Cultural Resistance

Tallersol is a graphic workshop founded in Santiago, Chile in 1977. Throughout the remaining years of the Pinochet civil-military dictatorship and to this day, it has produced posters, pamphlets, and leaflets for a range of partners: political, human rights, cultural. Its collection of thousands of posters is being digitised and made available to researchers, campaigners, and the public. Many of the posters were produced to support campaign groups in areas such as women's and children's rights, student activism, the urban periphery, international campaigns, and the rights of exiles. They also reflect the crucial role of cultural resistance through music, theatre, and cinema as well as the intersection of political activism and artistic expression. Therefore, the collection provides important insights into the networks and strategies among urban social movements in Chile in the late 1970s and 1980s. The Tallersol collection is not just an archive of the past but also of the present and future because it expresses the hopes and aspirations of grassroots activists for what Chile might have looked like after the end of dictatorship. With the shift from social movement resistance to party politics in the transition to democracy and the longer-term, these visions have often been marginalised and excluded from the dominant narrative. The archive continues to grow, and activists use it to campaign for justice and alternative reflections on the legacy of dictatorship and resistance.

This talk will focus on this emerging unique resource, and its use – and potential – in academic research (including methodological considerations) and in campaigns for justice and against the continuing invisibility of the Chilean resistance.

The digital archive can be consulted here:

<https://meap.library.ucla.edu/projects/memories-of-resistance/>

Friday, December 5th 2025 – 18:00 CET

Prof. Dr. Alejandro Frigerio

Universidad Católica Argentina, Argentina

Más allá del Catolicocentrismo: Por un Paradigma Sociológico de la Diversidad Religiosa

El estudio sociológico de la religión en América Latina se ha visto limitado por la persistencia de un paradigma catolicocéntrico. Este marco analítico no solo subestima la relevancia histórica y contemporánea de la diversidad religiosa, sino que la relega a la condición de epifenómeno reciente y marginal. Esta ponencia argumenta que una comprensión más precisa del protagonismo del catolicismo en la región—en todas sus dimensiones—requiere deconstruir los supuestos acríticos que fundamentan dicho paradigma. A partir de una crítica teórica, se identificarán sus principales rasgos: la sobre-dependencia de autores canónicos, la equiparación reductiva de "identidad" con "creencia", la adhesión a perspectivas excesivamente institucionalizadas de lo religioso y la escasa atención a las distintas modalidades de la regulación religiosa. Frente a esto, se propone una visión alternativa que, al integrar estas dimensiones desatendidas, cuestiona la noción exagerada de una 'América Latina católica' y ofrece un marco más realista para el análisis de su complejo panorama religioso.

Tuesday, December 9th 2025 – 18:00 CET

Dr. María Florencia Blanco Esmoris

Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Argentina

Ecologies of Decline: Material Experiences of Downward Mobility among the Middle Classes in Greater Buenos Aires

In the urban peripheries of Greater Buenos Aires, households are navigating the cumulative pressures of persistent economic crises, accelerating inflation, rising indebtedness, and visible housing deterioration. These dynamics are intensified by state disinvestment and by multiple vulnerabilities—climatic, social, and economic—that intersect to produce precarious and unequal urban environments. While downward mobility has often been examined in relation to working-class sectors, this research focuses instead on the middle classes—groups historically identified with expectations of stability and progress, but now increasingly confronted with decline.

The objective of this presentation is to analyze how ecologies of decline—the material, affective, and social arrangements that sustain everyday life—are reconfigured under these conditions. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork that extends my doctoral research on housing access and living conditions in the same geographical context, I focus on how middle-class households mediate processes of impoverishment and reinterpret the meanings of home in the face of collapsing promises of upward mobility.

Preliminary findings point to three interconnected dynamics. First, the material strain evident in deteriorating housing stock, the use of makeshift infrastructures, and the reorganization of household spaces. Second, the affective dimension of decline, as families grapple with frustration, uncertainty, and the erosion of social status. Third, the gendered centrality of women, who manage scarce resources, sustain the physical and emotional maintenance of homes, and weave fragile networks of support. Through these practices, the home emerges not as a private refuge but as a frontline where crisis is both endured and resisted.

In Argentina, this decline takes on resonance. The erosion of middle-class living standards undermines long-standing social imaginaries centered on progress and mobility, intensifying the symbolic and emotional weight of crisis. This dissonance between historical expectations and present realities amplifies feelings of dispossession while generating new strategies of endurance and adaptation.

By tracing these ecologies of decline ethnographically—in kitchens, patios, and informal connections of water and electricity—the study reveals how households negotiate scarcity, reorganize infrastructures, and generate alternative forms of knowledge. Situating domestic life as a contested site of negotiation and meaning-making, the presentation contributes to contemporary debates in the anthropology of crisis and the study of everyday economic practices, while also engaging discussions on urban sustainability and feminist political economy in unequal worlds.

Tuesday, December 16th 2025 – 18:00 CET

Paola Acosta Carrascal, Diana Mignano

Hof University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Women, Water, and Environmental Peace: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Sustainability and Conflict Transformation in Colombia's Magdalena Medio Region

FRAU-PAZ is an interdisciplinary research project that explores the role of women in fostering environmental peace in the Magdalena Medio region of Colombia, a territory rich in natural resources, particularly water, yet historically affected by armed conflict and environmental degradation.

Working directly with the women of the *Organización Femenina Popular (OFP)*, the project examines environmental practices and strategies rooted in a distinctly female perspective on peace. The OFP's long-standing commitment to defending human rights, protecting natural resources, and strengthening community cohesion provides a unique entry point to study how gendered understandings of territory and environment shape approaches to conflict transformation.

The project combines social sciences, environmental studies, and engineering-based methodologies to document, analyse, and promote community-led environmental practices. Through fieldwork, participatory workshops, and the integration of local and academic knowledge, we examine how women's environmental practices contribute to conflict transformation, gender equity, and the protection of vital ecosystems. This interdisciplinary approach bridges technical expertise in sustainable water management with qualitative methods from sociology, anthropology, and peace studies, enabling a more in-depth understanding of environmental peace as both a socio-political and ecological process.

The presentation will discuss preliminary findings and methodological challenges, including working across cultures, disciplines, and geographic distances, as well as strategies for fostering dialogue between local communities and international academic networks. In accordance with the technical proficiency of the Institute for Sustainable Water Systems (inwa) at Hof University of Applied Sciences, the presentation prioritizes environmental inquiries by emphasizing tangible environmental practices, particularly those related to water management. Highlighting the synergies between engineering and the social sciences, this talk contributes to broader debates on how sustainability, gender, and peace building intersect in Latin America's conflict-affected territories. It therefore offers a valuable case for understanding environmental peace not only as ecosystem protection, but as a transformative social process led by local women.

Tuesday, January 13th 2026 – 18:00 CET

Prof. Dr. Wil Pansters

Utrecht University, Netherlands

The Politics of Visibility of Santa Muerte Devotion in Mexico

This lecture examines the manifestations and meanings of the spectacularly increased visibility of Santa Muerte devotion in contemporary Mexico. To confront existential uncertainties and vulnerabilities, present day Santa Muerte devotees engage in a range of visual, performative, and spatial practices, that express the cult's 'iconic aspirations' and increased public visibility. As a key component of popular religion-making, it is important to understand the assemblage of a new visibility regime by the efforts of assorted Santa Muerte congregations and their leaders over the course of the past decades. Based on ethnographic material, I show how these range from place-making interventions through the appropriation and sacralization of secular spaces, to the visibilizing effects of commodities, rituals, processions, and human bodies. This perspective also allows us to understand the cult's critical bottom-up agency and explains its religious, iconographic, and expressive dynamics, as well as their profound social, political, and symbolic meanings.

Tuesday, January 20th 2026 – 18:00 CET

Dr. Katerina Hatzikidi

University of Tübingen, Germany

Awakenings as reading grids: Conspiracy theories in Brazil in an ethnographic perspective

Starting from the premise that conspiracy theories are relational and emerge within a dialogical field, this paper examines the experience of 'awakening', prevalent among conspiracy theorists, as a key lens into the societal fault lines conspiracy theories reveal, respond to, and foment. Awakenings perform radical breaks with the past, reconfiguring the boundaries of moral communities while initiating a process of staying connected to the revealed truth. They thus offer privileged vantage points for exploring not only personal or societal transformations but for exploring both—and issues considered conflictive among communities—at the same time.

The discussion draws on extensive fieldwork (including participant observation and lengthy semi-structured interviews) with self-described conservative voters in Brazil to show how awakenings are fundamental to understanding conspiracy-driven political subjectivities. Theoretically, it engages with the interdisciplinary literature on conspiracy theories, questioning a common ethnographic assumption that conspiracy theories are at odds with those in power (in line with recent work, e.g., Saglam 2024), and dialoguing with DeGloma's (2014) theorization of awakenings.

The paper advances a nuanced approach to conspiracy theories as practice through an immersive analysis of awakening as a transformative experience. It considers why *some* conspiracy theories resonate with some people but not others, highlighting the role of sentinels, or vigilant observers, in the post-awakening moment and in consolidating antagonistic frontiers. It will be showed that, contrary to a recurrent claim in the literature, conspiracy theories interpellate primarily through meaning—an affinity with one's *reading grid*—rather than through the specific details of the narrative. By foregrounding awakening, a defining yet largely overlooked dimension of conspiracist engagement, the paper contributes to the growing body of anthropological literature on conspiracy theories by proposing an analytical lens into their conditions of possibility, their practice, and their societal effects.

Tuesday, January 27th 2026 - 18:00 CET

Movie screening **"Tantas Almas"**

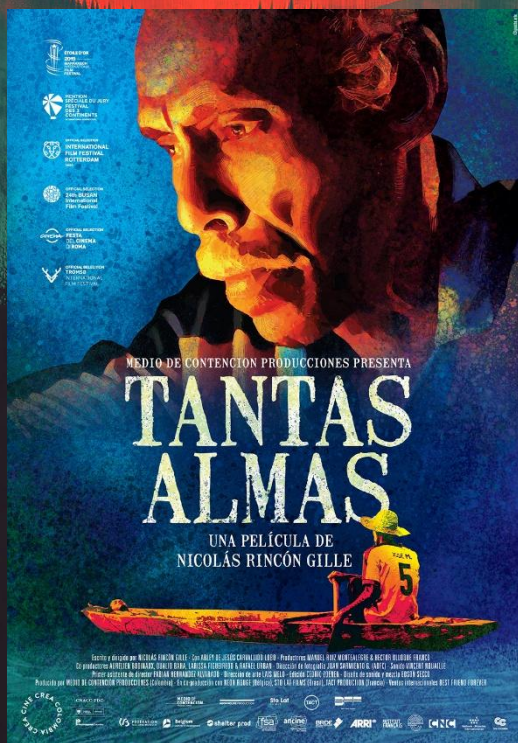
Spanish with English subtitles

[ENG] José, an old fisherman, returns to his home in the Colombian countryside after a long fishing night and discovers that paramilitary forces have killed his two sons and thrown their bodies into the river.

[ESP] José, un viejo pescador, regresa a su casa después de una larga noche de trabajo. A su llegada descubre que los paramilitares mataron a sus dos hijos y arrojaron sus cuerpos al río.

[Trailer & Info] <https://nrincongille.com/films/valley-of-souls/>

+ Q&A with filmmaker **Nicolás Rincón Gille**



CLOSING CEREMONY

We cordially invite you to stay for a glass of wine, some chats and a relaxed get-together to bring the colloquium and the winter term to a close.

ENTRY FREE

20:00

FOYER IWÄLEWAHAUS

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