

Institution: University of Kent		
Unit of Assessment: 26: Modern Languages and Linguistics		
Title of case study: Peruvian Political History: Learning from the Past to Help Shape the Future		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2009-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Natalia Sobrevilla Perea	Professor of Latin American History	2007-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Through her research on nineteenth-century Peru and her commitment to improving public understanding of the country's history, Sobrevilla Perea has influenced debate on key political issues, has ensured the preservation of vital archives and collections, and has enabled greater representation of marginalised communities. As well as being a member of two national commissions commemorating 200 years of independence, she has engaged extensively with national and international media to advance the cause of regional and indigenous peoples. She has also been instrumental in the establishment of the Centre for Documentation and Research at <i>Lugar de la Memoria, Tolerancia e Inclusión Social</i>, a national museum set up by the Peruvian government to commemorate a twenty-year period of extreme violence.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Sobrevilla Perea's research focuses on how Peruvian political and constitutional history has fuelled conflict. Her co-edited volume on the impact of the Cádiz Constitution in the Iberian Atlantic World explored the ideas and practices that led to the development of new political systems [R1]. These were further expanded in book chapters that analyse the difficulties of building durable nation-states in the nineteenth century [R4, R5]. The key finding in these and other publications was that even though the emerging political structures were influenced by newly developed liberal thought, they were still underpinned by Spanish tradition, where indigenous and African-descended populations were both included and excluded from the emerging concepts of citizenship. In an essay published in <i>Parliaments, Estates and Representation</i> [R3], Sobrevilla Perea elaborated on how constitutional constraints in Peru led to a conflictual relationship between the executive and legislative, arguing that during the nineteenth century the branches of government were precariously balanced.</p> <p>In an article in the French journal <i>Caravelle</i> on the pensions awarded to the widows of members of the armed forces during the nineteenth century [R2], Sobrevilla Perea traced how the newly created republican State inherited from the Spanish crown the responsibility for looking after the surviving dependants of those who fought for the Nation. Contrary to received wisdom, this historical perspective showed that the army was a functioning institution even if it was colonial in origin. Sobrevilla Perea's co-authored 2019 article in <i>Small Wars and Insurgencies</i> further developed this understanding of continuity and institutionalisation within the army by analysing how war was waged in the Andes [R6]. One of the principal findings of this research was that although independence brought new political institutions, the colonial legacy had long-lasting political consequences, with important implications for present-day politics in Peru, particularly with regards to the place in society of Indians and African descendants.</p>		

In July 2020, the outputs of Sobrevilla Perea's British Library projects 'Recovering the Provincial Nineteenth-Century Press' [G1] and 'Recovering Provincial Newspapers in Peru' [G2] were published online. Their impact has been very significant – accessed over 13,000 times between October and December 2020 alone – as for the first time the rich and varied regional journalism of cities in the interior has become widely known. Sobrevilla Perea's work consisted in identifying and selecting these archives and publications to ensure that there is a better understanding of the role of provincial life in the national narrative.

3. References to the research

[R1] Eastman, Scott, and Sobrevilla Perea, Natalia, eds. (2015). *The Rise of Constitutional Government in the Iberian Atlantic World: The Impact of the Cádiz Constitution of 1812*. University of Alabama Press, 320pp. <http://kar.kent.ac.uk/51267/>

[R2] Sobrevilla Perea, Natalia (2016). "Hallandome viuda sin recursos, sin apoyo y en la mas deplorable situacion": El montepio militar y la creacion del Estado en el Peru' (1800-1880). *Caravelle* 106: 15-30. <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/59228/>

[R3] Sobrevilla Perea, Natalia (2017). 'Power of the law or power of the sword: the conflictive relationship between the executive and the legislative in nineteenth-century Peru'. *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 37(2): 220-34. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02606755.2017.1334326>

[R4] Sobrevilla Perea, Natalia (2018). 'How (not) to make a durable state'. In: Ginger, Andrew, and Lawless, Geraldine, eds. *Spain and the Nineteenth Century: New Essays on Experiences of Culture and Society*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 13-37. <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/67076/>

[R5] Sobrevilla Perea, Natalia (2018). 'Nation-making and Nationalism'. In: Seligmann, Linda J., and Fine-Dare, Kathleen S., eds. *The Andean World*. London: Routledge, pp. 297-309. <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/74243/>

[R6] Sobrevilla Perea, Natalia, and Rabinovich, Alejandro (2019). 'Regular and irregular forces in conflict: Nineteenth-century insurgencies in South America', *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 30(4-5): 83-112. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/714005478>

Grants

[G1] British Library Endangered Archive Programme (2009). 'Recovering the Provincial Nineteenth-Century Press: Survey of Newspapers Held in National and Regional Archives in Peru' (EAP294). PI: Sobrevilla Perea. Value: £14,318. <https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP294>

[G2] British Library Endangered Archive Programme. (2011). 'Recovering Provincial Newspapers in Peru: Lambayeque, Ayacucho, Tacna, Cajamarca and Huancavelica' (EAP498). PI: Sobrevilla Perea. Value: £24,510. <https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP498>

[G3] Leverhulme Trust project grant (2014). This grant funded an assistant to aid in transcriptions and conduct research for Sobrevilla Perea's book on the Army and the creation of the state in Peru. Value: £34,000.

[G4] Leverhulme Trust International Network grant (2015). 'War and Nation in South America'. PI: Sobrevilla Perea. Value: £121,000.

4. Details of the impact

Preserving individual and collective history

Sobrevilla Perea's commitment to preserving archives and collections, and in particular to the digitisation of newspapers and the wider press, has been central to ensuring that a twenty-year period of violence in Peru's history is not forgotten. Based on her research (as PI on 'Recovering Provincial Newspapers in Peru' [G2] and 'Recovering the Provincial Nineteenth-Century Press' [G1]), she was approached in November 2014 by the Director of the *Lugar de la Memoria, Tolerancia e Inclusión Social* (LUM) to establish their Centre for Documentation and Research (CDI-LUM). LUM is a national museum, located in Lima, which receives

approximately 70,000 visitors a year [a]. LUM was established by the Peruvian government to address the history of violence and to commemorate the victims of the twenty-year conflict (1980-2000) in which an estimated 65,000 people were killed. The Centre for Documentation and Research is a key part of the museum, housing the archives and collections that are fundamental to the historical memory of the country.

Between 2015 and 2016, Sobrevilla Perea directed and advised the CDI-LUM team responsible for the collection, cataloguing, digitalisation, and presentation of over 150,000 primary sources. These included CIA records, photographs, books, periodicals, videos, music, historical data, key government corruption files, and audio-visual testimonies from Peru's 2003 Truth and Reconciliation Commission. From its opening in 2016, CDI-LUM documentation became accessible globally online via an open-access platform; as of August 2020, there were 1,540,120 views (406,739 in 2018; 729,871 in 2019; and 403,150 in 2020) [a].

At risk of being shut out and silenced during an extremely volatile political period, CDI-LUM benefited from seed funding from the University of Kent (£13,100) before support was secured from the Peruvian Ministry of Culture. The Coordinator at CDI-LUM explains that 'the role Natalia has played at LUM has been very important [...]. As you can imagine this is a very fragile space politically. It requires not just economic support but also allies. In that sense, Natalia has helped us a lot [...]. She is well known and respected in our country and her position as a historian abroad is recognised. That is why, with allies like Natalia, the space continues in spite of all the crises there have been in the country' [b].

Sobrevilla Perea has worked closely with the museum to enable greater engagement with their activities by improving knowledge sharing and educational opportunities for young people. In August 2015, she organised a workshop on audio-visual testimonies from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee [c]. In 2018, she supported a nationwide essay competition, with the winning entries published in a widely disseminated collection and with prize money (£2,000) awarded by the University of Kent [d]. Macher, former Director of LUM and member of the 2003 Truth Commission, explains that 'CDI-LUM is not the agenda of power, it is not the agenda of government or Congress. It is the agenda of the people'. Sobrevilla Perea's involvement in 'temporary exhibits, running competitions, [and] organising debates with schools' has been crucial in 'spreading information to more places and changing minds' [b].

Sobrevilla Perea's instrumental role in the establishment of CDI-LUM has been officially recorded: she was named in the LUM Development Report [c] and commemorated in an official museum plaque as a key collaborator who made the museum possible. In 2016, Sobrevilla Perea opened CDI-LUM with the Minister of Culture and the Director of the National Library. In their speeches, they attested to its significance, noting that 'the CDI will allow this and future generations to know everything that happened in the country during the years of the Peruvian internal war' [e], and that 'this new documentation centre will be a place of reference of vital importance and relevance for the memory of Peru' [e].

Enhancing Peruvian identity in the present by improving understanding of its past

As a member of the two governmental Commissions set up to oversee the bicentenary of Peruvian independence, Sobrevilla Perea drew on her historical expertise around state formation, constitutional change, and political culture in the Andean region to impact significantly on the commemorations. From 2017, she worked closely with policy-makers and the Minister for Culture to establish the remit of the national commission. She was selected, as part of an international jury of experts, to judge the competition for the Curator of the National Independence Exhibition; and she advised the government on how best to represent a broad range of perspectives and interpretations on Peru's independence. One of her key contributions was to ensure that regional and indigenous communities beyond the capital were fully engaged in the commemorations, particularly significant in a country where power and policy-making are heavily centralised in Lima and where indigenous groups are under-represented in politics. In 2019, she travelled on behalf of the Commission to regions throughout Peru, including Huacho, Supe, Puno and Tacna. Often invited by grassroots

organisations, she met with youth leaders, teachers and students, and other members of the public to debate, explore, and discuss the history of independence and its legacy. Through these activities she has promoted greater understanding, awareness, and interest in the country's history and its significance for modern Peru. After attending Sobrevilla Perea's workshop on the importance of local history (which she ran for both students and members of the public), a student from the city of Tacna noted that 'as Peruvians we need to know our history and accept ourselves in our cultural diversity to be able to keep working to build a country that provides opportunities for all. [The Bicentenary] is a moment to reflect about our past, about our history and to ask the question of ourselves – where are we now?' [b]. Owing to the effects of Covid-19, this engagement has continued in 2020 via numerous virtual and Zoom talks, presentations, and workshops.

Sobrevilla Perea's research has reached national and international audiences through her extensive and sustained engagement with the press and media. This has led *Caretas*, the country's oldest and most widely read news magazine, to name Sobrevilla Perea in a top 100 list of agents of political change [f]. Since 2018, she has written a bi-monthly column for *El Comercio*, which has the highest circulation of any broadsheet in Peru; she has contributed to *La República*, another of Peru's influential daily newspapers; she has been interviewed widely in the Latin American press; she has published weekly in *Jugo de Caigua* (an open-access web journalist cooperative); and she has collaborated with the Peruvian Ambassador to the UK on a podcast series where they discuss the most significant issues around independence from a historical perspective [g]. Her journalism has focused on the creation of the state of Peru, its elections, constitution, and archives, and the significance of its armed forces. She has also used her research to draw parallels between Peru's nineteenth-century constitutional and military history and modern-day politics. By making these comparisons, she has not only helped the people of Peru improve understanding of their history, but also provided critical context to the current social, political, and constitutional crises facing the country. This has led to further media interviews in Peru, Spain, Uruguay, and the UK (in November 2020), including an in-depth special on the global radio station Monocle where she discussed contemporary political processes, the fight against corruption, and the 2021 Congressional elections [h]. That the historical context provided by Sobrevilla Perea has underpinned the work of those agitating for political and social change in Peru is demonstrated by the fact that her tweet on constitutional change, sent on 19 November 2020, has already been seen by 117,487 people, with more than 5,000 direct engagements [h]. Reflecting on the significance of her journalism, the Editor of *Caretas* noted that 'as Peru is going into the bicentennial, we are gearing into a reflection of what that means and where we are and that makes dialogue and investigations of people like Natalia into our history more relevant' [b].

Influencing decision-making through intervention in social and political issues

Through her role on the two Bicentennial Commissions and her widespread media engagement, Sobrevilla Perea has obtained a notable public platform in Peru. This platform has given her the opportunity to take a stance on political issues and to improve the lives, representation, and welfare of Peruvians. In 2017, she organised the visit to the UK of Esperanza Huayama, President of the Association of Forcibly Sterilised Women, to raise awareness of the emotional and physical impact suffered by 270,000 women and 20,000 men forcibly sterilised by the Peruvian government between 1996 and 1998. The visit was organised in conjunction with the UK-based Peru Support Group, Amnesty International, and the University of Kent. Events were held at the Human Rights Action Centre in London, the House of Commons, House of Lords, and the FCO, garnering significant interest in the press, including on BBC Radio 4's *Women's Hour* [i]. The victims have been campaigning for justice and reparation for two decades, and, although the judicial process is still ongoing, the intervention of Sobrevilla Perea raised the issue with members of the House of Lords and other UK parliamentarians, who are now applying pressure on the Peruvian government to redress the wrongs of the past [j].

In 2017, Sobrevilla Perea also contributed to the Peruvian government's decision to recant the pardon offered to Fujimori, former President of Peru, who was found guilty of human rights

abuses and jailed for 25 years in 2009. The decision to pardon him led to widespread protest and as part of this movement Sobrevilla Perea resigned from the Congressional Bicentennial Commission. Her resignation was covered extensively in the press, with a feature article in two national daily newspapers, *La República* and *Gestión* (Peru's business paper), in which she explained 'that her work as a historian on the independence and origin of the republic of Peru is always in dialogue with what is happening today and that is why I cannot remain in a commission that endorses what happened in recent days' [k]. Her resignation letter was viewed over 123,000 times and interacted with over 13,000 times on Twitter [k], and was covered by the press as part of a campaign to force the government to recant their decision, a goal that was ultimately achieved. Following her resignation, Sobrevilla Perea joined the newly created National Bicentennial Commission.

Through her work at LUM-CDI, her role on the Bicentennial Commissions, and her extensive media appearances, Sobrevilla Perea has consistently engaged the people of Peru with the history that they share and the identity that it has shaped. She has also succeeded in making events that took place 200 years ago relevant in Peru today. Commenting on the significance of Sobrevilla Perea's work, Eduardo Gonzalez Cueva, Transitional Justice advocate and expert and adviser to Peru's Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, concluded that historical memory is 'an uphill struggle given the enormous resistance', but that 'I do think that persistence is absolutely necessary' [b].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[a] LUM visitor figures and usage figures of the CDI_LUM digital platform.

[b] *Peru: A Living Memory* (KMTV). This film includes testimony from: (i) Coordinator at CDI-LUM; (ii) Former Director of LUM and Member of the 2003 Truth and Reconciliation Commission; (iii) Student from the city of Tacna; (iv) Editor of *Caretas*; (v) Transitional Justice Advocate and Adviser to the 2003 Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

[c] LUM Development Report, confirming Sobrevilla Perea's collaboration with LUM and involvement in the Museum's educational programme.

[d] Evidence corroborating the significance of the essay competition instigated by Sobrevilla Perea.

[e] Peruvian government press release with details of CDI-LUM opening ceremony.

[f] *Caretas* magazine (31 October 2019), including Sobrevilla-Perea in its list of the most important agents of political change in Peru.

[g] Documentation of Sobrevilla Perea's extensive journalism, interviews, and other media engagement that has contributed to public understanding of Peruvian nineteenth-century history.

[h] Documentation of the media and press engagement (including interaction on Twitter) where Sobrevilla Perea discusses contemporary political issues and the movement for constitutional change in response to Peru's political and social crises.

[i] Documentation of the events and media response to the visit to the UK of Esperanza Huayama, President of the Association of Forcibly Sterilised Women.

[j] Testimony from a member of the House of Lords and from the head of an influential think tank corroborating how they have pressured parliamentarians to act on the issue of forced sterilisation in Peru.

[k] Press and social media response to Sobrevilla Perea's resignation from the Congressional Bicentennial Commission.