

María Belén Noroña

Humanities Institute, The Pennsylvania State University

mbnorona@psu.edu

Education

- 2019 Ph.D. in Human Geography. *University of Oregon*.
Dissertation: “Peripheries of Extraction in the Amazon of Ecuador: An analysis of Indigenous Territory, Livelihoods, and Voices”.
- 2007 M.A. in Latin American Studies (emphasis on Rural Development). The *University of Texas at Austin*.
- 2004 Bachelor’s Equivalent in Business Administration, *Universidad Tecnológica Equinoccial-Ecuador*.

Languages

Spanish and English.

Scholarly Interest

Feminist political ecology, Amazon region, oil industry, Indigenous epistemologies, coloniality of race and gender, ethnic territoriality, networked space and place, non-representational cartography, decoloniality.

Fellowships, Grants, and Awards

- 2021-2023 Just Futures Mellon Initiative, Humanities Institute
The Pennsylvania State University
- 2020-2021 Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship
Center for Environmental Futures, University of Oregon.
- 2017-2018 Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant Fulbright Hays
U.S. Department of Education
- 2016 Research Grant, Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies
University of Oregon
- 2016 Research Grant, *Global Oregon*
University of Oregon
- 2015 Bernard Nietschmann Ph.D. Award
Conference of Latin American Geographers CLAG
- 2006 Tinker Travel Grant, Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies
The University of Texas at Austin

2003 Special Cultural Fund (Co-recipient)
Inter-American Development Bank (Co-recipient)

Publications

Noroña, M. B. (forthcoming). Visceral empathy: communicating across difference in the Amazon of Ecuador. *Antipode*.

Noroña, M. B. (forthcoming). Geospatial technologies and rural and Indigenous knowledge. In Kent, A. & Specht, D. (Eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Geospatial Technologies and Society*, Ch. 42.

Noroña, M. B. (2022). Racism in the times of Covid-19: Angos, dirty, undisciplined, and vendors in Quito. In Brunn, S., Gilbreath, D. (Eds) *Covid-19 and a World of Ad Hoc Geographies*. Springer, Switzerland.

Noroña, M. B. (2022). Extractive governmentality, ethnic territories, and racial imaginaries: the northern Amazon of Ecuador. *Geoforum*, 128, 46-56.

Noroña, M. B. (2020). Luchas en red o luchas colectivas en la Amazonía del Ecuador: el caso de Tzawata. *Journal of Latin American Geography*, 19(2), 191-217.

Noroña, M.B. (2014). *La toma de la laguna: Turismo comunitario identidad y territorio*. Abya-Yala, Caap, Quito.

Noroña, M.B (2007). "Stranger in a familiar land: Finding the unexpected in the midst of fieldwork." *Portal*, no.2: 8-9.

Academic Lectures and Workshops

2022 Decolonizing human-environmental interactions in the classroom
Humanities Institute, The Pennsylvania State University (two-day workshop)

2021 Race/Gender and Conflict (PACs 305W).
Invited Lecturer (six weeks), Juniata College.

Body-territory Feminist Frameworks and Intersectional Violence in the Amazon of Ecuador (CGST 322).
Invited Lecturer (two weeks), Wesleyan College.

2020 Planting Epistemic Justice in our Pedagogy/Practice (Nov, 13).
A workshop designed and facilitated in collaboration with the Pachaysana Institute.
Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Ohio State University (Unlearning Hour Series 2020).

Experiential Education as Social Justice Methodology (Oct, 12).
A workshop facilitated in collaboration with the Pachaysana Institute.
Independent Schools Experiential Education Network (ISEEN).

Academic Teaching

- 2021- 2022 Latinx Identity and Borderlands (GEOG 410). Instructor, University of Oregon, Prison Education Program (PEP).
- Race/Gender and Conflict (PACs 305W). Invited Lecturer (five weeks), Juniata College and the Pachaysana Institute.
- Identity and Pacha (Land) (CGST 340), (five weeks). Co-Instructor Wesleyan University and the Pachaysana Institute.
- 2016 Geography of Latin America (GEOG 214), Human Geography (GEOG 142)
Instructor, University of Oregon.
- 2009-2012 History of Latin America I (LAH 1004), History of Latin America II (LAH 1005)
Instructor, Broward University, Quito Campus.
- 2008-2010 Local Realities / Global Trends (SOC 335)
Adjunct Professor, Beloit College.
- 2007-2009 Theories of Development (POL 202)
Adjunct Professor, San Francisco de Quito University.

Research and Professional Experience

2021-Present Just Futures Mellon Scholar, Humanities Institute The Pennsylvania State University

I am a postdoctoral researcher working in solidarity with Kichwa Indigenous communities to bring Indigenous epistemologies into conversation with scholarship and college curriculum. My research examines extractive-related violence, such as the experiences of Kichwa women fighting to keep oil extraction out of their territories. I am developing theoretical frameworks that acknowledge Indigenous experiences as theory in their own right, and educational methodologies that allow us to situate oil-related violence in everyone's bodies and lives, regardless of social differences.

2021-Present Instructor for the Prison Education Program The University of Oregon

I am an instructor for the Prison Education Program offered to Latinx incarcerated men and women through the University of Oregon. Given the difficulties posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, I have developed the Latinx, Borders, and Identities course (GEO 410) by correspondence. This is the first college course offered to incarcerated people in Oregon fully taught in Spanish, and offers the opportunity to Inside students to reflect on cultural identity, racial difference, and borderlands. Inside students converse with communities in Ecuador about structural racial inequality, social difference based on nationality, culture, and race. This creates space for meaningful conversations about territory, space, the body as a spatial scale of analysis. To achieve this, I lead courses offered to communities through the Pachaysana Institute in Ecuador in which community members engage in similar topics and send their reflections to Inside students, and vice versa.

**2020-Present Critical Race Laboratory Member
The University of Oregon**

I am a member of the critical race laboratory led by Dr. Laura Pulido at the Indigenous, Race and Ethnic Studies Department. The laboratory discusses current trends and theoretical frameworks that emerge from marginalized knowers such as women of color, Indigenous people, and LGBTQ+ community members.

**2020-Present Research Coordinator and member of the Board of Advisors
The Pachaysana Institute**

I am the research coordinator and founder of the Gender and Race Social Research Laboratory. This laboratory partners with urban and rural communities in Latin America to address gender and racial violence. The laboratory uses decolonial methods that include ethnography, experience-based mapping exercises, storytelling, Indigenous storytelling, social cartography, radical listening, and participation in grassroots collective projects. Research is born out of community needs, and incorporates a community-based understanding of reality, problems, and solutions as theory in their own right. Reflection on social issues uses a pluriverse approach where knowledge is situated, contingent, and plural. Research results benefit subaltern communities and produce academic knowledge centered on the participation of marginalized populations. I am also a member of the Board of Advisors where I provide advice and counsel to the Director and Area Coordinators.

**2020-2021 Postdoctoral Scholar, Center of Environmental Futures CEF
University of Oregon**

I worked as a postdoctoral researcher on the following projects: a) Indigenous epistemic violence in the context of oil and gas extraction in the Amazon rainforest, and b) racism during the Covid-19 global pandemic in Latin America.

**2014-2019 Ph.D. Teaching Fellow, Geography Department
University of Oregon**

I assisted in the teaching of several courses such as Qualitative Methods of Research (391), Human Geography (142), Geography of Latin America (214), Geography of Globalization (342), Population and the Environment (341), Geography of North America (208).

**2017-2018 Fulbright Hays Doctoral Fellow, Fulbright Program
Department of Education**

This fellowship provided funds to conduct my doctoral fieldwork. Fieldwork produced better understanding of state-led oil-extractive expansion into oil block 12 in the Amazon of Ecuador, as well as Kichwa survival strategies, resilience, and adaptation to changing livelihoods and changing legislation that regulates the use of Indigenous territory. I shared research results with the Ministry of the Environment in Ecuador, and Indigenous grassroots organizations as part of the overall research project. Findings are being published in several academic journals.

**2013-2017 Co-founder and Education Specialist
Pachaysana Institute**

The Pachaysana Institute bridges educational opportunities between rural and urban Ecuadorian communities and U.S. college students. Pachaysana has three primary programs: 1) the “Rehearsing Change Program”, committed to fair trade education, 2) the

“From the Cracks Program”, committed to developing decolonial methods of teaching and popular education, and 3) “The Gender and Intersectional Laboratory”, which partners with rural, urban, and Indigenous communities to identify gender violence and racial discrimination and its underlying causes. All programs allow honest exchanges between subaltern rural communities and U.S. students and scholars in ways in which community members and students are encouraged to challenge colonial power dynamics.

As an education specialist I developed the initial educational strategy and curriculum for the Rehearsing Change Program. The program uses experiential and affective learning, along with decolonial learning methods. Learning takes place outside the classrooms in rural environments. Education is plural, diverse, and collective in ways in which communities and international students learn from each other with the guidance of community intellectuals, professors, and facilitators. Community members get college credit or technical diplomas for their participation. For more information, see www.pachaysana.org

**2009-2014: South American Educational Program Specialist
Sustainable Horizons**

I was responsible for the planning and organization of volunteer, educational, and research programs for U.S. high schools and universities that would travel to Ecuador, Peru, and the Galapagos Islands. I planned and organized culturally sensitive community-based learning and service programs serving community needs. Some of the most important programs I developed were rainwater collection infrastructure, large-scale greenhouses for self-subsistence agriculture at high altitudes, improvements in primary school infrastructure, and infrastructure maintenance in rainforest animal rescue centers. I assisted with important educational and research programs including organization of research and ethnographic data collection on the Galapagos Islands history, human physiology at high altitudes in Cuzco, and taxonomy of native bird species at the Zanjarauno Reserve.

**2007-2008: Consultant and Researcher
Macro International Inc.**

I was a researcher working on women’s labor and forced women’s labor in Ecuador, Panama, and El Salvador, and child labor and forced child labor in Ecuador, Panama, and El Salvador. The U.S. Department of Labor requested this research to understand gendered work in Latin America as part of a more extensive study.

**2005-2007: Graduate Student and Teaching Assistant, Institute of Latin American Studies
The University of Texas at Austin**

I completed an M.A. in Latin American Studies, and served as a teaching assistant for the Geography of Latin America course taught by Dr. Gregory Knapp.

**2002-2004: Co-founder and Director of Services and Operations
The Quito Eterno Foundation**

The Quito Eterno Foundation is a non-profit that provides educational and cultural services to increase appreciation for Ecuadorian and Latino historical heritage. Quito Eterno also offers services to encourage critical thinking about ethnic discrimination and socio-economic colonial legacies that persist among Andean cultures. My primary responsibilities as a co-founder and Director of Services and Operations was designing and planning the organization's initial educational services and strategies, including

services tailored to Latin-Americans, Ecuadorian, and U.S. students interested in Ecuadorian and Latino heritage.

This initial education strategy has solidified over the years. Currently, Quito Eterno provides various services such as theatrical pieces, interactive workshops, storytelling performances, and guided walks in patrimonial sites such as the Historic Center of Quito. The Foundation has provided services to more than 200,000 beneficiaries, particularly high school and college students in Ecuador and the U.S. For more information, please visit: www.quitoeterno.org

Conferences, Talks, and Presentations

- 2022 Visceral empathy: Kichwa calls for solidarity across the Amazon rainforest (paper)
Conference of Latin American Studies (May 5-8)
- 2021 “Body-territories of Extraction as a Learning Methodology” (paper)
The Race, Ethnicity, and Place Conference. (October 20-23)
The University of Baltimore, American Association of Geographers AAG, Texas State University
- “Weaving Body-territories of Extraction and Hope: Indigenous Dreams from the Amazon RainForest” (paper)
Center for Environmental Futures, Interdisciplinary 101 lecture (May 14)
- “Entangled Dialogues: Situating Colonialism(s) and Racial Formations Across Abya Yala/Turtle Island” (panel).
American Association of Geographers 2021 (April 7)
- 2020** “Covid-19 Vulnerability and Racial Discrimination in Ecuador” (paper)
Race, Ethnicity, Place, and the Covid-19 pandemic Online Conference (October 21-23)
The University of Baltimore, American Association of Geographers AAG, Texas State University
- “Mining as Epistemic Violence: Erasure of indigenous epistemologies in the Amazon Region of Ecuador” (paper)
Conference of Latin American Geographers, Antigua, Guatemala (January 2-4)
- 2019** “Post-neoliberal Legibility and Indigenous Oil Conflicts in the Amazon of Ecuador” (paper)
14th Annual Critical Geographies Mini-Conference, University of Oregon (October 18-19)
- 2018** “Oil Subjectivity and Social Justice at Extractive Frontiers” (paper)
Oil Race, Ethnicity and Place, IX Conference: Engaged Scholarship (October 23-25)
Texas State University and the University of Texas at Austin
- 2017** “Recreating Territories: Socio-spatial Communitarian Relations and its Role in the Making of Indigenous Territoriality in the Ecuadorian Amazon” (paper)
Conference of Latin American Geographers (January 3-5)
- “Recreating Territories: Academic Input in Struggles for Land” (talk)
Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies and the Geography Department
University of Oregon
- 2016** “Controlling territory and Natural Resources: Indigenous Strategies in an Age of Mining” (paper)

Conference of the Association of American Geographers, San Francisco (March 29-April 2)

“Entretejando comunidad y Territorio: El caso de Tzawata” (talk)
Latin American School of Social Sciences FLACSO, Quito (September 23)

“Recreando Territorios, Teorías Territoriales y Tacticas Indigenas en la Lucha por Tierras”
(paper)
International Conference: Tierras y Territorios en las Americas: Acaparamientos, Resistencias y Alternativas, Bogotá.
Organized by: Universidad Externado de Colombia, UNESP, Cornell University, Universidad Autónoma de México (August 23-26)

2015 “Indigenous Adaptive Strategies to Mining and Institutional Policy Frameworks in Ecuador: The Tzawata, Ila and Chukapi Case” (paper)
Conference of the Association of American Geographers, Chicago (April 21-25)

“Comparing Local and Global Stories of Social Economic and Environmental Alternatives to Mainstream Corporate Development. Case studies – The Tzawata en Ecuador and the River Road, Eugene, Oregon”, co-presented with Jan Spencer (talk)
Public Interest Environmental Law Conference, University of Oregon

2013 “Turismo Comunitario Versus Empoderamiento Local en Ecuador: Casos de Estudio para la Evaluación del Turismo Comunitario como Herramienta de Desarrollo” (paper)
Congreso de Ecuatorianistas, a chapter of the Latin American Studies Association LASA, Cuenca, Ecuador

References

Laura Pulido, Professor
Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies, University of Oregon
lpulido@uoregon.edu

Gregory Knapp, Associate Professor
Department of Geography, University of Texas at Austin
gwk@utexas.edu

Shaul Cohen, Associate Professor
Department of Geography, University of Oregon
scohen@uoregon.edu

Daniel Bryan
General Director, Pachaysana Institute, daniel@pachaysana.org
Visiting Professor, Juniata College, bryan@juniata.edu