

<b>Institution:</b> University of Kent
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 28 – Modern Languages and Linguistics
<b>Title of case study:</b> Peruvian Political History and Its Importance for the Present
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The impact of Natalia Sobrevilla Perea's research on Peruvian political history has been to transform the public understanding of the importance of constitutions and elections in the search for political legitimacy in Peru. This impact has been achieved through engagements in the media (public online discussions, public presentations, and newspaper articles), as well as through a two-phase British Library-funded project to catalogue and digitize newspapers held in provincial Peruvian archives. The reach and significance of the impact achieved by Sobrevilla Perea's research is evidenced by her being identified in the 3 March 2012 issue of <i>Revista Somos</i> (the Saturday supplement to the Peruvian newspaper <i>El Comercio</i>) as one of the eight most influential new voices commenting on, and contributing to, national debate in Peru.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The underpinning research was undertaken by Dr Natalia Sobrevilla Perea (Lecturer In Hispanic Studies, University of Kent, 2007–11; Senior Lecturer, Kent, 2011–13; Reader, Kent, since 2013).</p> <p>The first major output to have emerged from Sobrevilla Perea's research on Peruvian political and constitutional history, and on the ways in which public discourses (especially in print journalism) have shaped that history, was an article in <i>Revista de Indias</i> (Sobrevilla Perea 2009), in which she analyses Peru's repeated attempts to establish constitutional government. The key research finding in this article is that, in the Peruvian context, constitutions were crucial for political legitimacy – even, and indeed especially, for regimes that had taken power by force of arms.</p> <p>In a subsequent article on the power of patronage in Peruvian politics, published in <i>The Americas</i> (2010a), Sobrevilla Perea argued that political patronage lay at the heart of nineteenth-century Latin America society. Focusing on a typical provincial centre in the department of Cuzco, Peru, she concluded that, in order to understand the limits of mid-nineteenth-century political reforms, it is necessary to reconstruct how elections were actually carried out. The crucial political role played by newspapers, and in particular by the regional press, became evident in this research, which led to a further article on the importance of constitutions in Peru (2010b) and an investigation of the historical role of elections and the access of Indians to voting (2011c).</p> <p>In an article published in the <i>European History Quarterly</i> on the officers defeated at the battle of Ayacucho in 1824 (2011b), Sobrevilla Perea traced how the disintegration of the Hispanic Empire and the reactions to the Cadiz Constitution led to political instability both in Spain and in Latin America. This historical perspective finds its fullest articulation in Sobrevilla Perea's 2011 monograph on Andrés de Santa Cruz (2011a), in which she charts his career from his birth in La Paz in 1792 to his attempts to shape the newly established republics, and to create the Peru–Bolivia Confederation (1836–39). One of the principal findings of this research was that the ultimate failure of this confederation had far-reaching political consequences, with important implications for the present-day political scene in Peru.</p> <p>Following on from this insight, Sobrevilla Perea has also focused on constitutions and elections in modern Peru, and in particular on the ways in which they are used to achieve political legitimacy. In this second strand to her work on Peruvian politics, she has situated current political processes within a broader historical context, and thereby demonstrated the centrality of elections and the importance of constitutions, as they provide possibilities for political transformation.</p> <p>Sobrevilla Perea's research has led to her supervision of a doctoral project by Ines Ruiz (PhD student in Hispanic Studies at Kent, since 2011) on the victims of the forced sterilization programme in Peru during the 1990s (under Alberto Fujimori's presidency). This research includes both an information-gathering dimension (the recording of the victims' experiences) and an analysis of the reception of this sterilization programme in Peruvian society more generally. It has found evidence to demonstrate that racism, and the perception of the victims as uneducated 'others', was a key factor in making this abuse possible and, indeed, widely accepted.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p><u>Outputs:</u></p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

1. Sobrevilla Perea, Natalia (2009), '[Batallas por la legitimidad: constitucionalismo y conflicto político en el Perú del siglo diecinueve \(1812-1860\)](#)', *Revista de Indias*, vol. 69, no. 246, pp. 101–28. DOI: 10.3989/revindias.2009.014.
2. Sobrevilla Perea, Natalia (2010a), 'The Enduring Power of Patronage in Peruvian Elections: *Quispicanchis 1860*', *The Americas*, vol. 67, no. 1, pp. 31–55. DOI: 10.1353/tam.0.0300. [This output is included in REF2: Sobrevilla Perea output 1.]
3. Sobrevilla Perea, Natalia (2010b), '[In Search of a Better Society: Constitutions in Peru](#)', *Rechtsgeschichte*, no. 16, pp. 111–14.
4. Sobrevilla Perea, Natalia (2011a), *The Caudillo of the Andes: Andrés de Santa Cruz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 256pp. [This output is included in REF2: Sobrevilla Perea output 2.]
5. Sobrevilla Perea, Natalia (2011b), 'From Europe to the Andes and Back: Becoming "Los Ayacuchos"', *European History Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 472–88. DOI: 10.1177/0265691411405296. [This output is included in REF2: Sobrevilla Perea output 4.]
6. Sobrevilla Perea, Natalia (2011c), 'Elecciones y conflicto en el Perú', *Elecciones*, vol. 10, issue 11. ISBN: 1994-5272. [This output can be supplied by the HEI on request.]

Funding:

1. In 2009, Sobrevilla Perea was awarded £14,318 by the British Library Endangered Archives scheme to carry out a pilot project entitled [Recovering the Provincial Nineteenth-Century Press](#) in order to identify the state of conservation of provincial nineteenth-century newspapers in Peru.
2. In 2011, Sobrevilla Perea was awarded £24,510 by the British Library Endangered Archives scheme to undertake a follow-up project entitled [Recovering Provincial Newspapers in Peru](#) to carry out a major digitization project in five Peruvian provinces.

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

The impact of Sobrevilla Perea's research has been achieved principally through her interventions in the public debate on the present-day political situation in Peru. These interventions are deeply informed by her historical perspective, and bear upon questions of political legitimacy and the role of constitutions and elections therein. Key focal points for this impact have included the Fujimori trial (2008–9) and the 2011 presidential elections. The impact of Sobrevilla Perea's project to digitize provincial newspaper collections in Peru (2009–13) has been to ensure wide public access to this historical material, which can also inform current political debate.

Impact activities:

1. **Blogs on the Fujimori trial.** In January 2008, Sobrevilla Perea was invited by the human rights organization Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos to act as an observer at the trial of the former president of Peru, Alberto Fujimori. She met with victims of the human rights abuses perpetrated during his regime, including both the only surviving victim of the killing in *Barrios Altos* and the relatives of those 'disappeared' at *La Cantuta*. After the trial, Sobrevilla Perea wrote an editorial published in a [blog in Peru](#) and a [blog in Argentina](#), which sparked a debate in Peru and Argentina over Fujimori's legacy (since the *Barrios Altos* case was instrumental in bringing to an end amnesty laws in both countries).
2. Two **articles** in *Argumentos*, the journal of Peru's most important think-tank, the Instituto de Estudios Peruanos. In '[Las elecciones peruanas: reflexiones a base de la historia de la larga duración](#)' (April 2011), Sobrevilla Perea offered an historically informed perspective on the Peruvian elections. In '[¿Darle una segunda oportunidad al Fujimorismo?](#)' (June 2011), she encouraged voters to consider the possibly devastating consequences of Keiko Fujimori's election as president.
3. **Public talks and workshops resulting in media engagement.** Following her participation in the online discussion, Sobrevilla Perea was invited to deliver a series of public talks in the UK on the 2011 Peruvian election, aimed at mixed audiences of academics, journalists, and Peruvian voters living in the UK. The first of these talks was delivered at Senate House, University of London, on 3 June 2011, two days before the elections. This talk was attended by journalists from the *Economist*, the *Guardian*, and the BBC. After the election,

Sobrevilla Perea was invited to give a talk on the election results at the London School of Economics on 17 June 2011. This was followed by an invitation to participate as one of the main speakers at the annual event of the Peru Support Group, held on 29 October 2011, analysing the first 100 days of Humala's presidency. In June–July 2013, Sobrevilla Perea organized a series of workshops with young people in Peru to reflect on the long-term understanding of the events that took place in Peru in the 1980s. These workshops used documentaries, videos, and video blogs on social platforms (Facebook and Twitter) to spark a debate on the importance of history in the understanding of politics and of collective memory on the tenth anniversary of the publication of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Peru.

4. **Newspaper and television.** One of Sobrevilla Perea's most important activities in the on-going debate around Peruvian political processes has been a [newspaper article](#) published in the *Guardian* on 17 June 2011. This article highlighted the plight of the women who underwent forced sterilization in the 1990s. The article has contributed to the campaign for the reopening of the judicial case against those responsible for the sterilization programme. Sobrevilla Perea was also interviewed on the Aljazeera television programme *Listening Post* (broadcast on 24 September 2011), to discuss the way in which the press covered the 2011 Peruvian presidential election, and on *Jueves a las 3 p.m. con Patricia del Río* (broadcast on 14 June 2013), to discuss her work with young people on memory.

#### Reach of the impact:

1. Over the past five years, Sobrevilla Perea has established herself as a public intellectual in Peru, and in March 2012 she was identified as one of the eight most influential 'nuevas voces en temas de realidad nacional' in *Revista Somos* (the Saturday supplement to the Peruvian national newspaper *El Comercio*).
2. Her June 2011 article in *Argumentos* was the second most widely read article in the journal that year, and sparked a campaign among 111,000 participants on Facebook and Twitter on the legacy of Fujimori and the 2011 presidential election, as well as on several well-known political blogs in Peru, where it was linked and discussed during the election. Her April 2011 article in *Argumentos* was the third most widely read article in the journal during the same period, and it also circulated widely on Facebook and Twitter. Several blogs have subsequently included links to it. Lawyer François Peglau commented: 'This article circulated like wildfire over the web and was a very useful tool in the debate.'
3. The meeting at Senate House, London, on 3 June 2011 was attended by over 60 people, including representatives of the two election candidates, journalists from the *Economist*, the *Guardian*, and the BBC, investors from the City of London, and members of the general public. The financial consultant Julius Abensur wrote: 'I was extremely impressed at [Sobrevilla Perea's] ability to present a dispassionate analysis of the political scenarios unfolding in Peru' (5.7). Lawyer François Peglau wrote that Sobrevilla Perea was able to supply a 'perspective with her historical analysis, which enriched the discussion' (5.7). Journalists and members of the general public, alongside academics and over 30 students, attended Sobrevilla Perea's talk at the London School of Economics on 17 June 2011. Maria Luisa Palomino, a participant from Peru, remarked that Sobrevilla Perea 'demonstrated in-depth knowledge of the topic under discussion' (5.7), while Alejandra Irigoin (Lecturer in Economic History, LSE) wrote: 'Bringing the long historical sweep of the politics of exclusion in a place like Peru made for a much richer understanding of the crossroads where the country and indeed the region stand today' (5.7).
4. Sobrevilla Perea's July 2011 article in the *Guardian* was widely circulated in Peru via blogs, Facebook, and Twitter, as well as being syndicated worldwide. The Aljazeera television programme *Listening Post*, on which she appeared in September 2011, was broadcast to an international audience in the millions.
5. The event held at the National Library in Lima as part of the provincial newspaper digitization project (see section 3 above) was attended by more than 100 people. These included representatives from the most important national newspapers in Peru – *El Peruano*, *El Comercio*, *Correo*, and *La República* – as well as from state institutions and

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museums, alongside librarians and archivists.

Significance of the impact:

According to the lawyer François Peglau, the impact of Sobrevilla Perea's research in both informing and changing the quality of the political debate around the 2011 election was significant, especially given the small margin (3%) by which Fujimori lost the election to Humala (5.7).

In November 2011, the judicial process against those accused of being responsible for the forced sterilization programme commenced at the Inter-American Court. Since the medical records of the sterilized women have been destroyed, the judicial process will only be able to proceed on the basis of testimonies. Ines Ruiz (under the supervision of Sobrevilla Perea) began taking testimonies from women in the communities of Huancabamba in the northern Peruvian Andes in 2012. Josefa Ramirez Peña from the Instituto de Apoyo al Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres Campesinas wrote that, after the first visit, 'over 100 women have been inspired to come forward and present their cases to strengthen the judicial process'.

The other strand of Sobrevilla Perea's work that is having significant impact is the creation of a centralized repository for digital collections of Peruvian newspapers. Providing easy and cost-effective access for a wider general public to historical newspapers will substantially improve the quality of political debate. Sobrevilla Perea's British Library-funded project has already resulted in a collaboration between the largest holders of newspapers in Peru (*El Comercio*, *La República*, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, and *El Peruano*), and the creation of a centralized catalogue at the National Library in Lima. This work has also ensured the preservation of newspaper collections in Huancavelica and Ayacucho.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)Quantitative indicators:

1. [Guardian 'Comment is Free' contribution](#), corroborating the impact of Sobrevilla Perea's and Ruiz's research on the forced sterilization of women in Peru and how this became a crucial issue in the 2011 Peruvian presidential campaign.
2. [Historia Global Online report by José Raqas](#), corroborating the impact of her piece on the indictment of Fujimori in April 2009.
3. 26 comments in response to Sobrevilla Perea's online contribution '[Reflexiones después de un fallo histórico](#)', corroborating the impact of her piece on the Fujimori debate in Argentina.
4. 28 comments in response to Sobrevilla Perea's online contribution '¿Se merece Alan García otra oportunidad?', corroborating how this piece influenced the debate on the election of corrupt presidents in 2011.
5. Newspaper article in *Publimetro* on the workshops with young people in Lima in June 2013, corroborating how Sobrevilla Perea's work on memory, history, and politics has reached an online audience of 111,000 Facebook and Twitter users.
6. TV interview with Sobrevilla Perea on her work with young people on memory: [Jueves a las 3 p.m. con Patricia del Río \(YouTube\)](#), broadcast on 14 June 2013, to corroborate how this project has been taken up in the public debate.

Independent testimony:

7. Statements by the following: Julius Abensur (financial consultant with PA Consulting Group, London); François Peglau (lawyer present at the 3 June 2011 workshop); Maria Luisa Palomino (participant in the 17 June 2011 workshop); and Alejandra Irigoin (Lecturer in Latin American Economic History, London School of Economics).
8. Letters from the NGO with which Ines Ruiz is working, corroborating that women have come forward to give their testimony inspired by the work carried out by her in 2012.
9. Letters from the participants in the June 2013 British Library workshop.
10. Testimony supplied by the participants in the workshops with young people in Peru in June and July 2013, evidencing how the activity has impacted upon them.