

Chaire Jacques Leclercq November 4-8, 2019 Louvain-la-Neuve

"Infopolitics, Cyber Insecurity, and Democracy: Reflections on Digital Power"

Victoria Bernal, Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Irvine
vbernal@uci.edu

THEME: In this series of lectures I explore the political contradictions arising from the growing entanglement of digital media with the relationships between citizens and states. I will draw on my several decades of work on the Eritrean diaspora and politics online as well as on a new line of research focused on the American security state, surveillance, and cybersecurity. Each session will focus on a different facet of the ways that people's engagements with the internet are transforming experiences, understandings, and practices of politics. Lectures will be delivered in English but some questions and discussion may be in French.

PROGRAM

1) November, 4 Infopolitics and Diaspora: the Nation as Network

What does it mean that migration and digital media are producing new spaces and relations between spaces?

How are some boundaries crossed or obscured and others created?

How can we theorize politics beyond the dichotomies of online/offline, physical/virtual, homeland/diaspora?

What does anthropology bring to the study of digital media?

Reference:

2014 *Nation as Network: Diaspora, Cyberspace, and Citizenship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

2) November, 5 The Online Public Sphere: The Mouse that Roared?

What makes expression online powerful?

What are the processes of inclusion and exclusion that shape the contours of what is expressed and who participates?

What are the methodological and ethical challenges involved in studying these issues?

References:

2013 "Civil Society and Cyberspace: Reflections on Dehai, Asmarino, and Awate" *Africa Today* (special issue on Postliberation Eritrea) 60 (2): 21-38.

Africa today,

2017 "Diaspora and the Afterlife of Violence: Eritrean National Narratives and What Goes Without Saying" *American Anthropologist* 119:23-34.

3) November 6 Creativity and the Politics of Protest: Dissent Goes Digital

What new political possibilities for dissent are offered by the capabilities of digital media?

How might digital media compel us to rethink what constitutes protest, activism, and the political?

References:

2013 "Diaspora, Digital Media, and Death Counts: Eritreans and the Politics of Memorialization" African Studies (special issue on diasporas) 72(2): 246-264.

2013 "Please Forget Democracy and Justice: Eritrean Politics and the Power of Humor" American Ethnologist (40)2: 300-309.

4) November 7 Digital Media and Security States: Theory from the South

Repression and resistance are not new, but what makes them different in the digital age?

Has a focus on the internet's capacity for empowering people and breaking down barriers to free expression deflected attention from the new powers digital media offer to states?

References:

Work in progress "A Tale of Two Surveillance States: From Isaias Afewerki to Edward Snowden"

Work in progress "Cybersecurity, America's 'War on Terror' and the Disappearing Citizen."

5) November 8 Imagining Digital Futures: From Cyberwar to Decolonization

References:

In press "The Aesthetics of Cyber Insecurity: Displaying the Digital in Three American Museum Exhibits" In Futureproof: Security Aesthetics and the Management of Life, edited by Asher Ghertner, Daniel Goldstein, and Hudson McFann. Duke University Press.

Work in progress "Digitality and Decolonization"

Victoria Bernal
PUBLICATION LIST

Books

- 2014 Nation as Network: Diaspora, Cyberspace, and Citizenship. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 1991 Cultivating Workers: Peasants and Capitalism in a Sudanese Village. New York: Columbia University Press.

Edited Volumes

- 2014 Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalisms, co-edited with Inderpal Grewal. Durham: Duke University Press.
- 2012 Contemporary Cultures, Global Connections: Anthropology for the 21st Century. San Diego: Cognella. [An anthology for teaching anthropology] (revised 1st ed. 2013)

Articles and Chapters

Under review "Digitality and Decolonization"

Under review "Cybersecurity, America's 'War on Terror' and the Disappearing Citizen."

Under review "Cityscapes, Mediascapes, and Diaspora: (Post)colonial Imaginaries of Asmara"

In press "The Aesthetics of Cyber Insecurity: Displaying the Digital in Three American Museum Exhibits" In Futureproof: Security Aesthetics and the Management of Life, edited by Asher Ghertner, Daniel Goldstein, and Hudson McFann. Duke University Press.

2018 "Digital Media, Territory, and Diaspora: The Shape-Shifting Spaces of Eritrean Politics" Journal of African Cultural Studies (special issue on "Past, present and future on the internet: African/diaspora websites beyond modernity and tradition," edited by Inge Brinkman and Daniela Merolla) advance published online: 13 Dec 2018
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2018.1556622>

2017 "NGO Fever and Donor Regimes: Tanzanian Feminist Activism within Landscapes of Contradictions," In Cultures of Doing Good: Anthropologists and NGOs, edited by Amanda Lashaw, Christian Vannier, and Steven Sampson. Pp. 37-55. Alabama University Press.

2017 "Asmara Online: The City as Contested Icon," in Architecture in Asmara: Colonial Origin and Postcolonial Experiences, edited by Peter Volgger and Stefan Graf. Pp. 402-409. Berlin: DOM Publishers.

2017 "Diaspora and the Afterlife of Violence: Eritrean National Narratives and What Goes Without Saying" American Anthropologist 119:23-34.

2016 "Extraterritoriality, Diaspora, the Space of Cyberspace" in Extraterritorialities in Occupied Worlds edited by Mayaan Amir and Ruti Sela. Pp. 157-170. Brooklyn: Punctum Books.

2016 "Migranti Eritrei, Stato e Sentimenti Inespressi: Comprendere il Silenzio Sui Siti Web" (translated from English to Italian by Aurora Massa and Jvan Yazdani), in Chi, cosa. Refugiati Transnazionalismo e Frontiere edited by Osvaldo Constantini, Aurora Massa, and Jvan Yazdani. Pp. 178-214. Rome: Mincione Edizioni.

- 2014 "Introduction: The NGO Form: Feminist Struggles, States, and Neoliberalism" co-authored with Inderpal Grewal. In Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms and Neoliberalism. Pp.1-18. Duke University Press.
- 2014 "Conclusion: Feminisms and the NGO Form" co-authored with Inderpal Grewal. In Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms and Neoliberalism. Pp. 301-310. Duke University Press.
- 2013 "Diaspora, Digital Media, and Death Counts: Eritreans and the Politics of Memorialization" African Studies (special issue on diasporas) 72(2): 246-264.
- 2013 "Please Forget Democracy and Justice: Eritrean Politics and the Power of Humor" American Ethnologist (40)2: 300-309.
- 2013 "Civil Society and Cyberspace: Reflections on Dehai, Asmarino, and Awate" Africa Today (special issue on Postliberation Eritrea) 60 (2): 21-38.
- 2010 "Nationalist Networks: The Eritrean Diaspora Online" in Diasporas in the New Media Age: Identity, Politics, and Community. edited by Pedro Oiarzabal and Andoni Alonso. Pp. 122-135. Reno University of Nevada Press.
- 2010 "Diasporas and Cyberspace" in Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities, edited by Kim Knott and Sean McLoughlin. Pp. 167-171. London: Zed Press.
- 2006 "Diaspora, Cyberspace, and Political Imagination" Global Networks: a Journal of Transnational Affairs 6(2): 161-180. (Special Issue on 'Return to Cyberia: Technology and the Social Worlds of Transnational Migrants) [translated, condensed, and reprinted 2006]
- 2005 "Eritrea On-Line: Diaspora, Cyberspace, and the Public Sphere" American Ethnologist 32(4):661-676.
- 2005 "Digital Diaspora: Conflict, Community, and Celebrity in Virtual Eritrea" Eritrean Studies Review 4(2):185-210. (Special Issue on Eritrean diaspora)
- 2004 "Eritrea Goes Global: Reflections on Nationalism in a Transnational Era" Cultural Anthropology 19(1):1-25. [reprinted 2012]
- 2001 "From Warriors to Wives: Contradictions of Liberation and Development in Eritrea" Northeast African Studies 8(3):129-154.
- 2001 "Nationalisierung des Transnationalismus: Transnationalism, Diaspora, and the World Wide Web of Eritrean Nationalism" Entwicklungs-Politik 23 (24):26-29.
- 2000 "Equality to Die For?: Women Guerilla Fighters and Eritrea's Cultural Revolution" Political and Legal Anthropology Review 23(2):61-76.
- 1999 "Migration, Modernity, and Islam in Rural Sudan" Middle East Report, 211(29):26-28. [reprinted 2015]
- 1997 "Colonial Moral Economy and the Discipline of Development: The Gezira Scheme and 'Modern' Sudan." Cultural Anthropology. 12(4): 447-479.
- 1997 "Islam, Transnational Culture, and Modernity in Rural Sudan" in Gendered Encounters: Challenging Cultural Boundaries and Social Hierarchies in Africa, edited by M. Grosz-Ngate and O. Kokole. Pp. 131-151, Routledge Press: N.Y. and London.
- 1995 "Cotton and Colonial Order in Sudan: A Social History with Emphasis on the Gezira Scheme" in Cotton and Colonialism and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa, edited by Allen Isaacman and Richard Roberts. Pp. 96-118, Heinemann Press: Portsmouth.
- 1994 "Peasants, Capitalism and (Ir)Rationality." American Ethnologist (21) 4:792-810.
- 1994 "Gender, Culture, and Capitalism: Women and the Remaking of Islamic 'Tradition' in a Sudanese Village" Comparative Studies in Society and History 36(1): 36-67. [reprinted 2005]

- 1990 "The Politics of Research on Agricultural Development: An Instructive Example from the Sudan." American Anthropologist (92) 3:732-739.
- 1990 "Agricultural Development and Food Production on a Sudanese Irrigation Scheme," in Anthropology and Rural Development in North Africa and the Middle East, edited by Muneera Salem-Murdock and Michael M. Horowitz. Pp.197-227. Westview Press: Boulder.
- 1988 "Continuity and Contradiction: The Maintenance of Peasant Production and the Destruction of Peasant Economy in a Blue Nile Scheme Village," in Economy and Class in Sudan, edited by Norman O'Neill and Jay O'Brien. Pp.157-185. Gower Press: London.
- 1988 "Losing Ground--Women and Agriculture on Sudan's Irrigated Schemes: Lessons from a Blue Nile Village," in Agriculture, Women and Land: The African Experience, edited by Jean Davison. Pp. 131-156. Boulder: Westview Press.
- 1988 "Coercion and Incentives in African Agricultural Development: Insights from the Sudanese Experience." African Studies Review (31) 2:89-108.

Reprints and Translations

- 2018 "Civil Society and Cyberspace: Reflections on Dehai, Asmarino, and Awate" in Post-Liberation Eritrea edited by Tekle Woldemikael Bloomington: Indiana University Press [reprinted from Africa Today 2013]
- 2015 "Migration, Modernity, and Islam in Rural Sudan" in SIHA Journal (Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa) in English and Arabic [reprinted from 1999 Middle East Report, 211(29):26-28.]
- 2012 "Eritrea Goes Global: Reflections on Nationalism in a Transnational Era" in Contemporary Cultures, Global Connections, edited by Victoria Bernal. San Diego: Cognella. [reprinted from 2004 Cultural Anthropology 19(1):3-25.], 1st ed. And revised 1st edition.
- 2006 TRANSLATED into German: (2006) "Eritrea: Diaspora – Nation im Cyberspace" der Überblick (Zeitschrift für ökumenische Begegnung und internationale Zusammenarbeit) Journal of Ecumenical Congress and International Cooperation], March. [reprinted from 2006 "Diaspora, Cyberspace, and Political Imagination" Global Networks: a Journal of Transnational Affairs 6(2): 161-180.]
- 2005 "Gender, Culture, and Capitalism: Women and the Remaking of Islamic 'Tradition' in a Sudanese Village." in Readings in Gender in Africa, edited by Andrea Cornwall, Pp, 164-177. International African Institute, Indiana University Press and James Currey Publishers. [reprinted from 1994 Comparative Studies in Society and History (36) 1:36-67.]

Encyclopedia Essays

- 2005 "Eritrea" in Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices Volume 2, pp.336-344. Thomson Gale: Farmington Hills, MI. co-authored with Tekle Woldemikael.
- 2003 "Eritrea" in The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Women's Issues Worldwide: Sub-Saharan Africa, edited by Aili Tripp. Pp. 109-123. Greenwood Press: Westport, CT and London.