

Exploring Contemporary and Historical Comparisons and Connections between New Zealand, Iberia and Latin America

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Introduction

In September 2010, an exploratory conference that sought to examine contemporary and historical comparisons and connections between Latin America, Iberia and New Zealand took place at Victoria University of Wellington. Two of the country's leading research institutes in their respective disciplines, the Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies, and the Victoria Institute for Links with Latin America, joined together to host a scholarly gathering that would, by incorporating academics from Victoria University's Spanish and Brazilian Programmes, allow a broad comparative analysis of the three areas for the first time. James Belich, who had recently published a groundbreaking work on settler society in the Anglo-world,¹ wondered what a comparison with the Hispanic settler societies might look like and, together with Richard Hill of the Stout Research Centre, suggested the exploration of such matters. The original remit expanded significantly and the eventual title of the conference was to become 'Parallel Pasts, Convergent Futures? Comparing New Zealand, Iberia and Latin America', a theme that would bring together speakers on topics as diverse as comparative cultural studies; historical political economy; politics of identity and nationalism; post-dictatorial society, memory and justice; and post-colonial developmental models, amongst others. Purposefully broad in its scope, the conference was underpinned by the desire to open new avenues of scholarly endeavour in order to investigate the conspicuously parallel historical evolution of the three regions and the even more striking potential for future convergence across an array of economic, political and cultural concerns.

The conference attracted speakers from many countries including, among others, New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, Spain, Chile and Argentina. Participants were asked to either undertake comparative analysis or to focus on connections between the three focus areas. What resulted was an interdisciplinary, historically and geographically diverse conference

that brought to light a series of resemblances and disparities that had not been previously considered. This special edition of the *Journal of New Zealand Studies* publishes many of these analyses, focusing in particular, but not exclusively, on the comparative contributions that incorporate New Zealand.

In what remains of this introduction, we first offer a concise context for the collection with an overview of comparisons and connections between Iberia, Latin America and New Zealand. Before some final thoughts, we go on to outline the three-part structure of the collection providing a summary of each of the contributions.

Unexplored comparisons and unexpected connections

At first glance New Zealand, Latin America and Iberia might seem as separate culturally, politically and economically as they are in terms of geographical location. Iberia has a colonial past, whereas New Zealand and Latin America are post-colonial societies. The Anglo-Celtic/Polynesian culture of New Zealand stands in contrast to the Hispanic societies of Iberia and Latin America. The political and legal systems that have dominated in the respective places, and the outcomes in terms of social equity, have been markedly different; ranging from brutal dictatorships in Latin America and Iberia to adapted Westminster democracy in New Zealand. However, when we look deeper we find that the societies intertwine in important ways; there are significant historical parallels and a contemporary convergence in terms of political, cultural and economic trajectories. The preceding observations provided the rationale for the original conference and, indeed, underpin this collection.

Both Latin America and New Zealand were settler colonies, occupied at very different times, and under very different conditions. In the case of the former, settlement took place during the European mercantilist period² that was driven by the desire of the Iberian powers for primary products – initially minerals and later agricultural items. The invasion of the continent, the virtual destruction of indigenous society, the disregard for the environment and the consolidation of the power of the social elite have left profound legacies. In the case of the New Zealand, settlement came during the industrializing phase of European colonial expansion, and New Zealand too was inserted into the global economy as a primary product supplier to the colonial heartland. Yet the products were different, centred initially on extensive agriculture. Conflict with the indigenous peoples over control of land and resources was significant and resonates powerfully today in New Zealand, but it was qualitatively different to the conflicts which took place in Latin America. The brutal elitism of Latin American colonial society

was not reproduced in New Zealand and, due in part to this factor, society today is *relatively* more socially equitable.

Arguably however, the current structure of the Latin American and New Zealand economies, and some of the political and cultural characteristics associated with resource dependency, is shaped in part by their parallel settler histories. Of late, possibly due to this shared path, there has been convergence with respect to the nature of the state and its role in the respective societies. After the Second World War, in many ways New Zealand and Spain were interventionist states. For Latin America, in the first centuries following independence this was far from the case and the neoclassical state was dominated by non-interventionist post-colonial elites. During the structuralist-informed period beginning in the 1960s, Latin American governments became more active undertaking import substitution and land reform among other things. This increasingly parallel transformation continued with the adoption in New Zealand, Latin America and, eventually, Spain of profound neoliberal reform in the 1970s and 1980s, although the exact details of this transformation vary from place to place.³

While the past may be parallel in only some senses, the future almost certainly will be convergent. A material expression of this is the increased interaction between Latin America, Iberia and New Zealand and what Lynch refers to as ‘a growing sense of easy comfort in each other’s presence’.⁴ The investment by Spanish firms in Latin America, the free trade agreement between Chile and New Zealand in the context of the evolving Pacific 8 agreement and the parallel pursuit of human rights abuse cases in Latin America and Spain are diverse yet concrete examples of the growing connections. It has been argued elsewhere that post-Second World War New Zealand and South American relations have gone through an encounter phase (1950-1970); a stand-off phase (1970-80) and a rapprochement phase (1990s to the present).⁵ It would appear there has been a re-discovery which, unlike the discoveries of the past, is mutual. With this in mind that we now turn to the three-part structure framing the specific contributions in this special edition.

Part I: Colonialism, Nations and Sovereignty

The first section of the collection is concerned with the history of settlement, and incorporates questions regarding nation-state formation and exercise of sovereignty over land. In the first essay, Geoff Bertram argues that settler colonies are distinct from colonies of exploitation in that they extracted rents from the metropolitan economy rather than vice versa. Their historical trajectories over the past century started from a shared high level of prosperity at the end of the nineteenth century, the culmination of a strongly

convergent growth process driven initially by mass migration and then by a staple-export boom. After 1930, however, the settler colonies diverged. The Hispanic exemplars – Argentina, Uruguay and Chile – stalled, while the USA pulled away to become an industrial superpower in its own right. In the middle of the group, Angus Maddison's other Anglo-Saxon 'neo-Europes' – Australia, New Zealand and Canada – began to diverge from each other after mid-century. Bertram's paper reviews the growth record of these seven economies and asks to what extent their divergence was attributable to internal institutional differences, as distinct from the effect of global forces at work in the evolving world system and different policy responses to those forces. The conclusion is that world-system forces produce convergence only at particular times and under particular conditions, while at other times longer-run historic path dependencies seem to prevail.

In the second essay in this section, Richard Boast considers the issue of comparative reform and land sovereignty. His paper focuses on revolutionary transformations of customary tenure that took place in New Zealand and in Latin America in the nineteenth century. After achieving independence from Spain, most Spanish American republics abolished customary tenures and launched large scale attacks on lands owned by the Catholic Church. The effects on indigenous communities, such as the Maya people of Guatemala and Chiapas, were very significant. In New Zealand, a similar process of transformation of customary tenures was brought about by the Native Lands Acts at more or less the same time. In both cases the net outcome was large-scale land loss among indigenous people. Boast considers the parallels and differences between the New Zealand and Latin American cases, focusing in particular on Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica, reviewing and comparing the relevant historiographies in English and Spanish.

One of the keynote presentations at the Parallel Pasts conference was provided by Marco Antonio Pamplona from Brazil on the theme of nation-state formation. The paper begins by emphasizing the creation/organization of power and authority for the nation-state in the early decades of independence (1810s-1820s) in both the Hispanic American regions and in the previously Portuguese American provinces. Here the author seeks to demonstrate how and in what aspects this process was differentiated, commenting on the commonly felt international constraints. A central aspect of the paper considers the interplay between the centralized trend of the monarchical court installed in Brazil and the diverse reactions of the provinces in the 1820s. This is contrasted with the more diffused, centrifugal, trends which have accompanied state-making in the new Hispanic American republics over a much longer period. Pamplona's intervention is followed by a reflection from Malcolm McKinnon who considers similar issues in the context of New Zealand's formation.

Part II: Conflict, Justice and Representation

In the second section of this special edition, we turn to the linked matters of conflict and justice, including some contributions where these matters are explored in literary fields. Mark Derby opens the section with an analysis of a particular example of Spanish Civil War writing that appeared in New Zealand. He argues that, at the time of the Spanish Civil War, news of the conflict in the mainstream New Zealand press was relatively scarce. There was one significant exception: a series that appeared in the *Weekly News* (formerly the *Auckland Weekly News*), then the country's best-selling weekly and a much-loved institution. In 19 consecutive issues from April to August 1938, the *Weekly News* published stories under the collective title *Heroes and Beasts*, by the Spanish journalist Manuel Chaves Nogales. These lightly fictionalized but historically accurate bulletins from the early months of the conflict had already appeared in translation in several countries. Derby shows that in recent years interest in Nogales' work has been revived, and he is now regarded as one of the most distinguished and far-sighted contemporary writers on the Civil War. This paper draws on recent research by Spanish scholars such as María Isabel Cintas Guillén (who edited Nogales' collected stories, posthumously published in 1993) and on media history and social history in New Zealand, to explore the curious publication of his writings in the New Zealand media and speculates as to its possible contribution to New Zealanders' understanding of the Spanish Civil War.

Carolina Miranda and Barbara Pezzotti's contribution continues in the literary field but, in this case, moves into the comparative investigation of works of crime fiction. They argue that questions of identity have traditionally been central to crime fiction. The initial search for a single identity – the culprit in the so-called 'whodunit' – has been gradually enlarged into an investigation of society which has introduced more realism in a genre which now reflects the tensions and problems of contemporary culture. Their essay seeks to draw some parallels between two crime novels: *Asesinato en el Comité Central* (1981) by renowned Spanish crime writer Manuel Vázquez Montalbán and *Old School Tie* (1994, aka *Dirty Laundry*) by Paul Thomas. At first sight, argue the authors, it may appear difficult to reconcile the works of writers who belong to different generations, different nationalities, and are writing at different historical and cultural junctures. The former was born in 1938 (died in 2003), the latter in 1951; Vázquez Montalbán was born and bred in Barcelona, Thomas in Harrogate, UK, then brought up in NZ and later adopted by Australia. Furthermore, the former published his first detective novel in 1972, the latter over two decades later. These differences notwithstanding, the Catalan's writing reflects anxieties revolving around questions of regional, cultural and political identity, particularly in

the context of the 'new' democratic Spain after Franco's death in 1975. The New Zealander also engages in an exploration of similar issues of identity, in this instance Māori/Pākehā identity, within the modern, democratic urban environment of Auckland. In his work too, Miranda and Pezzotti argue that crime also reflects the illness of a cosmopolitan metropolis.

Legal scholar Catherine Iorns Magallanes turns her attention to the representation and participation of indigenous peoples in the contemporary political systems of former colonies. Human rights law, international and domestic, has traditionally not recognized group-based claims. Thus, the laws on electoral participation are focused on the rights of individuals to procedural equality and fairness in the conduct of elections. In contrast, the emerging rights of indigenous peoples in international law, as well as within regions and individual states, are increasingly recognizing collective or group-based claims to indigenous political participation and representation. These two areas of contrasting rights are generally not well-integrated, and much human rights law rejects group-based claims as discriminatory, especially in the area of political participation and representation. Iorns' paper offers some examples from the European Court of Human Rights to illustrate this point. In contrast, the position taken in Latin America recognizes the more substantive, group-based rights, even in relation to questions of political participation and representation. The example of the *YATAMA* decision from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights is discussed in order to illustrate this. The essay concludes that the Latin American approach best integrates the human rights concerning both electoral participation and indigenous peoples.

José Colmeiro provided a stimulating keynote presentation at the original conference concerning the importance of historical memory and transitional justice in post-dictatorial societies. His paper examines the post-Franco situation in Spain and similar cases in Latin America in their way of dealing, or not dealing, with the horrors of the recent past. Beyond the comparative evaluation of parallel historical situations and social developments across the Hispanic Atlantic, Colmeiro focuses on the role played by transnational historical memories in the configuration of different post-dictatorial nations in cultural, political and legal terms. Specifically, his essay examines the cases of Spain, Chile and Argentina, which have often functioned as models and mirrors to each other for ways of dealing with their histories of torture, forced disappearances and mass executions. Several questions arise from Colmeiro's analysis: firstly, how have the measures and processes developed to deal with the memories of those events and to bring justice to their victims crossed the national borders? To what extent are they converging into a transnational legal space that accompanies the development of universal jurisdiction? What has been the role of social movements asserting

‘memories without frontiers’ in the age of the globalization of justice? As an illustration of these issues, the essay examines the rise and (possible) fall of Judge Baltasar Garzón in his judicial quest from his position in the Spanish High Court to persecute crimes against humanity committed both within and beyond Spanish borders. The following essay by Richard Hill offers a reflection on linked issues in the context of post-colonial New Zealand and the ways in which consecutive New Zealand governments have attempted to deal with historical injustices.

Part III: Cultures, Economies and Globalization

In the third and final section of the collection, we turn to the interaction of cultural dynamics and economic processes driven by the processes and patterns of globalization. In the first essay of the section, Alfredo Martínez Expósito compares nation-branding in New Zealand and Spain. He argues that with the popularization, in recent years, of the idea that nations can be branded and marketed to both domestic and global consumers, many social scientists are revisiting classic concepts such as ‘country image’ and ‘national stereotyping’ from a new perspective based on the notion of ‘brand as culture’. The role of the film industry in creating and disseminating local images is often considered to be one of the pillars of place and nation branding. Unlike critical discourses on national cinemas that conceive of cinema as an epiphenomenon of the nation, a ‘branding’ approach favours a view of cinema as showcase and a view of the nation as a malleable, ever-changing entity. Martínez posits that a record of enhanced visibility and international success of local cinemas is a common feature of those countries that successfully reposition their national brand. This has been the case with, among others, New Zealand and Spain, whose extraordinary rebranding processes since the 1980s, and the resulting benefits to their economies, and their national pride have been chronicled and projected abroad by a small but highly influential number of films and celebrities. In this article *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001, 2002, 2003) is discussed as an exercise in nation branding whose global influence can be traced in Pedro Almodóvar’s most recent films, *Volver [To Return]*, (2006) and *Los abrazos rotos [Broken Embraces]*, (2009).

Seini O’Connor, Benjamin Tilyard and Taciano Milfont explore the concept of liberation psychology in the context of comparative culture in the second essay in this section. O’Connor, Tilyard and Milfont argue that liberation psychology is a critical movement born in Latin America, inspired by liberation theology. The conditions that inspired its growth – in particular, a context of colonialism and oppression – are also present in many other countries, including Aotearoa/New Zealand. Liberation psychology offers a unifying framework for addressing entrenched power imbalances in these

various country environments and is gaining international recognition. The authors argue that psychologists in Aotearoa/New Zealand have much to gain through becoming familiar with the principles of liberation psychology. O'Connor, Tilyard and Milfont explain liberation psychology's genesis, underlying assumptions, processes and vision, and provide examples of its application around the globe. The discussion culminates in an exploration of how liberation psychology is not only congruent with kaupapa Māori practice and research, but also provides a broader framework for transforming mainstream psychological practice and research into a form more appropriate for, and representative of, disempowered communities.

Warwick Murray and John Overton consider the comparative cultures, economic structures, political dynamics and geographical outcomes of wine production and export New Zealand, Chile and Argentina. The wine sectors of these countries have divergent histories and factor endowments, yet they have come to occupy parallel competitive spaces in the contemporary global economy. This has been achieved through a process of complementary differentiation produced by investment by a mixture of local and global capital. This capital has invested in geographically distinctive varieties that have become national and regional icons. These varieties are in fact classic European products that have been adopted and adapted for the Southern hemisphere. Murray and Overton argue that, in this sense, the old has been made new, put in diversified bottles and sent back to the old core of the world market. This essay compares and contrasts the evolution of the wine sector in each country focusing on qualitative, quantitative, geographical and factor shifts created by this parallel transformation. Ultimately, the authors argue that 'co-opetition' is a useful concept to employ in order to counter the ill effects of unfettered neoliberal competition.

The final essay in this collection is provided by Tom Dwyer, whose keynote closed the original conference with a wide-ranging presentation that integrates economic and cultural concerns through exploration tracing of interactions between Brazil and New Zealand. Dwyer presents a brief history of contact from the very beginning of settlement when, between 1787 and 1856, over 800 British boats stopped in Rio de Janeiro on their way to the South Pacific, especially to Australia and New Zealand. Initial contacts waned, however, after changes in maritime technology and the building of the Panama Canal. He argues that the development of the trans-polar air-routes subsequent to the Malvinas (Falklands) war can be seen as a pivotal point for a new period of South-South relations between Brazil and New Zealand. Dwyer goes on to outline in some detail, from a theoretical position based on sociological theories of globalization, the new South-South dialogues that are being built between the two nations as the forces of globalization play their unexpected and surprising hand. In conclusion, the essay pays

particular attention to the way in which past and contemporary dynamics structure communication, interactions and perspectives for the future in the context of the challenges of an increasingly multi-polar world order.

New worlds to explore – a final word

The central purpose of this collection has been to open further avenues for the analysis of the factors underlying, and patterns resulting, from the mutual re-discovery of Latin America, Iberia and New Zealand. And, as can be seen from the varied collection of essays presented here, this is indeed a fruitful area of exploration. Methodologically, however, a note of caution needs to be sounded here. Ultimately, the epistemological purpose of uncovering similarities is in order that we can isolate disparity and then explain the geographical differentiation we observe. In other words, it is crucial to not get carried away with commonalities that can often hide more than they reveal. It is possible to be seduced by the grand narrative that waves of political and economic restructuring at the global scale condition cultural and social outcomes at lower scales in ways that constitute component parts of a world system. An equally plausible answer for any similarities that are revealed through comparative analysis or for connections that appear to suggest a deeper significance is that they result from coincidence. It is imperative, then, that work investigating the interaction explored here should, in the first instance, develop theoretical concepts for comparative study that act to underpin the varied representational and empirical cases studies.

The work contained in this collection is broad ranging, yet far from exhaustive in considering the comparative evolution of, and connections between, Latin America, Iberia and New Zealand. Despite the warning sounded above, there can be little doubt that the shift to neoliberalism, outward orientation, pursuit of regional integration, similar models of social democracy and the pursuit of historical justice in the three areas signal shared interests. Exactly what underlies these shared interests is less certain. In this sense, both theoretically and empirically, the essays presented here leave us with more questions than answers. The editors hope that the collection goes at least some way in stimulating further research that will begin to advance further into these unexplored areas.

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- 1 James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: the Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo World 1783-1939*, Oxford, 2009.
 - 2 W.E. Murray, *Geographies of Globalization*, London, 2006.
 - 3 See W.E. Murray and R.R. Rabel, *Latin America Today – Challenges, Opportunities and Trans-Pacific Perspectives*, Wellington, 2008.
 - 4 B. Lynch, 'Common Themes and Prospects for Latin America' in W.E. Murray and R.R. Rabel, *Latin America Today – Challenges, Opportunities and Transpacific Perspectives*, p.106)
 - 5 W.E Murray 'Relations between New Zealand and South America', in J. Philips and N. Roberts, *Te Ara – The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, Wellington, 2012.