



Children and Work Research Series: Session 15

Visible Subjects, Invisible Frames: Children's Rights, Work, and Violence in Lima, Peru

29 March 2023 - 10am EST / 4pm CET - Zoom. Register [here](#).

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Abstract

Based on research conducted during different periods over a ten-year span in Lima, Peru, this talk looks closely at the way two groups of child workers, ages 7-17, living in different parts of Lima are engaging in political commentary and activism—sometimes through organized political action, in other cases in simple quotidian ways—in response to different various intersecting forms of state violence.

Grounded in extensive interviews with child workers, qualitative data, visual methodology, longitudinal ethnographic experience, and detailed archival work, this talk engages a range of ways that working children frame and describe everyday state violence. For them, state violence includes not just hyper-localized experiences of the everyday, but something wrapped up in, and necessarily dependent on, trans-local patterns of both capital and environmental inequity. Their voices are influenced by their direct relationship with state power, both in terms of their spatial marginalization and also by historical and colonial factors.

The political insights about state power presented by the young people in this talk challenge key questions about children's subjectivity, and also complicate the spatial frame of state violence itself. I argue that when children who have been marginalized, especially those whose daily work and lives are most directly implicated in economic systems of inequality, aren't taken seriously as commentators of state violence, we fundamentally miss key insights about the working of state violence. In the case of Peru, such gaps in our knowledge have had as much to do with technocratic systems of understanding (modern) childhood, as it has about doctrinal and colonial conceptions of statehood and law.

Speaker Bio

Dr. Mikaela Luttrell-Rowland serves as the Senior Director of the Institute for the Gender, Law, and Transformative Peace initiative at the City University of New York School of Law. The Institute works to reimagine policymaking from the perspective of social movements, bringing those most impacted by crisis and conflict into the process of policy development. She previously served as Director of the Women, Peace and Security Program at Columbia University where



she worked closely with women changemakers from around the globe and probed new methods for listening to, and disseminating, lessons from their everyday activism.

Dr. Luttrell-Rowland holds a PhD in International Development from the University of Bath, and an MSc in Comparative Social Policy from the University of Oxford. Her research and teaching focus in the areas of economic justice, participatory practices, human rights, and social movements. Her scholarship has been supported by numerous fellowships, including the United Kingdom's British Council, Harvard Law School's Institute for Global Law and Policy, the Law and Society Association, the Harvard Kennedy School, Society of Latin American Studies, as well as a Fulbright Scholarship. Her new book [*Political Children: Violence, Labor, and Rights in Peru*](#) is out with Stanford University Press.