



The Center for Iberian & Latin American Studies, UCSD

Civility, Victimhood and Citizenship in Post-dictatorship Chile

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

**12-2 PM, Deutz Room in the Copley International
Conference Center, Institute of the Americas Complex, UCSD**

In the paper I explore civility in relation to victimhood and citizenship in post-dictatorial Chile. The analysis comes about as a dialogue between different sets of ethnographic material generated over the past 10 years, focusing on civil insecurity and crime protection among Santiago's lower and middle classes, and more recently on political action in intergenerational perspective. Juxtaposing these ethnographies I argue that since the return of democracy the hegemonic framework for civil society has been that of victimhood, and that a citizen-as-victim figure has been enforced in liaison with (global) discourses on post-conflict reconciliation combined with omnipresent attention to crime and civil security. The citizen-as-victim figure is performed in extraordinary settings and everyday relations as an expression of decent and civilized behavior opposed to political radicalism and violence belonging to past and the criminal figure of the present time. I sustain that these languages of civility and victimhood do not only structure understandings of democratic citizenship but also mold intersubjectivity and even intimate relations. Finally, I argue that while these performances of civility might have made post-dictatorship coexistence among a fraught society tolerable for the past 20 years, they have also doomed alternative citizen figures and political projects as dangerously uncivil and hence unviable.



Helene Risor received her Ph.D. in Social Anthropology at the University of Copenhagen. She is an Assistant Professor and Researcher at the Interdisciplinary Research Center for Indigenous and Intercultural Studies (ICIIS) at the Anthropology Program at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and Post Doc Fellow at the Department of Anthropology at Copenhagen University. Her research focuses on political subjectivity and urban anthropology, in particular issues of civil in/security, violence and post conflict, citizenship, generational politics and migration. Her regional specialization is on Latin America, and she has done extensive fieldwork in Bolivia and Chile.

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