

## [ANN: Artifacts and Guerrilla Warfare in 20th Century Latin America - Max Planck Institute for the History of Science's Colloquium](#)

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### **Artifacts, Actions, Knowledge and Irregular Warfare in Latin America**

[ALEXIS DE GREIFF A. \(NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBIA/MPIWG\)](#)

After the Cuban Revolution of 1959, a myriad of insurgent movements arose in Latin America. The Colombian internal war, between Marxist guerrillas and the State, has been the longest in the Americas. The Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) was the oldest communist guerrilla in the continent and, indeed, the world. Created in 1965, it signed a Peace Agreement with the Colombian government in 2016. It was originally a self-defense (auto-defensa) movement organised by peasants that reclaimed a land reform and had to confront the Army and paramilitary groups. Since 1982, when the FARC decided to take the power at a national scale, its actions and number of combatants increased exponentially, arriving to have more than 17.000 fighters, four blocks constituted by fronts, each of about 100 fighters. From a small guerrilla it became a semi-professional army. Hence, the group's logistics became a challenge that forced them to produce a complex infrastructure, governed by a bureaucratic apparatus. The FARC developed several techniques and artifacts for surviving, living, attacking and defending in a range of extreme conditions. In this talk I propose an analytic framework to study guerrilla's epistemes and actions. I illustrate it with the problem of cooking in clandestinely, under the threat of aerial attacks, for military companies that could reach 200 combatants. It also opens a door to a global history of insurgency, for it allows us to investigate empirically processes of technology transfers of "low technologies" and local innovations. Indeed, the case I discuss here is the so-called "Vietnamese stove," invented in 1951-52 by Hoàng Cầm, a Viet-Minh's cook, during the war against the French. In the 1990s it appeared in the Colombian jungles but with a few changes introduced by peasant women that had an ancestral knowledge of cooking with earth ovens and stones. It proved to be an efficient artifact that was possible thanks to the intertwining of politics/policies, institutions/organisations and artisanal knowledge developed by local guerrillas, who learned about it through an international network that involved not only Vietnam, but Chile, Cuba, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.

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For online participation, please register at [mpiwg\\_ic@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de](mailto:mpiwg_ic@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de) and we will send you the updated zoom link for the event.

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