InterAmerican Postgraduate Forum: Politics of Entanglement in the Americas

The Center for InterAmerican Studies of Bielefeld University invites scholars to participate in the 7th International Postgraduate Forum that takes place at Bielefeld University from June 25 - 27, 2015.

This three-day conference addresses an international community of postgraduate and early-career researchers with perspectives from across the humanities and the social sciences. The conference is integral part of the project “The Americas as Space of Entanglement”, funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). We welcome paper proposals that address the overarching theme of the conference: Politics of Entanglement in the Americas. Thereby we want to explore entanglements in their diachronic and/or synchronic dimensions and to contribute to a relational and historically grounded thinking of hemispheric Area Studies in a global context.

Description:

The Americas manifest a long history of (often enforced) entanglements that materialized – amongst others – in the transatlantic slave trade, plantation slavery, migration, uneven economic networks, and political institutions of colonialist origin. In the Americas, this diachronic dimension is profoundly infused with the persistent inequalities shaped by coloniality. Indigenous movements in the Andean region frame their demands in a narration of anti-colonial resistance since times of conquest that opens perspectives towards new political projects as it is expressed in the debate on the alternative cosmovision of *Buen Vivir*. African American movements like the Civil Rights movement and the Black Power movement created inter-American networks in order to encourage and enforce historically informed race consciousness in politics. The reference to history in recent projects regarding the re-invention of the social is exemplarily displayed by politicians who rely on political icons: Rafael Correa on Eloy Alfaro, Obama on Abraham Lincoln, Chávez on Bolívar, and Daniel Ortega on Sandino. This also finds its expression in cultural productions such as film, museum, art, and music. Nevertheless, the use of history is by no means limited to supposed progressive politicians. Even conservative movements, such as the Tea Party or regional movements in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, make use of history to justify their demands. We intend to explore the ways diverse political actors narrate their stories of the past and how these narrations changed over time in order to construct their own present identities and to create political imaginaries that shape their political projects and create geopolitical imaginaries.

Entanglements also matter in the synchronic, present political, cultural, economic and social constellations. The recent Chilean students protest movement created via cultural flows through new social media a veritable counter-public, while Obama’s election campaign highlighted the intersection of politics, economics, culture, and media. In what ways can we analyze the entanglements and their changes in the course of time that link actors from different social and cultural fields?

Most protest movements cannot be understood without a closer look at their social and spatial networks. Protests for the defense of livelihoods against economic mega-projects – such as the
Yasuní-oil-pipeline in Ecuador or the Xingu-dam in Brazil – emerge from specific environments and are characterized by alliances of a broad array of different actors across national state’s borders, while transnational corporations are often framed as common adversaries. New dimensions of transnational and translocal entanglement are expressed in the alter-globalization movement and hemispheric indigenous networks that often react to economic entanglements such as Free Trade Agreements, as well in early 20th century Pan-American movements. How can the multi-layered spatial dimension of entanglement be understood, historicized and conceptualized?

Trying to overcome *national* limitations of mobilization efforts, socio-cultural entanglements also matter in the local sphere. Civic movements against violence in Mexico and Colombia are increasingly shaped by their multi-class and multi-ethnic composition, while even “old” single issue movements – such as feminist, workers or indigenous movements – are analyzed in terms of the intersectionality of multiple forms of oppression. Chicano/a activists highlight the importance of ethnicity, race, citizenship, gender, and class – and racism, sexism, homophobia, immigration, and border regimes, respectively. In which ways can we conceptualize and also study changes these articulations of different social and cultural patterns and their changes in the course of time?

**Basic Information:**

With the transdisciplinary approach - that characterizes the CIAS - we welcome post-graduate and early career contributions from the fields of cultural, literary, and media studies; history and sociology; postcolonial and global studies, social anthropology, geography, and political sciences that have a focus on the Americas. We are especially interested in papers that alongside with an empirical case-study provide conceptual reflections on entanglement in the Americas.

Presentations of 20 minutes can be held in English or Spanish.

The Center for InterAmerican Studies invites all interested doctoral students and early-career researchers to submit abstracts in English or Spanish, which should not exceed 500 words, as well as a brief CV. The deadline for paper proposals is **February 15, 2015**. A limited number of partial travel grants is available.

Please submit your proposals to: cias@uni-bielefeld.de

Organizer: Prof. Dr. Olaf Kaltmeier

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