Social Production of the Environment

The problematic relations and links between the environment and social development represent one of the most pressing problems in the Americas. Therefore, the focus of this group lies on the transnational processes of environmental appropriation and transformation as well as on the repercussions of natural disasters and the environment on the entangled Americas. The individual projects explore societal perceptions of the relationship between man and nature as well as natural disasters, conflicts over the proliferation of plants and animals within the entangled space of the Americas and how these issues are evaluated from social, political, legal and biological perspectives.

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Key Topics Series

In order to synthesize the work of all three research groups, “The Americas as Space of Entanglements“ will publish the Key Topics Series “Rethinking the Americas”, which involves, in addition to the coordinators of the research project, nationally and internationally renowned scholars as co-editors and authors.

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http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/cias/entangled_americas/
Overview

The 3500-km-long border between the United States and Mexico is a monumental symbol of the paradoxical entanglement of two opposing phenomena. On the one hand, the ongoing process of border militarization represents an attempt, on both sides, to achieve territorial isolation. On the other hand, both the north and the south are growing ever closer in this region through the continuous flow of people, goods, information and media.

Bearing in mind these mutual and interconnected processes of entanglement, "The Americas as Space of Entanglements" sees the American continents as a spatially transversal, relational and progressive space. The project assumes that the various dynamics of interdependence come with overlapping, conflictual and divergent consequences for society, culture, politics and the environment that strongly shape the Americas in the process of transnationalization.

This conceptualization of the Americas results in a set of related questions: How do hemispheric spaces of entanglements play a role within transversal (translocal, transnational and transregional) dynamics? Furthermore, how are these entangled spaces increasingly becoming a central framework for sociocultural, economic, political and environmental action within the Americas?

In order to address these questions in depth, the overall project is divided into three main lines of research: 'Transnational Flows', 'Geopolitical Imaginaries' and 'Societal Production of the Environment'. Each working group, under the guidance of one post-doctoral researcher, consists of several individual research projects. These projects are, in turn, tightly integrated within the overall project through extensive transdisciplinary dialogue, i.e. regular workshops about the development and communication of terminologies, methodologies and theories relevant to the concept of the entangled Americas.

Transnational Flows

The research group entitled "Transnational Flows" focuses on hemispheric encounter scenarios and exchange processes and particularly highlights issues within the media and cultural sphere. Against the background of the historic geopolitical interconnectedness of the Americas, this project line examines trans-American mobility within the changed dynamics of a neoliberal state of crisis, and accelerating transnational processes of migration, production and communication.

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Geopolitical Imaginaries

"Geopolitical Imaginaries" are of particular importance in historical periods in which territorial concepts are challenged, replaced or superimposed with the new. Of particular interest are the community-building effects of geopolitical imaginaries as well as their strategic use in political disputes surrounding the shaping of the future of the Americas. Taking the example of urban violence, national borders and multinational spaces, these researchers examine how trans-border or fluctuating concepts of space are made politically manageable, economically profitable and are culturally processed using geopolitical imaginaries.

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