

Workshop

The Affective Creation of Community: Home-Making Practices between Mexico, Peru and the USA

Friday, November 11, 2016, 10am – 6:30pm

Venue: Lateinamerika-Institut, Freie Universität Berlin, Rüdeshheimer Str. 54-56, 14197 Berlin, Room 201

Migrants originating from rural regions of Mexico and Peru – in particular speakers of indigenous languages such as Mixe, Mixteco, Zapoteco and Quechua – are actors in motion who are partially immobilized by the border regime installed by nation states such as the USA. Despite this difficult situation, in many cases they foster a close relationship to their respective villages of origin. Transnational communities have been created that transcend the international border and include the satellite communities that have emerged in California and other parts of the USA. Actors have redefined the ‘place to which they belong’ (“home” or “*comunidad*”) through various home-making practices, which include audiovisual media practices – the creative processes of production, circulation and consumption of traditional media such as dances, music and fiestas, as well as their re-elaboration through emerging audiovisual media such as video, social media and the Internet. Such media practices are used, among others, by migrants and members of indigenous groups who invest affective work to recreate and redefine “home” in and from different places when they cope with highly restrictive immigration policies. Emotions such as both nostalgia and the love for the hometown, as well as pride in what has been achieved in the new place of residence, are important aspects of these transnational relationships. At the same time, discrimination and estrangement influence community building through their affective dimensions as well as their spaces of belonging and non-belonging. This workshop brings together scholars from the Americas and Europe who have analyzed home-making practices between Mexico, Peru and the USA. They thus highlight migrant strategies to affectively create “homes away from home”, a central research topic of the Collaborative Research Center “Affective Societies. Dynamics of Social Coexistence in Mobile Worlds”.

9:45 – 10:15 Welcome and coffee

10:15 – 11:45 Key note and discussion: Prof. Dr. Ulla Berg, Rutgers University New Jersey
Affective Economies of Migration in the Americas

11:45 – 12:15 Coffee Break

12:15 – 13:00 Project and book presentation: Prof. Dr. Ingrid Kummels and Thomas John, M.A., Freie Universität Berlin
The Affective Creation of ‘Home’: Patron Saint Fiesta Videos in the Transnational Context of Mexico/USA

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch

14:30 – 15:15 Prof. Dr. Adriana Cruz-Manjarrez, Universidad de Colima

Transnational Migration, Emotions and Identity in a Oaxacan Zapotec Community

15:15 – 16:00 Prof. Dr. Julia Pauli, Universität Hamburg
Landscapes of Belonging. Building and Dwelling in a Transnational Mexican Community

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee Break

16:30 – 17:15 Prof. Dr. Gisela Cánepa, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú
#NiUnaMenos by Peruvian Migrants in the USA: Indignation and Solidarity as Key Elements of New Forms of Public Action and Senses of Belonging

17:15 – 18:00 Prof. Dr. Freya Schiwy, University of California Riverside
Decolonization and the Politics of Affect: Some Notes on Video Activism and Social Uprising in Mexico

18:00 – 18:30 Final Discussion Round

18:30 – open end: Chilling out at the After-workshop Dinner

Discussants of the contributions: Prof. Dr. Ingrid Kummels, Thomas John, M.A., Prof. Dr. Stephanie Schütze

Abstracts

Prof. Dr. **Ulla Berg**, Rutgers University New Jersey
Affective Economies of Migration in the Americas

In recent years, scholars have increasingly used the concept of affect to critique the long-held assumption that capital accumulation and economic projects inherently conflict with the intimate, affective realm of human experience, an assumption that produced inadequate distinctions between private and public, “inner worlds” and social contexts, and subjectivity and political economy. While some effort has been made to situate affect in structures and relations of power – including its entanglements with normativity, inequality, and violence – contemporary studies of affect have nevertheless developed rather independently of the scholarship on migration and mobility in the Americas. This talk put these two rather separate bodies of scholarship into conversation by exploring what I term “affective economies of migration.” Drawing on fieldwork materials from Peru and among Latin American migrants in the United States, I examine the affective and moral economy that shapes migrants’ gendered and racial social positioning within the context of transnational families, communities, and state institutions. I focus both on the ongoing strivings of migrants abroad to remain emotionally connected and relevant in the everyday lives of their families back home as well as on the ways in which they are produced affectively through everyday practices and in their interactions with a range of institutions.

Prof. Dr. **Ingrid Kummels** and **Thomas John**, M.A., Freie Universität Berlin
The Affective Creation of ‘Home’: Patron Saint Fiesta Videos in the Transnational Context of Mexico/USA – Project and book presentation

Taking a visual anthropology perspective, the subproject explores how transnational belonging is affectively produced and negotiated both in and through the medium of patron

saint fiesta videos. These videos that document the fiesta in honour of the patron saint in the Mexican village of origin are a key component of practices instituted by actors in Mexico and the USA for the purpose of cross-border 'home'-making. The process involves people in the rural areas of Mexico, on the one hand, and migrant workers, on the other, some of whom have lived for decades in urban satellite communities in the USA. In order to analyse the nature of this transnational sense of community and how it is brought about, the subproject explores ethnographically the media practices involved in patron saint fiesta videos and their Internet representation. It takes a close look at how these video films are circulated and restyled via social media. It argues that people in Mexico and the USA consciously design the production, commercialization, circulation and consumption of fiesta representations to achieve the affective production and experience of belonging to a multi-layered transnational community. In a first publication scholarship on transnational migration, the use of audiovisual media and its affective dimensions between Mexico, Peru and the USA have been united. The volume on "*La producción afectiva de comunidad: los medios audiovisuales en el contexto transnacional México-EE.UU.*" is in Spanish as to make it available to those involved as research subjects.

Prof. Dr. **Adriana Cruz-Manjarrez**, Universidad de Colima

Transnational Migration, Emotions and Identity in a Oaxacan Zapotec Community

After sixty years of international migration from Oaxaca to California, Yalálag Zapotecs have developed a sense of a fragmented experience of community and identity. In this paper, I discuss how transnational settings and dynamics of migration affect and shape the construction of ethnic and racial identity among Yalálag Zapotec immigrants. Also, I analyze how Zapotec non-immigrants have to come to see Zapotec immigrants after immigration in the United States and why non-immigrants have made returning and visiting migrants the subject of chusca dances in religious fiestas. This paper pays particular attention to the sentiments and emotions of immigrants, non-immigrants, and their children who are dealing with the fast changes and increasing differences in their understandings and meanings of community, identity, and culture.

Prof. Dr. **Julia Pauli**, Universität Hamburg

Landscapes of Belonging. Building and Dwelling in a Transnational Mexican Community

All over Mexico, landscapes have been transformed through migration-related house construction. When I started my fieldwork in the village of Pueblo Nuevo, Estado de México, in 1995, international labor migration from the area and to the USA had just commenced. *Casas de sueños* (Fletcher 1999), dream houses, built with remittances were still rare. Gossip and envy surrounded these houses. By the beginning of the new millennium, migration to the U.S. had tremendously increased. Throughout the first decade of the 2000s the village experienced a boom in migration-financed house construction. During these years, building belonging and keeping attachment through houses turned into a vital social practice to muster the challenges of long-term absenteeism of migrants. The village's borders were extended by new houses and the rural landscape became dotted with colorful and creative dwelling projects in all states of completion. Yet when I returned to Pueblo Nuevo in 2010 and 2013,

more and more unfinished *casas de sueños* were in gradual decay or were being used for something else, e.g. goats' stable. In my presentation I want to unpack these stages of migratory experiences and affective production of belonging inscribed into landscape through housing. I will especially focus on the social dynamics and tensions underlying and being expressed through these transformations of landscape.

Prof. Dr. **Gisela Cánepa**, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú

#NiUnaMenos by Peruvian Migrants in the USA: Indignation and Solidarity as Key Elements of New Forms of Public Action and Senses of Belonging

In the last decade economic, social and political processes have changed previous physiognomies of cities, narratives on national identity, aspirations as a political community, as well as the perception of Peruvians about themselves. These changes have also affected the Peruvian migrants abroad regarding their feelings, imagination and ways of relating to Perú. The religious *fiestas* and the celebrations of national holidays have been until recently the field of public action where Peruvians living abroad revived their identities of origin, restored their ties with Peru at different levels (local, regional or national), while they created communities and represented themselves in their new places of residence. Although these repertoires and expressive contexts remain in force, in recent years new repertoires and new scenes for public action emerged in Peru, which have been embraced by migrants abroad. So, new narratives and models of citizenship are being promoted either by the various campaigns of *Marca Peru*, or by different social movements and their claims for citizens' rights and justice. Due to the implementation of marketing strategies on the one hand, and the enactment of political performances on the other, public action is becoming a highly emotional and theatrical experience. An expression of this was the demonstration against gender violence *#NiUnaMenos* held in Lima on August 13 of this year, which was replicated in other cities of Peru and abroad. In order to inquire about these new repertoires and scenes of public action and how they operate in terms of affective creation of community and home, I propose to explore *#NiUnaMenos* organized by Peruvian residents in cities such as Miami, Washington and NY. Considering the particularity of *#NiUnaMenos*, it further offers the possibility to problematize on indignation and solidarity, as well as on performativity, both on the street and

Prof. Dr. **Freya Schiwy**, University of California Riverside

Decolonization and the Politics of Affect: Some Notes on Video Activism and Social Uprising in Mexico

In this paper I examine the creation of affect in a series of collaboratively produced and transnationally distributed activist videos from Oaxaca and Chiapas that sought to document, intervene, and amplify the social uprising of Oaxaca in 2006 and the Zapatista's Other Campaign in 2005/2006. I argue that many of these videos produce a sense of optimism – affect understood as pure potential (Massumi) or joy (Hardt) – to the idea of the political as a disruption of the status quo by a formerly unrecognizable social actor (Rancière). However, I suggest that these films do not simply celebrate a momentary irruption but also reference political memories, including the 1960s revolutionary movements and a much older, persistent and patient decolonial struggle that cannot feed on rage alone.