

Transnational Americas: Difference, Belonging, Identitarian Spaces

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National borders and transnational relations have long been of central importance to the Americas. From Simón Bolívar's idea of a "gran patria" to Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy" and the work of the Organization of American States there is a long history of both theoretical and practical approaches to fostering transnational relationships and forms of cooperation. However, U.S. exceptionalism/imperialism and isolationist policies throughout the Western Hemisphere have often overshadowed inter-American relations and prevented approaches beyond dichotomies. In recent decades, massive migration movements, the transnational orientation of media along with the rise of New Media and the onset of the Information Age, an inter-American culture industry, the transnationalization of business and economy, trans-border consumer culture, cosmopolitan writers, artists and performers, governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as transnational alliances like those of the New Indigenous Left have promoted the crossing of multiple borders in the Americas. Yet localist and regionalist tendencies, separatist movements, or gated communities uphold the primacy of smaller entities.

Transnational interconnections are simultaneously being intensified and hampered; they are a highly complex (and a highly politicized) matter. In order to explore the intricate dynamics of transnationalism in the Americas, Border and Transborder Studies, Area Studies, Postcolonial Studies, Popular Culture Studies, Urban Studies, Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science and numerous other academic disciplines have joined literary, cultural and media studies in initiating a lively and fruitful interdisciplinary dialogue on questions of difference, belonging, and identitarian spaces. Those are central to analyzing the impact of transnational developments on individual, communal, and national identities.

With a focus on past and present transnational developments in the Americas, the conference seeks to conceive of the New World beyond the scope of nation states—relationally and transnationally. Considering shared experiences and issues (e.g. indigenous heritage, Black Atlantic, condition of coloniality, history of inequalities, multicultural societies, transnational media and economies, glocal approaches etc.) it seems imperative to think in **inter-American** terms. With this goal in mind, the conference will address the following issues:

ACADEMIC APPROACHES:

- theories of national, cultural, regional, communal, individual identity and belonging
- methodologies for analyzing transnationalism (e.g. the "reciprocal method")
- identity politics (Bourdieu, Wacquant etc.)
- Inter-American Studies as comparative Social/Area/Cultural/Literary/Media Studies
- Ethnic Studies and ethnic identity in the context of transnationalism

CONTEXTS AND BACKGROUNDS:

- policies and practices of national and cultural identity and diversity (incl. exceptionalism)
- belonging and citizenship
- the Political Left in Latin America as opportunity or peril
- activities and goals of social movements in favor of or opposed to transnationalism
- human rights in the transnational Americas
- migration
- transnational flows of capital, goods, and labor
- the economic and social impact of transnationalism
- transnational crime, narco-traffic
- changing urban spaces: ghettoization, gated communities, transborder metropolitan areas
- identitarian spaces: diasporic communities, long-distance nationalism, enclaves
- the Caribbean as a special case/laboratory of transnationalism
- political, economic, social, cultural approaches to internal and national borders
- obstacles to inter-American cooperation

NEGOTIATIONS:

- negotiations of national (and other) identities in literature, music, the arts, performance
- the geopolitics of knowledge; cultural imperialism; brain drain
- transnational media (policies), New Media
- lifestyles, sexuality, and everyday practices in the context of transnationalism
- transborder feminism
- the continuing impact of coloniality; the postcolonial condition
- processes of creolization, hybridization, mestizaje

Abstracts for 30-minute papers (in English or in Spanish) or proposals for two-hour panels (usually with three papers per panel, possibly also with a respondent) should be sent to XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX by April 30, 2010. For more information and updates please check the Association's website at www.interamericanstudies.net, which should go online in January 2010.

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