



*Wissensakteure und Grenzwissen zwischen Lateinamerika und Europa um 1900.*  
Iberoamerikanisches Institut (IAI), Berlin; University of Erfurt, 29.11.2013-30.11.2013.

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Published on H-Soz-u-Kult (March, 2014)

## Wissensakteure und Grenzwissen zwischen Lateinamerika und Europa um 1900

This workshop, jointly organised by the Iberoamerikanisches Institut Berlin (IAI) and the University of Erfurt, testified to the traction transcultural and transnational approaches have gained in historical sciences: almost all papers were interested in the spaces, places and actors in-between Latin America and Europe, critically engaging older transatlantic research paradigms. Additionally, the workshop showed a self-conscious disciplinary disposition by bringing together a wide variety of German and international scholars from different disciplines to discuss how Germans generated, transmitted, received, revived, brokered, rejected or advanced knowledge(s) in and about South America and how these epistemological enterprises changed knowledge systems in Europe (or at least in Germany).

IRIS SCHRÄDER and NILS GÄTTLER (both Erfurt) opened the first panel on acquisition and loss of knowledge with a presentation on the cartographic archive of the German publishing house Perthes. Since the 1850s, Perthes was an important global player in the economic sphere interwoven with the academic genesis of knowledge. Imbued with the imperial logics of geographical knowledge (brandishing the slogan "Knowledge is power; geographical knowledge is world power"), Perthes representatives regarded Latin America as an important market, thus serving as an intermediary for elites that aimed at better knowing (and thus controlling) their territories and populations. Perthes' presence at scientific fairs and a multilingual portfolio of maps transformed the publishing house into a go-between for political elites and scientific actors. Schröder and Gättler

also highlighted the "collective empiricism" of many maps, which were often elaborated by teams of scientists in a display of genuine interdisciplinarity.

WOLFGANG STRUCK (Erfurt) investigated the interstices between ecology and the imperial vision of the German entomologist Arnold Schultze, by examining a recently re-discovered archive on butterflies originally collected by Schultze. During his time in Colombia in the 1920s, Schultze's conservative (in the double sense of the word) concern for nature led him to collect butterflies, thus ironically participating in the destruction of the very natural wonders he wanted to preserve. Wrapped in papers and stored in his mailed luggage, the butterfly collection remained all that was left of Schultze's vast archives when the ship that should have brought them to Europe was sunk at the beginning of WWII. Stored away in a Berlin museum and re-encountered in 2006, the collection formed the base for a recent book – an "ecological thriller" – by two German authors Hanna Zeckau / Hanns Zischler, *Der Schmetterlingskoffer. Die tropischen Expeditionen von Arnold Schultze*, Berlin 2010. , a process which underlined the liminality of scientific artefacts and knowledge(s) within changing contextualizations, and which Struck linked with the "multi-foldedness" of the butterflies' position – in their distinct space within paper, boxes, a trunk and a museum – as a metaphor for scientific explorations.

MICHAEL KRAUS (Bonn) discussed the linear, Enlightenment-based conception of time and development (famously criticised by Johannes Fabian) which

many ethnologists subscribed to in their encounters with native people, whom they believed to be static entities, unable to change. Yet, around 1900 the discipline of ethnology was undergoing profound changes: While there still existed many 'blank spots' on European maps of Latin America, many ethnologists returned to already visited areas to immerse themselves in longer field studies. By returning, these ethnologists noticed that their research objects did indeed change, thus leading to first sets of empirical data that countered the mainstream ethnological theories, foreshadowing larger changes in the discipline from the 1940s onwards, when by and large conceptions of coevalness became acceptable.

The paper by SEBASTIAN DORSCH (Erfurt) highlighted the intimate entanglements in the transatlantic networks of knowledge production. Dorsch examined the famous German cartographer Heinrich 'Henry' Lange, who wanted to popularise Brazil in Europe. Being a typical 'armchair traveller', Lange resorted to maps elaborated by U.S.-Brazilian geologist Orville Derby, and by counterposing several maps (originals by Derby and modified versions by Lange), Dorsch showed how the notion of authorship became increasingly complicated by acts of borrowing and translation. He also underlined the peculiar geography of power in the networks of knowledge production and acquisition, with the German city of Gotha (as the home of the influential journal *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen*) and the Sao Paulo-based *Comiss o Geogr fica e Geol gica* constituting two nodes in a matrix otherwise dominated by imperial centres like Paris.

SANDRA CARRERAS (Berlin) commenced the panel on knowledge transfers and liminal experiences. Her paper examined the self-image and identifications of German scientists (ethnologists, botanists, geographers) in Argentina between the 1860s and 1900. Their proper 'Germanness' was often regarded as a liminal experience by these men (all of Carreras's examples were male), although they attempted to tone down national differences by relying on professional networks to gain access to institutional security. To foster their social standing, they often adopted the role of public intellectuals that mixed scientific with economic entrepreneurship. The differences in social stratification and discussions about their nationality (for example amidst their exclusion from National Conventions of Geographers, where only Argentinian-born scholars were officially invited) nevertheless punctuated their ambivalent double role as German citizens and Argentinian officials. In examining personal correspondences of several Germans in Ar-

gentina, Carreras also presented descriptions of the male body as liminal, overworked in bouts of academic activity to recreate the 'heroic' role of scientists in the field.

CRISTINA ALARC N (Berlin) discussed the reception of Prussian social reform models in Chile in the late 19th century. Alarc n showed how in Chilean discussions the abstract, un-reflected notion of a modern and thus 'civilised' Prussia served as a blueprint for reforming higher education, even sipping into the symbolic and rhetorical textures of these reforms by denominating them *reformas alemanas*. This resulted in the hiring of dozens of young German scholars into Chilean polytechnical institutes and high schools. Yet, the Germans saw themselves as academic elite, not mere teachers, and were dissatisfied that the Humboldtian ideal (with a shared interest in research and education) was never fulfilled in their host country. The reforms thus encountered resistance from the very subjects hired to carry them out.

The following panel was dedicated to the papers of the geographer Heinz Steffen, which are available at the IAI and are being digitalised at the moment. GREGOR WOLFF and THOMAS GERDES (both Berlin) presented the corpus, and Gerdes discussed Steffen's involvement in a border dispute between Chile and Argentina. Steffen, an  migr  to Chile, worked at a scientific committee which attempted to establish arguments in favour of Chile, while another committee argued to apply a different geological approach to give the disputed territory to Argentina. A British group of scientists asked to settle the dispute finally opted for neither geological theory. Gerdes presented the different roles scientific knowledge played in the conflict: It first opened the dispute, as both Chile and Argentina initially learned about the territory and its inherent economic possibilities via scientific explorations; afterwards scientists attempted to provide a solution, but ultimately failed as no consensus on methodology could be established. The heated debate between Steffen and other geographers showed the porous limits between academic discussions and polemics, in which foreign-born scientists often felt the urge to steadfastly defend their adopted country's national interests.

On Friday evening WOLF-DIETRICH SAHR (Curitiba, Brazil) presented a paper on the construction of 'ethnic landscapes' by German geographers in South Brazil. Often following infrastructure built by German settlers in the region (towns, roads, bridges etc.), German geographers interlinked their research perspectives and modes of writing with this particular, highly eth-

nicised social background, thus converting geographical into social landscapes in their research. Using Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between molecular and molar types of organising knowledge, Sahr showed how Southern Brazil, its inhabitants and their interconnected social structures were perceived as molecular, that is fixed entities, while the scientists' own actions (and resulting texts) were rendered in terms of 'molarity', a free floating changeability. The complex social interactions transformed the (geographical) texture of Southern Brazil into (social) texts in the works of German geographers, a process 'as Sahr self-consciously underlined' still potent in the acquisition and generation of knowledge today.

The sessions on Saturday were opened by CHRISTINE HUNEFELDT (San Diego) who asked if in spite of all the research Latin America could not be seen as a 'blank spot' on the map of transatlantic knowledge genesis. Developing her argument from an examination of maps and geographical reports in popular, non-expert periodicals from the 19th and early 20th century like the *Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Das Ausland*, Hunefeldt traced several geographical and epistemological shifts in European scientists' interest in South America, which resulted in a highly unequal distribution of research resources. Myriad (often local) factors played into the decision to which destination an expedition would be sent or where it should head next, thus problematizing the concept of European actors as the leading agents in knowledge acquisition and transfers. Hunefeldt argued that national foci still hamper investigations into the fundamentally transnational and transcultural nature of most expeditions in Latin America 'another 'blank spot' on the epistemological map of the region.

PAUL HEMPEL (Munich) turned towards the material objects often pilfered by anthropologists in the field. Hempel discussed the use of crania, drawings and, later on, of photography in different scientific contexts. While the removal of human remains from cemeteries underlines the responsibility of scientists in crossing moral borders, the increase in this ethically questionable practice from the 1850s onwards eventually provided the critical amount of 'research objects' to question racial stereotypes. Hempel highlighted the importance of growing professionalism and, especially, the impact of changing technology on the discipline: With the advent of photography it was possible to circumvent hand-made drawings which often remodelled scenes for their effect on the viewer. This included, in Hempel's examples, the integration or extinction of the scientist's persona, or the ethnicisation of indigenous people by removing 'European-

style' clothing. Such practices have just begun to exert critical investigation in a field that still grapples with the primacy of its visual material for the production of knowledge.

The workshop was concluded by a round table discussion on the possibilities and challenges of working with geographic collections and personal archives. Representatives from different archives and institutes made clear that digitalisation and networking constitute important tools to position German archives within the paradigm of a web-based 'science 2.0', and that librarians have to embrace their role as brokers in the emerging new networks of knowledge, underlining their importance vis-à-vis dominating institutional actors like universities.

In general, the papers showed a tilt towards the 'ABC countries' (Argentina, Brazil and Chile), and while this allowed for very enriching discussions between the participants, it also accentuated the vantage points and power dynamics of the research community.

The focus on actors that were affiliated with universities, high schools, museums, scientific societies or other state(-sponsored) institutions also guided the workshop's conceptions of knowledge, prioritising disciplinary frameworks for what counts as knowledge over knowledge systems in everyday social practices or deviant approaches that radically reject(ed) institutional frameworks.

While Bruno Latour's actor-network-theory, Deleuze and Guattari's modular/molecular distinction and different strands of centre-periphery-models were repeatedly invoked, the 'liminal/border knowledge' of the workshop's title was only sparingly used as a theoretical tool. Transcending the geographical implications of the term seemed to loosen its analytical rigour too much.

Combining research papers with discussions on the archives often serving as sources for research proved very effective to highlight the materiality of most historical investigations. The loss of artefacts and the lacunae of changing scientific models served as potent reminders for the potential loss and implicit fugitivity of any set of knowledge.

During the various, very lively rounds of discussion some elements for an entangled history of the scientific communities between Latin America and Europe could be carved out: the influence of technological innovations in the process of knowledge acquisition, the crucial position of visual material for the discipline (maps, photos, il-

lustrations), the intersection between knowledge production and economic interests (of private companies and individuals, nation states, editorials or local political leaders), and – finally – the importance to conceptualise the scientists and the knowledge generated by them within multifocal, transcultural networks of actors and knowledge systems.

### Conference Overview:

*Wissen sammeln – Wissen verlieren*

Moderation: Peter Birle (Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut)

Iris Schr der / Nils G ttler (Universit t Erfurt), Sammeln, Ordnen, Verkaufen. Die Sammlung Perthes in globalgeschichtlicher Perspektive

Wolfgang Struck (Universit t Erfurt), Natur und Imperialismus. Hanna Zeckaus und Hanns Zischlers Wiederentdeckung eines  kologischen Thrillers

*Atlantische Wissensnetzwerke und geographische Wissensakteure*

Moderation: Gregor Wolff (Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut)

Michael Kraus (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universit t Bonn), Vorw rts im Raum und r ckw rts in der Zeit? Grenzverlagerungen und Wissenskonstruktionen deutscher Ethnologen bei der Erforschung des s damerikanischen Tieflandes um 1900

Sebastian Dorsch (Universit t Erfurt), Orville Derby, Henry Lange, das Instituto Hist rico e Geogr fico und die Comiss o Geogr fica e Geol gica de S o Paulo im atlantischen Wissensnetzwerk

*Wissenstransfers und Grenzerfahrungen: Deutsche Wissenschaftler in S damerika in den Jahrzehnten um 1900*

Moderation: Pablo Buchbinder (Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, Argentinien)

Sandra Carreras (Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut), Grenzerfahrungen deutscher Akademiker in Argentinien

Cristina Alarc n (Humboldt-Universit t zu Berlin), Die Lehrerausbildung im Fach Geographie am Instituto Pedag gico (1889–1920)

Gregor Wolff / Thomas Gerdes (Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut), Projektvorstellung: Die Erschlie ung des Nachlasses Hans Steffen (1865–1936) im IAI

Thomas Gerdes (Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut), –Ein ungew hnlicher Fall wissenschaftlicher und litterarischer Freibeuterei–. Hans Steffen, der chilenisch-argentinische Grenzstreit und der Plagiatsfall Kr ger

Wolf-Dietrich Sahr (Universidade Federal do Paran , Curitiba, Brasilien), Geographen im Br ckenland der Fremde. Ein Gang auf der Grenze zwischen Lebenswelt und Wissenswelt in S dbrasilien

Einw hrung: Sandra Carreras (Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut)

*Brasilienforscher und ihre Einbindung in die atlantischen Wissensnetzwerke*

Moderation: Georg Fischer (Lateinamerika-Institut, Freie Universit t Berlin)

Christine Hunefeldt (University of California, San Diego, USA), Lateinamerika als –wei er Fleck– im atlantischen Wissensnetzwerk?

Paul Hempel (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universit t M nchen), Anthropologische Grenzgebiete. Paul Ehrenreichs Forschungsreise zu den Botocudos am Rio Doce 1884/85

*Table ronde und Abschlussdiskussion: Forschung zu/mit geographischen Sammlungen und Nachlassen mit Lateinamerika-Bezug*

Heinz-Peter Brogiato (Leibniz Institut f r L nderkunde, Leipzig)

Wolfgang Crom (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin)

Iris Schr der (Universit t Erfurt)

Gregor Wolff (Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut)

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

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**Citation:** Andreas Beer. Review of , *Wissensakteure und Grenzwissen zwischen Lateinamerika und Europa um 1900*. H-Soz-u-Kult, H-Net Reviews. March, 2014.

**URL:** <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=41349>

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