

Call for Papers: Special Forum “American Territorialities”

This special forum of the *Journal for Transnational American Studies* is situated in the context of contemporary critical discussions of the nation-state, transnationalism, and globalization, but insists on a longer historical perspective and places its focus specifically on the United States. It is setting out to explore the historical and contemporary relationship between sovereignty, territoriality, and jurisdiction in the context of US-American colonial/imperial processes. Placing conceptions of territoriality at the center of analysis, the special forum takes as its starting point the definition of territoriality as “spatially defined political rule” (Miles Kahler and Barbara Walter, “Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization” 5).

As “territorial regimes,” modern nation-states have been described as enforcing the dual principles of “border limitation” and “jurisdictional congruence” (Kahler and Walter 5). Critics have argued that processes of globalization currently necessitate a reconceptualization of territoriality, now perceived as “unbundled” from notions of clear borders and uninterrupted sovereignty and/or jurisdiction. At the same time, earlier periods of American history also provide examples for territory conceived of as dynamic, overlapping, contested, or “unbundled”—both in US imperial endeavors and in movements contesting them. This includes US imperialism’s creation of “fuzzy borders,” but also African Americans’ creation of Maroon societies, past and present Puerto Rican conceptions of independence, or the historical and ongoing movements of Native American and indigenous rights and resurgence. This special forum intends to explore territoriality as “land and water-based practices” (Hōkūlani Aikau, “Following the Alalōa Kīpapa of Our Ancestors”), narratives, and visualizations. We invite contributions that analyze how such texts and practices have been used to create and enforce the US-American nation as “territorial regime,” as well as contributions that highlight how such texts and practices have served—and serve—to contest this regime and envision or create alternatives.

In literary and cultural studies, this special forum seeks to encourage conversations between fields like the study of American imperialism, postcolonialism, Native American studies, border studies, African American studies, and Caribbean, Atlantic, and transpacific studies, which all critically relate to the nation-state as well as the nation as a discursive construct (cf. Vormann, “Who needs American studies?” 390-93). In addressing the questions of borders and jurisdiction, we also ask for contributions from scholars in geography and legal studies interested in exploring the cultural and political specificities of legal texts and maps, or in addressing the way in

which stories or songs can function as legal assumptions and practices, as cognitive maps, or as navigational tools.

The special forum invites submissions addressing, but not limited to, the following subjects:

- The interrelationship of diverse U.S. imperialisms (continental, Caribbean, Pacific, global) seen through the lens of territoriality
- The territoriality of U.S. imperialism and U.S. nationhood; the relationship of transnationalism and imperialism
- Conceptualizations of territory in sovereignty and independence movements envisioned by people, peoples, communities, and groups affected by U.S. territorial rule
- Theorizing water as territory; the cultural, legal, and political representations of the people who enter the U.S. from the sea or who dwell in oceanic areas placed within U.S. sovereignty
- Non-statist but land- or water-based conceptualizations of nationhood
- The relation of place-based theories such as extraterritoriality in legal studies or scale theory in geography to theories more current in American studies, such as border theory or archipelagic theory

Applications should include an abstract of the proposed contribution (about 500 words) and a short CV. Please submit your application by **April 30, 2018** to: territorialities@uni-potsdam.de

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For more information visit: www.uni-potsdam.de/americanterritorialities