

## „Twin Cities and Sin Cities? – A Translocal History of Sexuality in Ciudad Juárez and El Paso, 1900-1940”

In my dissertation project I will explore the border region of Ciudad Juárez/El Paso in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During this time the area was subject to enormous demographic growth due to economic development and (trans)national circumstances like the Mexican Revolution or the U.S. Prohibition. In the wake of the modernization of the cities I want to trace down the regulative measures and the reaction to their implementation in these dynamic urban settings from a transnational/translocal perspective. This angle is of aid trying to understand local actions supposedly contradictory to national settings. The national border between the cities and its geographical representation in the Rio Grande / Rio Bravo will be of importance just as the socially constructed boundaries within the two cities. Thus, my work will rely on research about socially constructed space (Henri Lefebvre), disciplinary and regulative discourses (Michel Foucault), and resistant daily practices (Michel de Certeau).

I want to close in on the subject by using sexuality as a pivotal point to uncover how the regulation of society was being thought of, implemented and subverted. As a consequence sexuality must be tied to other dynamic factors creating this modern urban space such as traffic, consumption, or work. This seems necessary in order to understand the importance of sexuality in relation to the social dynamics and the regulative measures that were applied in the border region. For an analysis of sexuality I will investigate the allegedly contradictory phenomena of prostitution and reproduction relying on intersecting discourses and practices of modernization, industrialization, militarization, medicalization / pathologization, moralization, criminalization, and racialization that themselves point to modes of exclusion and inclusion, and especially for my case to narratives of limitation and resistance.

Hence, I will analyze translocal inhabitants (e.g. prostitutes, soldiers, clients of birth control clinics and the El Paso sanatorium, physicians, feminists, workers, members of the border police forces, and members of religious and civic organizations) as subjects moving in the urban area and across the borders shaping the landscape of the cities. My analysis is based on the assumption that the actors are not acting as autonomous subjects but are also shaped by discourses *and* practices. However, they are able to – and this exactly is of major interest – produce resistance in their own (daily) practices and are thus in a position to modify or obscure discourses and other practices.