Gisela Cánepa Koch, Ingrid Kummels (eds.)

PHOTOGRAPHY IN LATIN AMERICA

Images and Identities Across Time and Space

[transcript] Postcolonial Studies
Historical photographs taken in Latin America have now become key sites for memory politics, ethnographic imagination, and the negotiation of identity. This volume opens up a set of questions relating to the contemporaneous agency of images as well as their current appropriation via new technologies. Case studies of pictures taken in Mexico, Colombia, Peru and Brazil analyze these processes by tracing how the images have been resignified over time and space. The contributions examine photographs that have been recently rediscovered by such diverse actors as European museums, human rights organizations, anthropologists, shamans, local historians, and communities of internet users.

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For further information:
www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-3317-7

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Photography in Latin America
Images and Identities Across Time and Space –
An Introduction

INGRID KUMMELS AND GISELA CÁNEPA KOCH

Case studies tracing current uses of historical photographs taken several decades ago in Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Brazil demonstrate their value as key sites of memory politics, ethnographic imagination and the negotiation of identity. Anthropologists who participated in these processes and analyzed them as part of their ethnographic research are the contributing authors in this volume. During this time the photographs were resignified, attributed new uses and given a new thrust of public distribution across time and space. The photographs and photographic collections were rediscovered by such diverse actors as European and Latin American museums, online communities, anthropologists, members of indigenous ethnic groups – descendants of those once portrayed by anthropologists –, the non-indigenous local elite and middle class, traditional religious and political authorities, and families who had lost a relative to the violence of civil war. By engaging in exchange and dialogue with transnational actors and intervening in their publication at exhibitions and on Internet websites, where historical photographs are stored in novel digitized archives, all of these actors have ascribed new functions, meanings and values to these images against a backdrop of crisis, both past and present.

The contributors and editors of the volume draw on different theoretical approaches and strands of analysis as their point of departure, such as Deborah Poole’s (1997: 7-8) concept of “visual economy,” which foregrounds the political uses of images and their relationship to power. Gaining percep-
tion of the meanings and values attached to photographs as they move across cultural and national boundaries calls for exploration of the social relationships, inequalities and power constellations that prevail in the “visual economy.” In the course of mobility, pictures not only move between locations and time frames, but also between different regimes belonging to the realm of science, art or the market (Cânepa Koch, this volume). Most actors addressed in this volume actively look for memory, history and identity. As a result of the meanings attributed to them, photographs intervene in social reality and develop “small narratives” that act as “visual incisions through time and space” (Edwards 2001: 3). Depending on the actors that enter into dialogue with each other, on the specific location of the pictures in operation and on the historic moment, distinctive “ways of seeing” emerge, visual conventions that persuade people to see and represent themselves and others in particular ways (Berger 1990; Strassler 2010: 18). Actors also form political subjectivities by appropriating global flows such as photographic technology, knowledge, genres, and local marketing modes. This allows them to create media spaces with leeway to reposition themselves in terms of collectivity, social status, ethnicity, and gender in a way that exceeds simplistic dichotomies and binary codes (Kummels 2012).

The processes under consideration in this volume span a time period in which temporality and historicity themselves undergo transformation. The contributions center on pictures taken during the comparatively long era of analog photography: the century from the 1880s to the 1980s. At the same time, these images have been resignified in the present, that is, in the digital age. Digital technology should be understood as constituting what McKenzie (2001) considered the technological dimension of the “performance stratum,” where power and knowledge intersect to configure a new order governed by the principles of performativity. Thus the current use of historical photographs is inspired by the opportunities digital technology offers, but constrained by its new imperatives, new media forms with the potential to affect conventional practices. “Today” (i.e., between 2008 and 2015) images are circulated, publicly exhibited, openly commented on and used politically. The change in significance generally attributed to photography in the present age – one that varies according to locality, culture, history, and the constellation of power and actors concerned – must therefore be taken into account.
Several contributions draw attention to this starting point. Photographic techniques, practices, products and filing methods are now ubiquitous, as exemplified in cell phone photography and its dissemination via the Internet. Taking, sending and viewing pictures has quantitatively higher temporal (“always on”) and spatial (“almost everywhere”) dimensions (Hepp 2010). At the same time, the quality of these images, e.g., their ascribed temporality, has altered: capturing memorable moments and “freezing” them is no longer common practice. New practices of mobile phone photography and the publishing and filing of images on specialized websites such as Flickr and Facebook no longer center on documenting exclusive moments. Instead they celebrate countless instants that evoke the more ordinary and ephemeral moments of people’s lives (Murray 2008: 151). Besides, the photographers themselves have become a major motif. “Pictures of life” have moved on to become “living pictures” (Van Dijck 2007). In other words these pictures have acquired a life of their own and escape control in the course of digital circulation, since they are reshaped ad infinitum and rearranged by a few mouse clicks along their countless intermediate stations. A similar distinction is suggested for “images of the world” (“imágenes del mundo”) and “images in the world” (“imágenes en el mundo”) in order to explain the new functions, uses and appreciations of pictures in transit from a representational to a performative regime (Cánepa Koch 2013). The mouse click synthesizes the performative dimension of the Internet. The Internet user, who is constantly in action (e.g., he/she searches, downloads, comments, evaluates, shares), travels along a complex grid of routes where images function as a repertoire for action. In this logic structure the user’s actions are guided by the principles of efficacy and efficiency. In this new landscape the images in each stage are no longer relevant as objects of representation in terms of verity but are used and defined as repertoires of digital performance. Hence the presence of the Internet actor and the effectivity of his/her actions are legitimized by the “like” tag mediated by the mouse click (Cánepa Koch/Ulfé 2014). In the case of photography, the digital era implicates a transformation that Joan Fontcuberta (2015) has coined the “post-photographic condition.”

Against this background, new and perhaps even greater expectations have been set in historical images and channeled into their new uses. The contributions in this volume substantiate that, based on individual, non-professional initiatives, these pictures now travel more easily between geo-
graphic spaces, between continents and between the traditional archives of specialized institutions such as museums and new filing spaces on the Internet; they can be filed in large numbers on a hard disc and exchanged or disseminated in the public sphere. Thus to a certain extent historical pictures have escaped the custody of museums, private family archives and the hitherto regime and hierarchy of the visual that these archives have helped to maintain, and their new mobilities “democratize the archives” (Garde-Hansen 2011).\footnote{Edwards (2001: 4) warns against overemphasizing the homogeneity and inactivity of museum archives. These tend to be characterized by the “dense multidimensional fluidity of the discursive practices of photographs as linking objects between past and present.” Yet photography expertise in the museum context was long conceptualized as a one-way flow of information through which the subject of investigation enhanced the anthropologist’s knowledge. This procedure allowed the latter to underline their authority.} The authorship and defining power of image interpretation is now negotiated in wider circles and on circuits with more leveled hierarchies; traditional specialists, such as professional photographers, scientists and curators, can no longer smoothly claim exclusiveness to expertise on these matters. Yet the visual heritage of humanity recorded during the analog era is still archived in a highly inequitable manner, albeit individual actors are introducing major changes in this context. In the context of digitization even cropping and resolution choices constitute a first reinterpretation of the photographic object. New forms of diffusion facilitated by digitization, such as the vast transfer of photographic files, further contribute to roughing up the world’s visual heritage and making headway on its reconfiguration.

Following on the argument that historical photographs move between different scientific, aesthetic, economic and cultural regimes, it should be noted that with every move they enter a new realm of power, where surveillance and normalization is performed. Neither should it be forgotten that Internet platforms are widely designed and administered by hegemonic consortia like Google and regulated by the state. In a similar vein the mobility of digitized photographs made possible by the digital regime should also be seen as operating within a given frame that not only creates and defines mobility but also specifies its terms. Although technical features are responsible for these conditions, they are also shaped by the contested interventions of social actors and their agendas, among them corporations, state
institutions and online communities. Bearing in mind Livingstone’s (2010) critical reflections on the e-democracy debate, this approach allows us to discuss in more depth the democratizing potential of digitized photographs and their circulation on the Internet, in each case considering historical and cultural contingencies, as well as national and transnational power constellations.

Following on the discussion of the contributions assembled in this volume, we argue for an understanding of the movement of historical photographs as strategic displacements, while taking account of the complex power relations involved in the multidirectional trajectories they follow between space and time, and between diverse regimes. Similarly, the understanding of making greater use of historical photographs to intervene in the contemporary public sphere coincides with the notion of public culture, defined by Appadurai and Breckenridge (1995: 5) as a “zone of cultural debate.” This notion not only accounts for the public debate on cultural content, but also the emergence of and conflictual relation between new publics and new repertoires for argumentation arising from the “experiences of mass-mediated forms in relation to the practices of everyday life” (Appadurai/Breckenridge 1995: 4-5). It tallies with a conceptualization of culture as porous rather than bounded. We contend that photographs are likewise “busy intersections,” that is, a “…porous array of intersections where distinct processes crisscross from within and beyond its borders” to cite Renato Rosaldo’s (1993: 20) concept of culture as constituted by sites where cultural and social processes intersect.

These developments give rise to a set of questions: What do these shifts in time and space and across regimes imply for the role of photography in memory politics, ethnographic imagination and the negotiation of identity? In what way are the social relations of anthropological museums, anthropologists and members of ethnic and social groups, and those between families and the state transformed by new uses assigned to historical photographs?

All of the case studies refer to memory politics as a field of intense but also tense negotiations, in which new forms of remembering via historical photographs emerge and take center stage. At the same time, these processes shed light on the way in which memory and processes of identity are intertwined and realigned. The first group of authors worked on – and some of them arranged – exhibitions of ethnographic photographs as part of their
field research. In most cases the images concerned had once been collected by museums or were stored in the private collections of individual scholars. The contributions of Kraus, Cánepa Koch, Reyes, Petroni, and Kummels show that even today access to and circulation of these historical photographs by no means occurs on equal terms. In particular the descendants of the subjects portrayed in ethnographic photographs or people who identify with the settlements, landscapes, and objects they depict were either ignorant of their existence or had hitherto had no access to them. Hence they were not in a position to even consider them as visual heritage. The ethnographic collections amassed primarily from the 19th century onwards in European museums founded specifically to house them have triggered debate on cultural property rights. This is particularly true of contemporary mega-museums such as the Quai Branly, which opened in Paris in 2006 (Price 2007; Brown 2009) and the forthcoming Humboldt-Forum in Berlin to be opened in 2019. Debates of this kind on political and ethical issues of museum objects and new postcolonial sensitivities have led to an increase in novel forms of collaboration between museums, investigators and source communities, among them “visual repatriations” of a dialogic quality (Brown/Peers 2006; Bell/Christen/Turin 2013).

Some of the contributions deal with treading new paths in the context of ethnographic pictures that open space for collaboration, dialogue among stakeholders and in many instances aspirations to visually decolonize European collections (Kraus, Reyes, Kummels). They therefore provide valuable clues to the interaction with photographs as a constitutive element of field research practices. Such interactions are not confined to photoelicitation as a tool used by the researcher unidirectionally to extract information and document historical “facts.” Instead, the historical photographs researchers brought into the field developed a social life of their own. Looking at photographs taken by German anthropologist Konrad Theodor Preuss in Colombia, Aura Reyes detected a wide array of topics that she did not originally have in mind when she discussed these photographs with her research subjects. The Kogi people broached the legitimacy of pictures taken by Preuss and the permission to do so, and pondered over the political posture of the Kogi authorities at the time, who seem to have been more permissive than today’s authorities in terms of foreigners taking pictures. This they did against the backdrop of current debate on the patrimonial rights to the collection, which is in the possession of the Stiftung
Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin but claimed by both Kogi communities and the Colombian government. With the aid of these photographs Reyes’s interlocutors analyzed the uneven relationship. Their interpretation of images was also influenced by changes that occurred as a result of negotiations between this indigenous group and the states of Colombia and Germany.

In the case of Ingrid Kummels, who brought pictures taken by anthropologist Manfred Schäfer back to the source communities of the Asháninka and Nomatsiguenga in Peru, the photographs unfurled an agency that cannot be characterized readily as a unidirectional act of visual repatriation, since the circumstances under which they traveled across time and space are too varied and their layers of meaning plurivalent. She delivered photographs of the 1970s and 1980s to a society that had undergone radical transformation since then. Besides, this society did not consider photographs of great value and had therefore not demanded their return. Up until today the dominant medium of historical remembrance in the community is orality, with which images cannot compare. On the one hand, this case of “repatriation” points to the fact that numerous anthropologists are in possession of photographs from a time when they were often in the privileged position of being the chief photographer in the indigenous communities. It also raises questions on the potential place value of such images and their processes of appropriation for societies whose influence during their production was limited and that have hitherto not availed of them as a medium for retrospection. Here, too, the Asháninka and Nomatsiguenga interlocutors first used the returned photographs for political purposes: they saw their potential to further community development and modernization, and to substantiate claims vis-à-vis the Peruvian state. This motivated some of the people portrayed and their relatives to gain access to and control of the photographs. In the case study of the identitarian movement of the Muchik in Northern Peru, Gisela Cánepa Koch discusses the appropriation and resignification by current actors of photographs taken by German businessman Hans Heinrich Brüning in the region of Lambayeque. She traces the role played by ethnographic studies on Brüning’s photographs, published in the late 1980s, and the activism of local Muchik anthropologists in shaping the discourse on Muchik identity and legitimizing Brüning’s photographic work as a principal source. The author later focuses on Internet users and owners of domains from the regional middle class who digitize Brüning’s
photographs as a means of participating in the public debate on Muchik identity. Their aim is to articulate a particular version of this identity, one they can feel part of and that allows them in terms of class and gender to remain distinct from other groups in the region claiming to belong to the Muchik people. In doing so, they contest ethnographic discourses on Muchik identity first introduced by Muchik anthropologists and that argue for continuity between the indigenous and rural populations depicted in the photographs and the Muchik people of today. Together these contributions present a novel approach to the movement of the photographs and their role in forging an ethnographic imagination and defining the field “as site, method, and location” (Gupta/Ferguson 1987).

A second group of authors examines interventions in memory politics that individuals and members of families develop as part of their daily life and their political actions. Mercedes Figueroa investigated the photographic strategies of families of disappeared or murdered family relatives (university students) in connection with the civil war and (state) terror in Peru, which reached its peak in the 1980s. In this context they negotiated the status of the disappeared as civil war victims. Family members resorted to ID photographs or pictures taken for family albums in order to render their absence publicly visible and transform the perfidious strategy of disappearance into its antithesis. Onlookers were compelled to gaze at the “face of absence.” Family and ID photographs are recontextualized on moveable altars that can be assembled rapidly in the public sphere and used at regular demonstrations in front of the Palace of Justice and the Congress to remind a larger audience of the disappeared students. Hence images are used as a means of denouncing the state, particularly ID photographs, which the state monopolizes for purposes of verification and control. On the other hand, actors also integrate these photos and practices into their daily lives. The constant visual remembrance of their deceased relatives cements the bridge between the past and the present – producing a new temporality. María Eugenia Ulfe and Ximena Málaga saw themselves likewise faced with photographs from Peru’s civil war period due to the agency of local people who referred to them. Nilton Saucedo, a citizen of Huancasancos, the province in Ayacucho most affected by this violent period, emphasized vis-à-vis the researchers the importance of local photography as a key to understanding the history of the province and its inhabitants. The photographs that Huancasancos residents keep in private albums narrate their own stories of
the continuities of this period, such as the annual beauty pageant to elect a local beauty queen and soccer games played during the reign of terror.

One of the issues explored by the first group of authors refers to the conditions and social relations of production under which ethnographic photographs – currently being resignified – were once produced. In the context of scientific and commercial photography at the beginning of the 20th century, scholars like Deborah Poole (1997) have up to now highlighted the notable extent to which these ethnographic photographs constructed ethnicity and race in their intention to create and freeze rigid hierarchical categories. Such images were produced in situations with a clearly biased distribution of power between those who took pictures and those who had to be content with their role as photographic subjects. This disparity can be conceptualized as a “visual divide,” since inequality is not merely inscribed in representations, but also in the materiality and social practices of audiovisual media, such as in media training and the organization of work (Kummels 2015; n.d.). Yet the analysis of this volume shows that it is worth examining the variety of motives and negotiations involved in ethnographic photography, depending on the actors’ interventions on both sides of the camera to discern subtle shifts in power. The contributions of Michael Kraus, Gisela Cánepa Koch and Aura Reyes, who deal with this early period of anthropological photography, point to the diversity of picture-taking situations, which ranged from colonial encroachment on the part of photographers vis-à-vis their subjects to efforts to achieve a balanced relationship, even a degree of collaboration between the photographer and those he portrayed (all of the photographers concerned were men). Kraus stresses that the blanket categorizing of photography from that period as a form of “visual colonization,” that is, as a regime that served to execute and legitimate a (neo)colonial order would imply overlooking and thus negating indigenous agency. The overall picture becomes even more complicated when the subjects’ interest in the photographs at the time is taken into account. This is particularly the case with people who cooperated with the photographer and those who saw photography as an opportunity to present themselves as hybrid and modern, as in Reyes’s case study. The second half of the 20th century saw the anthropological use of photography to decolonize the relationship between researchers and research subjects. In the 1970s and 1980s, German anthropologist Manfred Schäfer, for example, pursued an action anthropology approach that sought to empower the
Asháninka and Nomatsiguenga. Although he was the principal photographer, he discussed the photographic messages to be conveyed and, given their common interest, selected photographs in cooperation with the research subjects, as demonstrated by the exhibition *Somos Asháninca (We are Asháninca)* shown in Lima’s Biblioteca Nacional in 1981. The images deliberately document the “good life” of the Asháninka and Nomatsiguenga and their accomplishments associated with the concept of a sustainable, self-determined life adapted to the rainforest environment. This was part of their struggle against the Ene 40 dam project, which was backed by the Peruvian and German governments.

All of these examples illustrate the usefulness of analyzing photographs according to Rosaldo’s (1993: 17) concept of culture as constituted by sites or “busy intersections,” where numerous cultural and social processes crisscross. In the context of production, the images are not exclusively linked to the photographer as the main actor. Instead several actors contribute to reinterpreting meanings at these crossroads, including the photographic subjects, other members of their society and the intended audience of the images in question. The choice of publication ranged from scientific monograph through political journal to specific websites, and suggests the target audience. Even in the case of early anthropological photographs, dialogically inscribed messages – to a certain extent at least – invite people in the present to identify with the image and ascribe a similar function to it. The contributions indicate that despite the passing of several decades and given their production contexts and processes of negotiation, images do not lose their reference to reality entirely (as Baudrillard suggested with regard to how representation is handled during the third stage of the Age of Simulation). Actors who tend to identify as successors of the people photographed or relate to the photographers as their “heirs” take on a leading role in the resignifying process. The contributions of Reyes, Petroni and Kummels demonstrate how repatriation and elicitation processes trigger different paths of identification. Debates in the respective source communities help to foster an exchange of theories about images from the past and the topics of their representation. Theories inscribed in the production process and those voiced today either converge or are positioned at a distance from one another. These discursive practices of interpreting historical photographs, that is, “practices of knowing, explaining, justifying” (Hobart 2005: 26, in: Postill 2010: 5) trace the diachrony of visual narratives from the “Time
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Back Then” to the perceptions of actors “Today.” Orality and photography engage in a complex interplay as media of recollection and identity (Freund/Thomson 2011), which these authors have investigated in depth.

One example of this dialogue of theories refers to women’s attire in the Zapotec-speaking town of Yalalag, Mexico, which unfurled in the context of Mariana Petroni’s showing of early pictures taken by anthropologist Julio de la Fuente. De la Fuente’s hypotheses see clothes interpreted along a continuum of acculturation and classified from indigenous to mestizo, contingent on the ethnic identity of the wearer. This allowed him to index whether Zapotec culture has been sustained or lost. These ideas now converge with those of specific groups in the town, such as the political wing of the Grupo Comunitario that engages in identity politics with a view to preserving and strengthening Zapotec culture. In this instance of resignifying historical images, the concepts of the photographer impact on those of the Grupo Comunitario and converge. Yet another case deals with the incipient political use of images once captured by anthropologist Manfred Schäfer with his Nikon camera in the Asháninka Nomatsiguenga community of the Peruvian Selva Central. Within the frame of the then novel approach of action anthropology, Schäfer conceptualized the photographs as instruments of community empowerment, given state policies that denied ethnic minorities their cultural rights and questioned their existence. The photographs were once conceived as visual evidence of the community’s creation, its right to existence and its excellent quality of life. In view of their efforts to enhance the political position of the community, local authorities appreciate this same message today. The residents were reminded of their humble origins and the adverse circumstances under which their village evolved. At the same time they interpreted these images as speaking of their determination and their social mobility, an interpretation also influenced by aesthetic devices once used in the pictures. The choice of motifs and aesthetic devices as well as the political uses inscribed in them during their production evoked similar interpretations of the images vis-à-vis contemporary observers, who are too young for personal testimony.

Yet there is nothing “natural” about an observer identifying with his or her “former self” in historical photographs, with the clothes worn by the people portrayed or with the objects, houses, and landscapes they display. It calls for socialization in “ways of seeing” (Berger 1990) and in the devices of photographic cultures, such as family albums, family pictures in plastic
bags, shoe boxes and drawers or today more contemporary forms such as photobooks, Facebook and mobile camera phones. Kummels’s case study on Matereni, Peru, reminds us that even identifying with “one’s own” picture can cause considerable effort: when she encouraged them to interpret these hitherto unknown photographs as images of themselves during their childhood and youth, the adults of Matereni were forced to reconstruct their image of the self. In all other cases it was not the genealogical continuity between the subjects portrayed and the next generations of their source communities that sparked identification. Petroni documents that the inhabitants of Yalálag, Mexico, privileged women’s attire as the point of reference for identification with de la Fuente’s photographs as “their” cultural heritage. They did this against a backdrop in which Yalálag and the surrounding communities of the Sierra Norte once fashioned women’s (but not men’s) garments in a way that distinguished the community from others, rendering them a symbol or form of flag. While donning this attire has become less popular in everyday life, it is now given major ethnopolitical significance by the Grupo Comunitario, which pushes for identification with it and thus with one of de la Fuente’s favorite photographic motifs. In the case of women from the local elite of Lambayeque, Peru, their relationship on Facebook to Brüning’s photographs of rural women in pastoral surroundings, in contrast, is one of distancing from this past, as Cánepa Koch discovers. For these contemporary urban, middle-class women of Lambayeque, the female subjects portrayed in the images index a nostalgic and romantic past as inherent in Muchik identity, but they do not actually identify with them. As argued in her article, the different attitudes of female as opposed to male members of Facebook groups towards these photographs speaks for the fact that gender is vital to defining Muchik identity. This kind of indexing has become a powerful instrument in constructing a locally based identity that now claims continuity from the pre-Columbian archaeological cities of the Moche across Muchik culture of the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century as captured by Brüning’s camera lens.

In all of the case studies the actors concerned have now assigned historical photographs a new place in the public sphere and in public debates, one that goes beyond the traditional institutional spaces they once occupied, such as museum archives and private family collections. This coincides with new forms of using photography in the digital era. Clear distinctions
between transmitter and receiver and the modes of private and public media have been dissolving for quite some time. A single device such as a cell camera phone or social media integrates their respective dimensions. Facebook and Flickr function at one and the same time as archives and platforms of communication and publication (cf. Adolf 2011: 156). Hierarchies of old between amateurs and professionals have been evened out – this also applies to the expertise in historical photographs once exclusively in the hands of professionals at universities and museums, but now easily executed by self-taught specialists outside of these institutions and asserted vis-à-vis others. This notwithstanding, hierarchies in the realm of the visual persist, as Reyes’s chapter confirms. Although numerous photographs by Preuss are circulated in publications and on the Internet, his interlocutors’ descendants were unaware of them, albeit highly interested once privy to them. This immediate interest is linked to hierarchies that are being challenged in the debate on exhibition objects at the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, among them two Kogi dance masks. Claiming them as ethnic and national patrimony, the Kogi have demanded their repatriation. Descendants of Kogi mamos or religious specialists relied on photographs to reconstruct how Preuss was able to access sacred places now heavily regulated and to appropriate vital cultural goods such as the masks in question. They expounded their cultural knowledge of the landscapes, objects, and acts depicted in the photographs to the researcher. Based on their own epistemology, Kogi interlocutors were keen to ban pictures of key aspects of their culture, juxtaposing their interest and the photographer’s visual documentation concerns, and discursively renegotiating the prevailing imbalance of power at the time when the photographs were produced. In the process of sharing knowledge about these historical images and interpreting them from a current perspective, the photographs were resignified as intrusive in response to issues raised about the future place and ownership of the cultural goods they portray.

This volume’s contributions describe the power shifts that spring from the appropriation, use, exchange, discussion, publication, and insertion of historical photographs in public culture. These shifts in the balance of power provided an opportunity to democratize the archives and led to the loss of institutional supremacy. The interventions of Peruvian families in family memory politics compete with recent state mega-projects and museums founded specifically for this purpose. The latter cannot claim monopoly of
the politics of remembrance. Parallel to initiatives of the families concerned, the Peruvian civil war period is now commemorated at the museum Lugar de la Memoria, la Tolerancia y la Inclusión Social (LUM; Place of Memory, Tolerance and Social Inclusion) and as part of state policies of remembrance and the attempt to come to terms with a national trauma. In a participative process with key actors from this period, a multidisciplinary team of experts is now curating a permanent exhibition based on historical images. Family and state mega-project interventions are indicative of the use of historical photographs in the interests of the future. Both follow the strategy of shedding light on dimensions of the past that have been suppressed in order to prevent similar acts of violence in the future (Poole/Rojas 2011). In the case of the forthcoming Humboldt-Forum in Berlin, on the other hand, whose inauguration is planned for 2019, one of the main thrusts of public discourse is the accusation of colonial and neocolonial usurpation of ethnographic collections on the part of former German researchers and government institutions, and the repatriation demands made by the ethnic groups and Latin American nation states concerned (see, for example, Schmidt 2015).

The future Humboldt-Forum in Berlin is one of the protagonists in Michael Kraus’s chapter. Conceived as a center of art, culture, science, and learning, this museum is where collections from the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin – hitherto classified as “non-European” (außereuropäisch) – will take center stage. Based on the experimental exhibition concept designed for the photography collections of the Ethnologisches Museum, Michael Kraus challenges the notion of dual cultural patrimony between the “West and the Rest” (see also Kraus 2015). The exhibition was hosted in the Humboldt Lab, which had the mandate to experiment with new exhibition formats that might influence the exhibition concept of the Humboldt-Forum. In this first ever exhibition of early historical portrait and type photographs taken in Latin America, visitors to the Humboldt Lab had been led to see them as part of European cultural heritage, that is, as visual objects of their own “source community,” which had produced and consumed them.

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2 Up until now collections based in the Berlin district of Dahlem have been distributed between the Ethnologisches Museum, the Museum of Asian Art and the Museum of European Cultures. Only the first two museums will be transferred to the Humboldt-Forum in Berlin Mitte.
The photographers originally tended to fade out the portrayed individual from Amazonia and instead construct the subject as a “representative of the ethnic group.” The exhibition sought to give current visitors to the museum the visual and written means (by animating photographs, integrating them in tablets and complementing them with explanatory texts and excerpts from the explorers’ diaries) of deconstructing this theoretical operation on the past. Not a single original photograph was exhibited – an unusual procedure for museum exhibitions, given their propensity to display originals as treasured possessions and their raison d’être. Interestingly, the visual device of animating selected photographs sparked the biggest controversy. Although the critique referred to the ethical questions involved (altered facial expressions of those portrayed through animation), it also seems to point to the fact that “frozen” photographs are indeed still perceived as reproducing reality.

New archive forms are emerging against the backdrop of the Internet, such as websites and social media, and raise interesting questions about objects, practices and expert knowledge pertaining to the digital archive and its potential to promote democratic processes. Gisela Cánepa Koch traces how the photographs of Heinrich Brüning acquire new life as they travel on pathways beyond long-standing archive and publication practices. Brüning’s pictures have been published in several German and Peruvian books and their ethnological and documentarian character emphasized. In the meantime, however, Internet users of Peruvian websites have scanned some of these iconic publications and posted them on websites such as Antiguas Photos de Chiclayo or Imágenes de Lambayeque in the pursuit of identitarian objectives. Scanning has thus facilitated the creation of a digital archive for Brüning’s photographic collection and corresponds to a method of “informal repatriation,” despite the fact that the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin has made its collection available to the public on the museum website as part of its institutional policy of accessibility. Moreover, photographs kept as digital Facebook page files now play a major role in the public culture of Lambayeque, where Muchik identity is in the process of being shaped. Public culture has become a space for digital performance; there Brüning’s photographs are posted, shared, grouped, discussed, and valued. New archival objects are created and grouped into new archives that are, in turn, interconnected further and emerge as a reality. Digital performance creates its own interpretive contexts and references of authenticity that challenge
the hegemony of the museum. While previous discussion has argued for the democratizing potential of digital archives, here attention is also drawn to its limits. The digital archives administered by the two Facebook groups mentioned above involve the capacity to know and appreciate photographs and the ability to use and comment on them professionally, all of which leads to the creation of hierarchies that exclude those who fail to perform to satisfaction. To the extent that these performances connote class and ethnicity, Cánepa Koch argues that the Muchik identity revitalized through these digital files can be seen as suited to urban middle-class male professionals.

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In sum, this volume seeks to highlight new approaches that explore the current use of historical photographs in the context of memory politics, ethnographic imagination, and the negotiation of identity. The way in which diverse actors conceptualize memory and collective identity has itself undergone transformation in this process. We arranged the contributions in chronological order beginning with the production period of photographs that have become historical. All of the chapters build a bridge between the “Then” of production and the “Now” of resignification by raising and systematically answering questions such as: Who created the images and what was the context? To what extent have these pictures been given new meanings and do viewers and users identify with them? How are new uses brought about and publicly disseminated?

In the first chapter, *Of Photography and Men. Encounters with Historical Portrait and Type Photographs*, Michael Kraus examines the historical portrait and type photographs that European explorers, collectors of ethnographic objects and professional photographers took of members of ethnic groups in the Colombian, Peruvian and Brazilian Amazonian lowlands at the turn of the 20th century. These photographs were stored at the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin where systemization takes “alone the ethnicity of the photographed person, the place the photograph was taken and the name of the photographer” into account. Kraus, however, looks at the circumstances surrounding the emergence of certain pictures. Notwithstanding the fundamental bias in the relationship between European photographers and the indigenous people of the Amazon Rainforest as their motif, the finely graduated distinctions of how they met and negotiated with each other and
the respective outcomes are discussed. These distinctions refer to relations between members of both groups, local people’s understanding of photography and the scientists’ degree of reflexivity. In addition, fragments of the individual life courses of the people portrayed have been unearthed through these pictures. In the frame of an experimental exhibition by the Berliner Humboldt Lab (*Touching Photography*; see also Humboldt Lab Dahlem 2015: 93-101) historical portrait and type photographs now rarely circulated in the public sphere were showcased. The exhibition ultimately challenged museum visitors and exhibition critics to take a stand on these photographs. As heirs and – in a manner of speaking – source communities of the photographers of old, they grappled with these images for the first time.

In *Unfixed Images: Circulation and New Cultural Uses of Heinrich Brüning’s Photographic Collection*, Gisela Cânepea Koch traces the production, circulation and reception of pictures taken by the German engineer and businessman Hans Heinrich Brüning (1848-1928). In 1875, Brüning moved to Peru and worked as an engineer on the haciendas of sugar cane plantations in Lambayeque. There he engaged in archaeological exploration, studied the Muchik language and photographed the local cultures of the Lambayeque region. While the bulk of his photographic collection is divided between the ethnological museums of Hamburg and Berlin, some photographs can be found scattered in albums assembled by other researchers of the time, in various publications and on the Internet. At the core of this scattering are other sets of circumstances such as Brüning’s personal and scientific agendas; the acquisition, preservation and dissemination policies of museums; the social uses of photography and its mediation in creating subjectivities, social relationships, communities and audiences; finally, technological change. Thus, the article problematizes the mobility of Brüning’s photography, not only across time and space, but also between different scientific, artistic, commercial, and technological regimes. Finally, Cânepea Koch discusses the tensions and contradictions involved in the appropriation and resignification of the photographs, such as those of members of the local Lambayeque elite, including intellectuals, schoolteachers, journalists, and communicators, who use them as identity anchors of the emerging Muchik ethnopolitical movement. Analyzing its circulation through websites, she highlights the democratizing potential of digital media to open the photographic collections to new audiences, uses and expert
knowledge. At the same time she draws attention to the restoration of old and new forms of classification and social exclusion.

In Recognizing Past and Present Through Photography. Temporality and Culture in the Konrad Theodor Preuss’s Images, Aura Reyes relies on photographs taken by the German anthropologist Karl Theodor Preuss (1869-1938) for her research on the tightly knit interrelation between the constitution of anthropology as a systematic discipline at the beginning of the twentieth century and the musealization of the indigenous people of Colombia. Shortly before and during World War I, Preuss supervised archaeological excavations in San Agustin and conducted ethnographic research among the Kogi of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Most of his vast collection, which includes twenty-one monolithic stone sculptures from San Agustín, is housed at the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, while his photographs are preserved at the Världskulturmuseerna in Gothenburg, Sweden. Today the statuary and sacred wooden masks of the Kogi constitute a field of conflict that refers to the controversial history of their acquisition and the current repatriation claims articulated by the Kogi and the Colombian government vis-à-vis the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin as part of the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (whose collections are soon to be transferred to the prestigious Humboldt-Forum in Berlin). Aura Reyes brought pictures taken by Preuss to her research field to stimulate narratives on his period of investigation. What began as a method of photo elicitation progressed to a profound dialogue on a wide range of topics spanning a longer period of time. They addressed the legitimacy of Preuss’s photography activities in the 1910s and the political posture of the Kogi in charge of religious and political affairs vis-à-vis the researcher. These aspects were discussed with the scientist Reyes against the backdrop of the current debate revolving around the patrimony of Kogi sacred objects in the Preuss collection.

Mariana Petroni’s contribution on Appropriating an Image. A Study of the Reception of Ethnographic Photography among the Zapotec Indigenous People of Mexico centers on photographic images captured by the Mexican anthropologist Julio de la Fuente (1905-1970) in the late 1930s and early 1940s in the Zapotec-speaking community of Yalalag. Influenced by the school of cultural anthropology and ideas formulated by U.S. anthropologist Robert Redfield, de la Fuente’s lens attempted to capture phenomena marked by a folk-urban continuum. He defined positions on this continuum according to tracers such as the degree of traditionalism (equated with indi-
geneity) or modernity (equated with Mestizoness) manifested in people’s attire. Petroni rearranged some of the 221 photographs of Yalálag stored in the Fototeca Nacho López collection of the National Commission for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples (CDI in Spanish) in an album she took with her to Yalálag. Her intention was to find out whether and if so how after almost seventy years the residents of Yalálag relate subjectively to these historical photographs. The observers identified the pictures with Yalálag and themselves as its residents, but interpreted them from different perspectives and political stances. The members of one political fraction, Grupo Comunitario, attached major significance to traditional female attire as a Yalálag identity marker – not unlike Julio de la Fuente many decades earlier. This interpretation spotlights their ethnopolitical demands to preserve and strengthen the Zapotec language and Zapotec culture. The meanings that the photographer inscribed into the photographs when he chose to portray residents more as “representatives of the ethnic group” than as individuals contributed to this convergence of ideas across decades. Yet the search for evidence of cultural persistence in the photos has assumed a novel quality, since the images now serve the interests of local residents to formulate self-determined ethnically based goals for the future of the town and the Zapotec-speaking people.

In her contribution on *Unexpected Memories. Bringing Back Photographs and Films from the 1980s to an Asháninka Nomatsiguenga Community of the Peruvian Selva Central* Ingrid Kummels discusses photographs taken by the German anthropologist, filmmaker and activist Manfred Schäfer (1949-2003) between the late 1970s and early 1980s in the Eastern Peruvian rain forest in the community of Matereni. These images are an example of the visual heritage stored in the private collections and legacies of numerous anthropologists as part of a “visual divide” in audiovisual media. In this case the photographs were repatriated twenty-five years after the last picture was taken on the personal initiative of the scientist Kummels. Many of these photographs initially carried political messages that can be contextualized as the commitment of German Völkerkunde (anthropology) students to combat the massive assimilation pressures to which ethnic minorities worldwide were once exposed. They are also related to solidarity with the political movement of Peru’s Amazonian indigenous peoples and its struggle against policies of exploitation and colonization in the rain forest region backed by the then Peruvian president Fernan-
do Belaúnde. The aim of the dialogical messages inscribed in these photographs was to contradict the romantic German stereotype of indigenous people, empower the people portrayed and visually document their good quality of life. The photographs were reinterpreted from today’s perspective, that is, after the community had overcome the devastation of civil war by their own efforts, sold their timber resources and engendered a process of rapid modernization. Residents interwove these pictures with the prevailing medium of handing down history through oral narratives and realigned them. Although not familiar with the use of historical photographs, the community authorities rapidly used them for political purposes, that is, to highlight the active and progressive role of the village in building the Peruvian nation.

In Gazing at the Face of Absence. Signification and Resignification of Family Photographs of Disappeared University Students in Peru Mercedes Figueroa examines the new uses that families give to ID pictures and photographs from their private albums. This refers to family members who were disappeared and murdered during the civil war in the 1980s. At the same time, doubts were cast on their status as victims. They came under general suspicion as a result of the Peruvian state’s Manichean classification of those who disagreed with its policies as guilty of tacit collaboration with terrorists. In a reverse strategy, family members visualize absence with the presence of photographs. By representing the disappeared with ID pictures they had appropriated a photographic tool of state control. They furthermore visualize them via family photographs that allow for an insight into the character of the person portrayed, something that the neutral expression called for in ID pictures renders invisible. These strategies are part of a broader pattern of affected families in several Latin American countries, who actively counteract the impact of violence with similar photographic interventions in the politics of memory. In the course of socializing and interacting with the researcher, who digitized these pictures, other appropriations of pictures for political interventions took place. In one particular case one of the disappeared is commemorated by interviews with family members on the SoundCloud portal, which includes a podcast of his biography and a digitized photograph from his childhood. Hence the pictures developed a social life of their own during research and accessed the digital world as a further platform for political intervention.
In *Disputing Visual Memories in the Peruvian Andes. The Case of Huancasancos, Ayacucho* María Eugenia Ulfe and Ximena Málaga Sabogal direct their attention to photographs at the suggestion of their interlocutors in Huancasancos. These include pictures of residents once taken by the local professional photographer, pictures that give insights into a period when the town was infiltrated by Sendero Luminoso and drawn into the conflicts of this terrorist group in the 1970s and particularly the 1980s. The stories these pictures tell about everyday life run parallel to integration of Huacasancos into one of the pivotal committees Sendero Luminoso used to indoctrinate youth and train them at the Los Andes local school for armed conflict in the interests of building a “new state.” The researchers collected photographs that bear witness to this event, “[t]he war continued, but in the meantime community life kept on going.” The various interests and perspectives of both scientists and residents influenced the choice of historical pictures shown in a local photographic exhibition, the fruit of concerted action with local authorities. The photographic exhibits tell stories of beauty pageants and soccer games under conditions of violent civil war, thereby foregrounding the “small narratives.” The official photographic exhibitions on the Peruvian civil war to be housed in the future in the museum Place of Memory, Tolerance and Social Inclusion (in Spanish LUM), on the other hand, still have no plans to devote space to the “small narratives” of these photographs and thus of life beyond victimization.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the many colleagues who conduct research on the topic of photography in and from Latin America as referred to in the articles in this volume. Our exchange with some of the authors is based on workshops such as “The Visual Cultural Heritage of the Andes und Amazonia,” which took place at the Institute for Latin American Studies of the Freie Universität Berlin in November 2014. The financial support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the Institute for Latin American Studies of the Freie Universität Berlin was instrumental to making publication of the present volume possible. The volume itself is the outcome of Gisela Cánepa Koch’s stay as a Georg Forster research fellow of Cultural and Social Anthropology at the Institute for Latin American Studies in 2014 and a reciprocal visit by Ingrid Kummels to the master’s program of Visual Anthropology at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú in the same year. Special thanks go to Barbara Belejack for her pa-
tience and expertise in revising the authors’ contributions. We gratefully acknowledge the superb quality of the language editing by Barbara Belejack and Sunniva Greve (who worked on the introduction). We thank Anne-Kristin Kordaß, Ximena Aragón, Luis González Toussaint and Oliver Tewes for their dedication in completing the volume and their valuable copy-editing and layout skills.

Berlin/Lima, January 2016
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