

Workshop ‘The Transnational Challenge: Tracing Networks across Borders’

Maastricht University, June 27, 2014

Venue: Spiegelzaal, Soiron Building Grote Gracht 90-92, Maastricht

In this one-day workshop we will explore the possibilities and difficulties of transnational network research, both in history and the social sciences. We have asked five experts (who deal with different themes and methodologies) to shed light on their concrete research strategies. More than in research results as such, we are interested in the processes that generate these results. The presentations will be followed by a panel discussion about different methodologies in transnational studies. In addition to the presentations of experienced scholars, the morning session will be fully dedicated to the work of early career researchers / PhDs in projects coordinated by the convenors of the workshop. Our idea is that the more experienced scholars try to comment on research problems posed by the PhDs.

Transnational networks (whether political, social or scientific) changed drastically in both scale and kind in the modern and late modern world. We are interested in how these networks took shape through the traveling of people, ideas and objects, and how they were maintained through instruments such as conferences, protest meetings, correspondence, journals and international organizations.

Transnationalism has grown into an academic buzzword over the past decades, and research into the phenomenon has methodologically taken different paths. These range from approaches that are highly digital and quantitative, to those that are more qualitative and text-oriented, from research that focuses on empirical data-gathering to studies that concentrate on modeling theories. With our workshop we hope to contribute to the exchange of ideas between these different research practices.

The workshop ties in with two research projects that are currently carried out at Maastricht University. ‘Nature’s Diplomats’ (Raf De Bont) explores the networks of ecological experts in international conservation organizations in the twentieth century. ‘The Transnational Dynamics of Social Reform’ (Nico Randeraad) studies the transnational dimensions of socio-legal reforms in the Low Countries, between 1840 and 1940.

Program:

9-11h (chair: Nico Randeraad)

Workshop PhD researchers: Concrete problems in transnational network studies

11:15-12:30h and 13:30-15:15h(chair: Raf De Bont)

Methodologies for transnational network research:

Presentations by Charles van den Heuvel (Huygens ING) , Pim Huijnen (Utrecht University), Jan-Henrik Meyer (Aarhus University), Julia Moses (University of Sheffield), Clare Saunders (University of Exeter).

15:30-17h (chair: C. Verbruggen)

Panel Discussion:

Kiran Patel (Maastricht University), Pierre-Yves Saunier (Université Laval),Christian Topalov (EHESS, Paris)