

CfP The personal and emotional dimension of nationhood in European history (19th century to WWII)

Workshop

31 May – 1 June 2017

Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Germany

CfP deadline: 15 March 2017

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This workshop welcomes case studies with a historical dimension from across the field of the humanities and the social sciences. The aim is to publish an edited volume with an international academic publisher or a themed issue of an international academic journal.

Successful applicants will have their accommodation costs completely covered and their travel expenses reimbursed. In exchange, participants will give the right of first publication to the organizers of the workshop.

Please send a 500 word abstract of your paper and a short academic biography of 5 lines to Maarten.VanGinderachter@uantwerpen.be; x.nunez@lmu.de; and andreas.stynen@nise.eu. Deadline is 15 March 2017. You will be informed of our decision by 15 April 2017.

Call for Papers

For over two decades the individual construction and personal, emotional experience of nationhood has been at the centre of scholarly attention in the fields of ethnography, sociology, political geography and social psychology. This so-called ‘affective turn’, closely related to the new history of emotions, has also been described as a shift towards the study of personal nationalism (Anthony Cohen), embedded nationalism (Jonathan Hearn) or embodied nationalism (Anne McClintock). These and other scholars do not merely conceptualize nationhood as a collective category construed in opposition to a national ‘Other’, but also as a personal sense of belonging predicated on emotional experiences, and reproduced by individuals in manifold dimensions of their daily life.

Benedict Anderson famously asked “why [do nations] command such profound emotional legitimacy”, but historians have only recently begun tackling this question. The paradox is that “the most personal of subjects - human feelings” has yet to be dealt with on the level of individual experience, partly because both the history of emotions and that of nationalism have generally only studied the most articulate social groups. (Matt & Stearns)

Thus, the workshop’s central issue is a variation on Katherine Verdery’s basic question: how did Europeans become national in the past? How did they draw on nationhood to construct their own sense of self? How did they invest a generic social category that was available to them in public life with personal meaning? How was it linked to their own emotional experiences? The workshop is specifically interested in applying these questions to the 19th and the first half of the 20th century.

Possible topics of enquiry include:

- the transnational dimension, e.g. displacement of prisoners of war, expats and migrants who are forced to position themselves in revealing ways
- autobiography, ego-documents and national identification
- the impact of family and friendship ties, of moments of crisis, etc.

- Saul/Paul conversions in nationalist/anti-nationalist autobiographies, or individuals who experienced a change of national loyalties in the course of their lives

Possible questions to ask are:

- how can one generate evidence of emotions connected to nationalism, especially among ordinary people, with the available sources?
- which emotional triggers might move individuals from a position of 'indifference' to active national engagement / consciousness?
- what role do notions of loyalty, honour, sacrifice, kinship, love (and hatred) etc. play in transferring emotions to the national sphere?

This workshop is coordinated by the [POHIS-Centre for political history](#) of Antwerp University, funded by the 'International Scientific Research' program of the Research Foundation of Flanders, in cooperation with Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich and NISE.