

CES Research Network on Transnational Memory and Identity in Europe

Intellectual Focus

The proposed *Research Network on Transnational Memory and Identity in Europe* will be dedicated to advancing interdisciplinary European Studies by concentrating on the role of social and political processes of meaning-making in contemporary Europe. Memory and identity issues are closely tied up with the question of how public history shapes political agendas and policy making at the local, national and supranational level. Research in this arena is thus particularly well-suited to systematically linking examinations of political agency at various levels and pertinent for academics and practitioners alike.

The Network aims at gathering scholars who analyse transnational politics and policies of memory, processes of memory entrepreneurship, cultures of remembrance and identity construction in the context of European integration. Memory and identity are often seen as part of a niche discipline. To keep the Network as diverse as possible, memory and identity are thus defined in their broadest sense. We want to foster exchange between scholars from different disciplines who are working on related subjects, including heritage, public history, political culture, communication, trauma, religion, and who use memory and identity as the baseline of their research. Moreover, we welcome comparative perspectives between Europe and other world regions. We want to strengthen research that is cutting-edge and interdisciplinary in nature, approaching memory and identity issues from different perspectives in the social sciences and the humanities (history, sociology, political science, psychology, anthropology, cultural studies, literary studies and more). We thus wish to attract scholars from as many disciplines, generations and geographic areas as possible in order to expand the intellectual community of CES.

Memory and identity studies are not yet encompassed by existing CES research networks. There is furthermore no overlap, either in thematic focus or founding membership, with other CES research networks. Setting up a new Network on Transnational Memory and Identity will therefore expand and diversify the Council's intellectual reach.

Planned Activities

Our aim is to strengthen the field of Memory and Identity Studies within the Council for European Studies by organizing panels and workshops, as well as by giving enhanced opportunities for research cooperation. To this effect we selected particularly those scholars as founding members who are already very active in different existing research networks on memory (i.e. the COST network 'In Search of Transcultural Memory in Europe', the 'Network in Transnational Memory Studies', the German Studies Association's Network on Memory Studies) and who will thus function as multipliers. Most of the existing networks are either very restricted in geographical reach or in disciplinary scope and there is usually very little connection between them. The aim of the new CES Network is to provide a platform that is broader in scope and in reach and that is truly interdisciplinary. It would serve as an umbrella network for academics and practitioners analysing memory and identity issues from different interdisciplinary standpoints. This would allow scholars who usually do not talk to each other to come into contact. Moreover, our founding members represent both well-known and innovative members of the memory studies community, meaning that the CES Network will become a pivotal hub for discussing the state of the art in the field.

In order to support in-person networking, we will organise Research Network gatherings and special conference sessions dedicated to Memory and Identity Studies at the annual CES conference. For the 2015 meeting in Paris we have put together a Mini Symposium with four panels on 'Shaping Memory and Identity in Europe: Countervailing Forces from Above and Below'. Furthermore, we are planning to draw up a comprehensive database of scholars that can serve to facilitate cross-disciplinary and cross-border cooperation. We would also like to foster the organisation of goal-oriented workshops and theoretical or methodological training seminars. Such activities will ideally feed into joint publications and new cooperative research projects.

Members

We have gathered 50 high-ranking academics that constitute the Network's founding members (see attached list). By selecting scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds, who work in different national contexts and are from different generations, we aim at strengthening ties across disciplines, age cohorts and national borders. Founding members are based in eighteen different countries on five continents. They are early career researchers, lecturers, practitioners and full professors. They work in arts & humanities and social sciences departments. And they are all committed and enthusiastic to contribute to the new Network.

Why CES

We believe that the Council for European Studies, as a highly respected setting for scholarly practice, offers the right environment for the successful running of this Research Network. The fact that CES Research Networks enjoy wide visibility together with providing an already well-developed system of administrative support, made us prefer CES over other scholarly organisations.

Founding Chairs

Aline Sierp is currently Assistant Professor in European Studies at Maastricht University (NL). She holds a PhD in Comparative European Politics and History from the University of Siena (IT) and a joint Master's degree awarded by the University of Bath (UK), the University of Siena (IT) and Sciences Po Paris (FR). Before joining the University of Maastricht Aline Sierp worked as researcher at the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site (DE). She has published several peer reviewed articles and book chapters on collective memory, questions of identity and European integration. A monograph on the nexus between national and European memory politics has been published by Routledge in 2014. For more details, see <http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Profile/aline.sierp.htm>

Jenny Wüstenberg received her Ph.D. in Government & Politics at the University of Maryland (US) and then taught at the School of International Service at American University in Washington D.C. From 2012-2013, she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the "Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies," at the Free University of Berlin. Currently, she is a Research Associate with the "Independent Academic Commission at the Federal Ministry of Justice for the Critical Study of the National Socialist Past." She has presented and published on grassroots activism in memory politics, European memory politics, and methodology. For more details, see <http://jennywuestenberg.weebly.com>

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