

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

# **Religious Migrants and European Identities, 1400-2009**

Hamburg (Germany), 9-12 September 2009

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## **SCIENTIFIC REPORT**

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## **1. Executive summary and scientific content of the event**

This event was designed to open up new research questions through a sustained and interdisciplinary group focus on the relationship between religious minorities and identity formation (of migrant groups, of nations and of Europe) across a broad span of time. The conveners believed that a comparative exercise such as this workshop held the possibility of finding new connections between the role of migrants and refugees in the construction of national AND European identities. We think it is fair to say that we were surprised by quite how many such connections were identified across the workshop and how testing and problematic were the new research questions and domains which were thrown up by this comparative approach. In our summing-up discussion at the end of the workshop it was absolutely clear that our participants, and indeed our rapporteur, believed that we were at the start of a new process and that to full explore our new research agenda it would be necessary to recruit colleagues from disciplines and countries not represented in Hamburg.

In summing up our discussions and highlighting new questions and topics which arose at the event, we might identify ten key themes:

1. The history of Europe looks very different when it is written from the perspective of Ashkenazi Jews, French Calvinists, Irish Catholics in France, Quakers and other migrant groups we studied at this event. Curiously such a history of European minorities does not necessarily imply a history of the margins for many of the communities which we considered lived across national boundaries and their trade and settlement patterns reveal both 'European' AND 'national' traits which are under-acknowledged in most of our broad understandings of European history.

2. On a similar note, there was a concerted move against the notion of the nation lying at the heart of the European story. While a narrative of nations may seem appropriate for the final section of our study, it is inadequate as a means of describing much of the early modern and modern period, and indeed the power of the centralising state is increasingly called into question in historical, anthropological and sociological accounts of modern life.

3. The history of interchange between migrant and minority groups was an underlying theme of our event and one which we felt merited further study so that the specificities of relationships between such groups in and across national borders might be better understood, as well as their relations with minorities and the disempowered, such as slaves, outside of Europe and in imperial settings.

4. A sustained questioning of the concept of 'identity' ran across the event. How did historical actors at different moments think about themselves and their identities? How do we as scholars avoid essentializing minority groups? How can discussions of identity take account of lived identities, plural identities, contradictory identities, fluid identities, and so on? What role do others play in making the identities of minority groups? This cluster of questions provided some of the most invigorating discussions at the event and we believe that there was a collective will to push the important methodological and conceptual issues such discussions raise in future fora.

5. Debates about identity were also seen as being exemplary in the sense that they crossed time periods and validated the long-range approach of studying the medieval and the early modern alongside the modern and the contemporary, so that we might see long-range continuities as well as identifying specific questions at certain moments in time. An example of a contemporary debate which exercised the group was Feldman's analysis of the curious conservatism of

multiculturalism as a political force, in its tendency to impose communitarian norms on minority groups, which then often come into conflict with rights cultures which stress the sovereignty of individuals.

6. The question of relationships between 'Europe' and 'Islam' ran across the event, and might be succinctly summed up by the question 'Is and has Islam been Europe's other or a part of its self?' which we think needs to be answered positively.

7. The event also opened up the possibility of new comparative histories of ideas which are rarely studied in a European or cross-temporal perspective, such as the history of refugees and ideas of asylum and cosmopolitanism.

8. The 'return of religion' (if it has ever been absent from Europe and European identities) was much commented-on at the event and a sense developed that as a collective we ought to explore how the histories we gathered might add to our growing understanding of life in a so-called post-secular world.

9. One very specific history – that of cosmopolitanism – was seen to change radically when it was viewed in specific historical contexts, such as Kant's Germany, and considerable interest was generated in the idea of extending such readings of this key idea to other key moments in the history of this idea.

10. We began to tentatively sketch out connections between our discussions and contemporary policy debates in areas such as the EU constitution, asylum law and trans-national and trans-local identities, realizing that religious pluralism in Europe and the accommodation of religious migrants, today, is- in some countries such as Greece – not possible because of national refugee law.

### **3. Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field**

As a group we also settled on a set of follow-up items and outcomes which will emanate from the event:

- i. The conveners are currently editing a selection of papers from the event to be submitted as a book proposal to Longman-Pearson with the title *Another Europe or Other Europes*.
- ii. The conveners have also begun to make contact with educationalists working on notions of 'European identity' in school curricula to explore the idea of linking these two pan-European, and EU-funded, projects with the creation of school materials based on the history of religious minorities in Europe and Europe's nation-states. We are keen to explore other areas of taking our debates outside the academy and presenting them to popular and lay audiences.
- iii. The conveners are preparing a paper on the history of minorities for the influential History and Policy network, which will explicitly link our historical discussions to contemporary policy debates.
- iv. A group of contributors have also been exchanging ideas so as to try to collectively write an essay on the methodological problems inherent in the history of identity. This is one example of a series of spin-off research activities of a cross-European nature which have emanated from the event.
- v. Reports of the conference have been posted on H-NET and HSK.
- vi. We are now actively expanding our research group to incorporate disciplines which were absent or under-represented at this exploratory event (such as anthropology and political theory)

and from regions and minority groups which we did not discuss (such as eastern Europe and the Balkans) and are preparing for an application to the ESF research networks scheme in 2010.

As a final note, the conveners would like to add that we learned a great deal from this event, both in terms of the complexities and challenges in coordinating a pan-European event of this kind, and, more importantly, the great intellectual gains which can come from the discussion of ideas across borders.

## 4. Final programme

### Wednesday 9 September 2009

Late afternoon      *Arrival*

19.30                  *Informal gathering at Hotel Vorbach/Abaton*

### Thursday 10 September 2009

Further Arrival of Participants

**13.00-14.00**          **Coffee**

14.00-14.20          **Welcome by Convenors**  
**Susanne Lachenicht** (Hamburg University, Germany) and **William Gallois**  
(Roehampton University, London, UK)

14.20-14.40          **Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF)**  
**Kostas Gouliamos** (ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities - SCH)

**14.40-17.30**          **Afternoon session: Cosmopolitanism and European Identity**  
**(Chair: William Gallois, Roehampton University)**

14.40-15.10          **Presentation 1 "The Cosmopolitan Identity of the Germans"**  
**Pauline Kleingeld** (Leiden University, Netherlands)

**15.10-15.40**          **Coffee / Tea Break**

15.40-16.10          **Presentation 2 "Migration and Religion – Diasporas and the emergence of cross-cultural social and commercial networking and identities in early modern Northern Europe"**  
**Dagmar Freist** (University of Oldenburg, Germany)

16.10-16.40          **Presentation 3 "Do Cosmopolitan and Hybrid Identities Exist in Contemporary London"**  
**John Eade** (Roehampton University, London, UK)

16.40-18.00          **Discussion**

19.00                  *Dinner (Goldfisch, Isekai)*

### Friday 11 September 2009

**Coffee**

**10.00-12.30**          **Morning Session: European Identities in Early Modern Atlantic Diasporas**  
**(Chair: Susanne Lachenicht, Hamburg University)**

10.00-10.30          **Presentation 1 "An 'Innocent People' Abroad: The Influence of Persecution and Migration on the Shaping of a European Quaker**

## Identity"

**Sünne Juterczenka** (University of Rostock, Germany)

10.30-11.00

**Presentation 2 "The Situational Privileges and Rights of Sephardic Jewish Mercantile Communities in the Southern Atlantic World of the Early Modern Era"**

**Noah Gelfand** (NYU, New York, United States)

11.00-12.30

**Discussion**

12.30-14.30

*Lunch (Goldfisch, Isekai)*

**14.30-19.00**

**Afternoon Session: Refugees, Religion and Identities in Modern and Contemporary Europe**

*(Chair: William Gallois, Roehampton University, London, UK)*

14.30-15.00

**Presentation 1 "Why the English Like Turbans: The Surprising History of Multiculturalism in One Country"**

**David Feldman** (Birkbeck College, London, UK)

15.00-15.30

**Presentation 2 "Les berbères en contexte d'immigration : vers une identité transfrontalière et transnationale ?"**

**Mohand Tilmatine**(University of Cadiz, Spain)

15.30-16.30

*Discussion*

16.30-17.00

*Coffee break*

17.00-17.30

**Presentation 3 "Islam, Education and Muslim Identities in Contemporary Germany"**

**Hayrettin Aydin** (University of Bremen, Germany)

17.30-18.00

**Presentation 4 "Islam as Europe's Other throughout history: external and internal"**

**Michael Wintle** (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands)

18.00-19.00

*Discussion*

19.30

*Dinner (Restaurant VLET, Speicherstadt)*

## Saturday 12 September 2009

### Coffee

**10.00-12.00**

**Morning Session: Contemporary European Governments and Religious Refugees: Legal Perspectives**

*(Chair: Susanne Lachenicht, University of Hamburg)*

10.00-10.30

**Presentation 1 "The Freedom of Religious Minority Groups in Greece: Their Legal Status and Treatment by the State and the Authorities"**

**Altana Filos** (MPI for Comparative Public Law and Int'l Law, Heidelberg, Germany)

10.30-11.00

**Presentation 2 "Refugees and European Law"**

**Guy Goodwin-Gill** (All Soul's College, Oxford, UK)



- 11.00-12.00 *Discussion*
- 12.00-13.00 *Lunch at Warburg-Haus*
- 13.00-16.30** **Afternoon session: Religion, Refugees and European Identities in Early Modern Europe**  
*(Chair: Natalia Muchnik, EHESS, Paris)*
- 13.00-13.30 **Presentation 1 “Anti-Judaism in the Visual Culture of Late Medieval Spain”**  
**Carlos Espi-Forcen** (University of Murcia, Spain)
- 13.30-14.00 **Presentation 2 “Irish Catholic Migrants and the Irish Past in Eighteenth Century France”**  
**Liam Chambers** (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland)
- 14.00-15.00 *Discussion*
- 15.00-16.30 **Discussion on follow-up activities/networking/collaboration**
- 16.30 *End of Workshop and departure*

## **5. Statistical Information on participants:**

Gender structure: 6 women, 9 men

Age structure:

Age 25-30: 1

Age 30-40: 6

Age 40-50: 4

Age 50-60: 2

Age 60-70: 2

Countries of Origin (affiliation):

Germany: 5

UK: 3

Spain: 2

France: 1

Ireland: 1

The Netherlands: 2

U.S.A.: 1

## 6. Final list of participants

1. **Prof. Dr. Susanne LACHENICHT**, History Department, Hamburg University, now Bayreuth University, Chair in Early Modern History, Germany.
2. **Dr. William GALLOIS**, Department of History, Roehampton University, London, UK.
3. **Dr. Hayrettin AYDIN**, Department of Intercultural Education, Bremen University, Germany.
4. **Dr. Liam CHAMBERS**, Department of History, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland.
5. **Prof. John EADE**, CRONEM, Roehampton University, London, UK.
6. **Dr. Carlos ESPI-FORCEN**, Department of Art History, University of Murcia, Spain.
7. **Dr. David FELDMAN**, School of History, Birkbeck College, University of London, UK.
8. **Dr. Altana FILOS**, Max-Planck-Institut für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht, Heidelberg, Germany.
9. **Prof. Dr. Dagmar FREIST**, Department of History, Carl-von-Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, Germany.
10. **Dr. Noah GELFAND**, Department of History, New York University, U.S.A.
11. **Dr. Sunne JUTERCZENKA**, International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture, Universität Gießen, Germany.
12. **Prof. Pauline KLEINGELD**, Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen, Instituut voor Wijsbegeerte/SMES, Leiden, The Netherlands.
13. **Dr. Natalia MUCHNIK**, Maître de conférences à l'EHESS, Paris, France.
14. **Prof. Dr. Mohand TILMATINE**, Responsable del Grupo de Investigación LESOAB (HUM683), University of Cadiz, Spain.
15. **Prof. Michael WINTLE**, Leerstoelgroep Moderne Europese geschiedenis, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.