

RT03 COMPARATIVE, TRANSNATIONAL AND GLOBALISED PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN HISTORY

Organisers: Nicolas Kenny (Simon Fraser University)
 Rebecca Madgin (University of Leicester)

Period: All periods

Date: Friday, 31 August 2012

Time: 09:00-12:30

Room: 111

Description

In recent years, historians have increasingly sought to refine understandings of the development, transformation and socio-cultural significance of urban centres by looking beyond the stories of individual cities and situating their objects of study in wider comparative, transnational or global frameworks. From this perspective, the internal dynamics of cities are studied not only for what they say about specific places, but more broadly for what they reveal about the nature of urban life and experience within and across societies. This session invites reflection on the methodological and theoretical implications of studying the history of two or more cities in conjunction with one another. How are comparative, transnational and global approaches defined and justified in the context of urban history, and what new questions and insights do they bring to light? We are particularly interested in the different forms that work with multiple cities can adopt. For instance, if a comparative approach can underscore points of convergence as well as specificities, how do transnational perspectives situate distinct urban centres in relation to one another? Indeed, does a focus on cities in their global context challenge the continued reliance on the nation-state as a point of departure for historical inquiry? How do such perspectives allow for a more complex appreciation of the way urban life intersects with the politics of gender, race and class? Drawing on the theme of the conference, we intend for this session to shed light on how research can be fully grounded in more than one context, moving past research that focuses primarily on one city while appending an arbitrarily chosen minor case study for illustrative purposes. How does knowledge of the urban thus become a lens through which to view broader social, political and cultural processes? In addition to epistemological questions on the merits of comparative and transnational research, we wish to explore practical and methodological concerns associated with these practices. On what basis do we select comparable case studies, and how do we adapt our methods from one country to another? What problems arise from the search for analogous sources in distinct settings, particularly when similar dynamics occurring in more than one place are recorded in entirely different ways? For the promise this widened lens might offer, do such approaches also entail potential risks or pitfalls? This session will examine the ways in which expanding the scope of research to encompass study on more than one city within or beyond a specific region, country or imperial framework can deepen our understanding of what it has historically meant to live in an urban setting. As such, we welcome paper proposals from any period or geographical context(s). Authors may choose to engage methodological and theoretical questions directly, or alternatively they may draw on their own comparative, transnational or global urban research to illustrate the conceptual issues at play.

Scientific Programme

- 1239 “DES FAUSSES CAUSES LOCALES”?: COMPARING PROSTITUTION IN 18TH C. PORT CITIES IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND**
Marion Pluskota (University of Leicester, Centre for Urban History, Leicester, U.K.)
- 262 MEASURING QUALITIES: AN APPLICATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN COMPARATIVE URBAN SOCIAL HISTORY**
Jordan Stanger-Ross (University of Victoria, History, Victoria, Canada)
- 310 COMPARING URBAN REFORM IN LONDON AND BRUSSELS**
Janet Polasky (University of New Hampshire, History, Durham, USA)
- 1312 (TRANS)NATIONALISM AND THE GERMAN CITY**
Janet Ward (The University of Oklahoma, History Department, Norman, USA)
- 1603 WHOSE "URBAN INTERNATIONALE"? INTERMUNICIPALISM IN EUROPE, C.1924-36: THE VALUE OF A DECENTRIST APPROACH TO TRANSNATIONAL URBAN HISTORY**
Stefan Couperus (Utrecht University, Department of History, Groningen, The Netherlands); *Shane Ewen* (Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds, U.K.)
- 324 ALPHAVILLE REVISITED: TRANS-NATIONALIZING THE HISTORY OF URBAN SECURITY AND SEGREGATION IN THE AGE OF GATED COMMUNITIES**
Harold Platt (Loyola University Chicago, History, Chicago, USA)
- 837 BRING SOME SWEEP TO THOSE STREETS: REFLECTIONS ON WRITING A GLOBAL HISTORY OF URBAN SEGREGATION**
Carl Nightingale (State university of New York at Buffalo, Transnational Studies, Buffalo, USA)
- 1450 TOWARDS GLOBAL HISTORIES OF SOUTH ASIAN CITIES**
Nikhil Rao (Wellesley College, History, Wellesley, USA)
- 270 WORLD URBAN CULTURAL HISTORY AND “NONWESTERN” STORIES, THE CITY OF DIU AS AN INTERFACE OF EAST AND WEST**
Nuno Grancho (University of Coimbra, Portugal)