Unity in Diversity:
Transnational Identity Politics in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Dr Corinne Geering

Time: Wednesday, 9.15 – 10.45
Place: GESI, Emil-Fuchs-Straße 1, room 3.15

The aim of this seminar is to critically engage with the notion of collective identity through the history of identity politics in the 19th and 20th centuries. Collective identity, loosely defined as a sense of belonging to a group of people, usually denotes sameness among the group’s members, be it linked to ethnicity, religion, gender or nationality. Ideas of nationalism and nation-building processes have long relied on the perceived homogeneity of groups of people as the basis of collective identity. Therefore, political programmes aiming at national cohesion have also entailed exclusion of people presented to be alien to the nation. At the same time, however, there were other political programmes ranging from state-building and international cooperation to supranational institutions that sought to integrate cultural difference as a central element in collective identity projects.

Nowadays, the motto of ‘Unity in Diversity’ is at the core of several states policies across the world and thus reflects the globalisation of modern societies. This seminar will provide an overview of such transnational identity projects. In a global comparative perspective, the readings and coursework will focus on efforts by states and societies to shape collective identities based on cultural diversity. The seminar discussion will take the rich research literature on collective identity, especially in relation to nationalism, as a point of departure and reflect on imperial, federal, postcolonial and post-migrant identity politics. Case studies to be explored include Russia, the USA and India among others as well as supranational institutions (e.g., the European Union) and global projects such as socialist internationalism.
SYLLABUS
The sessions of the first section will be held online. The readings and instructions for the online tasks will be provided on Moodle.

SECTION 1: HOW TO CONCEIVE OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES (ONLINE)

Online Task 1: What Are Collective Identities?

Online Task 2: Collective Identities and Nationalism

Online Task 3: How to Approach Diversity in Collective Identities?

Online Task 4: Federalism

SECTION 2: ‘UNITY IN DIVERSITY’ WITHIN THE STATE

6 May 2020
Imperialism (Case Studies: Austria-Hungarian and British Empires)
13 May 2020

**How to Write a History of Transnational Collective Identity? (Case Study: Ukraine)**

20 May 2020

**Immigration and Settler Societies (Case Study: USA)**

27 May 2020

**Anti-totalitarianism (Case Study: Switzerland)**

3 June 2020

**Postcolonialism (Case Study: India)**

10 June 2020

**Post-Apartheid (Case Study: South Africa)**
SECTION 3: GLOBAL AND SUPRANATIONAL IDENTITY POLITICS

17 June 2020

Socialist Internationalism (Case Study: Soviet Union)

24 June 2020

Supranational Unions (Case: EU)

1 July 2020

International Organisations (Case Study: UNESCO)

8 July 2020

Post-Migrant Societies (Case Study: Germany)

15 July 2020

Wrap-up session