

CFP: Cultural & Technological Transfers in Global and Comparative Perspectives, 18th – 20th Centuries

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In recent years “transfer” has gradually evolved into an umbrella term in the humanities and social sciences. In their works scholars describe or analyze “cultural transfer” (Espagne 2013, Middell 2020), “technology transfer” (Hughes, & Pinch, 1987), etc. The increase of scholarly interest in transfers, in turn, has led to an expansion of research in the fields of technological, political and economic history. But this has also led to the fact that instances of transfers have become divided into narrow cases. For example, economic and technological transfers are studied separately within the fields of economic history and history of technologies, respectively (Davids, 2016). Authors who tackle the issues of cultural transfer also work in different disciplinary subfields: literary studies (Lüsebrink 2008, Roland 2016), translation studies (Göpferich 2007, Roig-Sanz & Meylaerts 2018), cultural history (Espagne 2013, Middell 2014). Yet because transfers overlap (Werner & Zimmerman 2003), interdisciplinary investigations of transfers can lead to rethinking of agencies and channels that enable the former. For example, technical specialists working abroad are carriers of professional knowledge and simultaneously agents of sociocultural practices. The transfer of architectural and urban planning may also simultaneously include political, cultural, and technological transfers, in municipal government, art and construction areas.

Some issues that we would like to discuss within the wider framework of the conference that focuses on the transfer history include (but are not limited to) (1) linearity, (2) compatibility of transfers with other approaches and methods, (3) problematization of the concept of border.

What is the specificity of the transfer methodology versus the specificity of a concrete historical case? Which methodological approaches could one borrow from other disciplines? How should one study transfers beyond Western European context (e.g., in the Russian / Soviet or Chinese context)? How should one analyze and approach the nonlinearity and asymmetry of the transfer processes given different space-time continua? What measurable transformations took place during the transfer (hybridization, modification, adaptation, etc.)?

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