

History Department

Introduction

The research mission of the Department of History of the Erasmus School of History Culture and Communication (ESHCC) is to conduct high-quality research and to disseminate its results at national and international levels.

The **key objective** of the department's research is to improve the understanding of current developments in societies around the globe by analysing long-term historical processes, the experiences, aspirations and struggles of people in the past, how these were articulated, and have been perceived, imagined, mediated and remediated. The internationally oriented research programme consists of **three major research pillars**:

1. *Economic History and International Relations*
2. *Historical Culture and Theory of History*
3. *Global History Research Cluster*

These three research pillars of the Department of History share an approach focusing on the interaction between the local, the national and the global since the (late) 17th century. We investigate how these interactions were influenced and shaped by economic developments, intercultural encounters and changing sociopolitical systems and parameters. What was in this respect the impact of globalising processes on the local level and vice versa? Where can the interconnecting zones, networks or intermediary organisations be identified and how did they function? What did these intertwined connections do to imperial nation states, transnational organisations, colonised societies or local institutions? What was its impact on large enterprises and small businesses, political entities, societal formation, and people's daily life in the metropolis and former colonies, and the migratory space in-between? How did these processes – often accompanied by large-scale violence – affect national economies, historical culture, personal and corporate memories, the use of (popular) media and historical consciousness in society?

Economic History and International Relations

Research leader: Prof. Hein Klemann

Chair Economic History and Social Relations

Economic History and International Relations focuses on processes of regional economic integration and transnational relations. While in the 19th and 20th centuries politicians were often nationalistic, companies became multinational or had intense transnational relations. The target of this programme is to analyse the tension between these two developments, including the history of economic and political integration and disintegration. Linked with that is the question of why certain economic activities became important in specific economic regions and then disappeared again. This historical research combines applied economic theory and theories of international relations with qualitative and quantitative history, and geographical information systems. The programme concentrates on the question of why certain economic spaces urbanised, modernised, became dominant centres of economic activity and remained so, despite political wars, crises and changes in technology.

Organisation

The research is organised within the Erasmus Centre for the History of the Rhine and the Rotterdam Centre of Modern Maritime History (in close cooperation with the Maritime Museum Rotterdam). Related to this research is the business history initiative, a cooperation with the Erasmus Research School of Management, in which modern business history is combined with theories on management, corporate strategy and finance. In this project the history of the fashion industry is emphasised.

Erasmus Centre for the History of the Rhine

www.eshcc.eur.nl/english/research/researchcenter/centre_for_the_history_of_the_rhine/

The activities of this centre comprise:

- Research on the economic history of the Rhine
- Participation in the Transnational Rhine Network (jointly with Goethe University)
- Organisation of annual conferences (jointly with Goethe University)
- Providing access to publications and other resources on the history of the Rhine

Research Centre Modern Maritime History (RCMMH)

www.eshcc.eur.nl/english/research/researchcenter/research_centre_modern_maritime_history/

Established in 2014, the Modern Maritime History research group at the Maritime Museum Rotterdam and Erasmus University Rotterdam studies the history of Dutch shipbuilding, the port of Rotterdam and its links with the hinterland and the Dutch offshore industry. These topics will be the subject of academic research and are also incorporated in the history curriculum at Erasmus University. The Modern Maritime History chair group, as it is known, is a collaborative venture between the Maritime Museum and Erasmus University.

Business History @ Erasmus www.erim.eur.nl/centres/business-history/about/

This research group brings together business researchers with an interest in the history of business. They study the historical evolution of business systems, entrepreneurs and firms, as well as their interaction with their political, economic and social environment (Jones & Zeitlin, 2007). As such, business history research is multidisciplinary by nature and active researchers in this field are scattered over different disciplines. The goal of this platform is to unite researchers from the ESHCC and the schools of Business, Economics, Social Sciences and Law in their endeavours to improve our academic knowledge in the field of business history. The history of the fashion industry is an important element of this research.

Societal relevance

The researchers of this programme have close contacts with the Transnational Rhine Network, maritime museums and business institutes, and stimulate the transfer of their knowledge.

Historical Culture and Theory of History

www.eshcc.eur.nl/english/chc/center_for_historical_culture/

Research leader: Prof. Maria Grever

Chair Theory and Methodology of History; Director, Center for Historical Culture

The past is not simply gone. It is constantly actualised through memory and imagination. Memories are expressed in various media – from cultural heritage, history textbooks to re-enactments and video games – and are inspired by local, national and global encounters. A central concept to understand how people relate to the past is "historical culture", a meta-historical notion that refers to three levels of analysis: narratives and performances of the past; mnemonic infrastructures (e.g. the existence of museums, school history, national holidays); underlying conceptions of history (Grever 2009; Grever & Adriaansen, 2017). This kind of research is located at the Center for Historical Culture (CHC).

Researchers at the CHC investigate cross-cultural interactions and constructions of identity since the late 17th century, including its effects on societies, communities and networks in the globalising world. They reflect on historical consciousness, memory, conceptions of history, heritage, popular culture, the use of qualitative and quantitative methods, digital humanities, and they conduct empirical research about expressions and meanings of the past.

Organisation

Established in 2006, the current team of the CHC consists of 18 researchers, including two endowed professors: *Historical Culture and Education* and *Popular Historical Culture and War*. The CHC collaborates with members of the ERMeCC programme (ESHCC), Erasmus Studio, the LDE Centre for Global Heritage and Development, the KNAW NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, the National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts (LKCA), the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness (UBC Vancouver) and the European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO). Several research projects have been funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), e.g., *Heritage Education, Plurality of Narratives and Shared Historical Knowledge* (2009-2014) and *Historical Scholarship and School History: National Narratives in Dutch and English Textbooks* (2010-2016). Recently the centre has been the leading unit of the *Research Excellence Initiative* grant for the programme *War! Popular Culture and European Heritage of Major Armed Conflicts* (2015-2019).

Societal relevance

Since 2007 the CHC has received a large international collection of history textbooks, audiovisual materials and documentation on the learning and teaching of history, donated by scholars and institutions. The Erasmus University Library made the History Didactics Collection searchable through the library catalogue. More than 5000 titles are now available (www.eshcc.eur.nl/english/chc/resources/hdc/). The CHC also initiated a Professional Learning Community by organising retraining activities for high school teachers of history in the Rotterdam region. Teachers are provided a substantive deepening and didactic design of lessons on heritage and identity. For these activities the CHC collaborates with the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences and the Open University.

Next, the CHC founded the International Network Popular Uses of the Past, a collaboration with the Institute for Public History (Ghent University), the master programme History (University of Cologne) and the master programme Public History (Utrecht University). The network aims to intensify and stimulate research, thereby elaborating on the increasing popularity of research into popular culture and public history, which has led to PhD projects on the image of history from informal education through museums, theatre and video games.

Throughout time our world has been shaped by the circulation of people, commodities and ideas, as well as by their interaction. Central in this research are the concepts of encounter and agency – of people, things and ideas – as well as the outcome of those processes. In this approach the local, regional, national and international levels are included; however, the global analysis goes beyond as well as between those levels. It looks for the local in the global and vice versa. Thereby it seeks to explain the ways in which networks and flows have influenced the everyday lives of people, their identifications and ideas, and how they have set commodities and their meanings in motion.

This research starts from the premise that human interaction and movement have shaped both the past and the present. The encounters model is an alternative to the national and regional models. It emphasises cultural contact and exchange as agents of historical change. The topic includes migration, identity formation and commodities. A combination of methods is used for drawing from oral history, applied anthropological and sociological theory, and social and economic history. The geographical scope ranges from Africa to Europe, to South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, North America, and the Caribbean. There the impact is studied of the interaction between local and global processes in colonial and postcolonial conditions, particularly through migrations and diasporas and the changes they bring about, one of them being cultural and religious diversity. This research therefore focuses also on issues of citizenship, identity formation and politics, heritage, gender relations and (ethnic-cultural) entrepreneurship.

Recent research projects focused on transnational Asian-African business elites in the 19th and 20th centuries, East India Companies in the 17th and 18th centuries, slavery in the Dutch Black Atlantic, Islam and globalisation in Africa, religious plurality in the Middle East; Caribbean, North-African and Middle-eastern diasporas in Europe, globalisation and cultural heritage and globalisation of ideas.

Organisation

Researchers of global history in the Department of History established the Global History Research Cluster (GHRC) in 2014. Up until now this cluster has consisted of 11 members, most of whom collaborate with members of other research centres and programmes within the ESHCC as well. Half of GHRC is also a member of the LDE Centre for Global Heritage and Development. Several research projects have been or are still funded by NWO. In 2016, one programme within the GHRC was the leading unit of the Research Excellence Initiative grant for research on History, Sport and Nation.

Societal relevance

Global histories often illuminate contemporary issues in surprising and productive ways. GHRC considers participation in public debates and public outreach a vital part of its academic work. Members of GHRC actively participate in social and political debates in the media and public meetings on issues such as racism, refugees and Islam. Several members have contributed to television programmes and documentaries and large-scale exhibitions. Apart from scholarly publications, GHRC members publish their academic findings for larger audiences as well in popular journals, books and newspapers.