



WORKSHOP

WHAT ABOUT THE NODES AND LINKS?

Approaching Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Ottoman and German History
through Network Theory

21-22 February 2014

History Department, Heidelberg University

With presentations by

Prof. Dr. Adelheid von Saldern (University of Hannover)
Prof. Dr. Christoph K. Neumann (LMU Munich, [tbc](#))

Chairs

Prof. Dr. Katja Patzel-Mattern (Heidelberg University)
Johannes Zimmermann, M.A. (Heidelberg University, [tbc](#))
Dr. Stefanie van de Kerkhof (University of Mannheim)

The workshop will explore possibilities to use network theory for the historical analysis of political, economic, and social processes. It is our goal to 'test' network-theoretical approaches by debating their applicability to selected research projects concerning German and Ottoman history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The workshop will host two prominent guest researchers: **Prof. Dr. Adelheid von Saldern** (University of Hannover) will give a lecture concentrating on the German context, whilst **Prof. Dr. Christoph K. Neumann** (LMU Munich, [tbc](#)) will deal with late Ottoman history. We would like to invite historians and social scientists to deliberate the possibilities and limitations of network theory for historical research in this workshop.

In the context of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the German Confederation and the later German Reich, as well as the dominions of the Ottoman State, are particularly interesting research objects for 'testing' and applying network-theoretical approaches. In both the Ottoman and the German contexts, researchers find themselves dealing with territories, which were heterogeneous politically, socially, and culturally. Moreover, both political entities were experiencing a time of transition in this period. This transition was characterized by political and economic instability, which went hand in hand with the erosion of institutional arrangements as well as traditional structures. Viewed in a larger context, such developments can be connected to the fact that both polities were confronted with globally connected ideas and developments that manifested themselves especially in the context of a European vision of 'modernity' conceptualized through buzz words such as nationalism, imperialism, and industrialism. What is interesting here is how agents in the Ottoman as well as in the German contexts reacted to and dealt with these notions. When compared to e.g. France as an early nation state or England as a pioneer among industrialized countries, both polities underwent their very own peculiar paths of development. It is this similarity between the Ottoman and German cases which makes a parallel examination of their histories a worthwhile endeavour. Indeed, comparative analysis of the Ottoman Empire and the German territories becomes even more appealing when considering that, despite their similarities, both historical spaces differed significantly in terms of their political and economic configurations. Finally, an engagement with both spaces is absolutely necessary when addressing research questions which attempt to go beyond German-Ottoman 'interdependencies'¹ in processes of state building in order to investigate potential parallels on economic and social levels. Here, it is

¹ Fuhrmann, Malte: Zwei Völker in Waffen. Türkisch-deutsche Interdependenzen beim nation building, in: Brunnbauer, Ulf, Helmedach, Andreas, Troebst, Stefan (ed.): Schnittstellen. Gesellschaft, Nation, Konflikt und Erinnerung in Südosteuropa. Festschrift für Holm Sundhausen zum 65. Geburtstag, München 2007, p. 231-244.

also possible to ask if convergences between the Ottoman and German contexts were supported, or even caused, by particular structures and paths of development within each space.

These research objectives raise questions about the actors and authorities who were active in various political, economic, and social processes and also direct the researchers' attention to different agents' ways of interaction and cooperation. In this framework, networks as social or institutional constructions, their emergence, and their functioning become the main focus of analysis. Today, the 'social network' as such represents an omnipresent – not to say 'en vogue' – concept, which has become part of our everyday language. However, 'social network' also refers to a theoretical concept that has gained popularity within historical research during the last two decades.² Nevertheless, in order to be able to use the 'network' concept as an analytic tool in historical studies, it arguably becomes necessary to formulate a clear definition of the term with respect to the particular research projects. In this regard scholars not only need to delineate the notion of the 'network' in order to distinguish it from concepts of other social phenomena, but they also strive to find tailor made ways to operationalize and to adapt theoretical models of interest for the needs of their historical research projects. The workshop will offer an opportunity for discussing such undertakings.

We therefore invite researchers in history and the social sciences undertaking research in German and late-Ottoman history to present their projects and the theoretical and methodological concepts underlying their work. The joint discussions about the projects presented shall serve to address the functionality and utility of network theory by exemplifying models of its operationalization whilst dealing with two culturally and linguistically different spaces – each possessing their very own societal, governmental, and economic characteristics and development processes. Additionally, the workshop aims to discover possible similarities and reciprocities between the German and the Ottoman contexts as a step towards a "*histoire croissée*" of these two regions. Finally, the focus on these polities will create an opportunity for young scholars of Ottoman and German studies to network.

The workshop is directed primarily, but not exclusively, at doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, whom we would like to invite to discuss their research projects and their theoretical and methodological concepts in this workshop. It is possible to present projects, which deal with both Ottoman and German history, or which concentrate solely on one of the two polities. If the latter case predominates, the comparative analysis of both polities will take place in the joint discussions. The projects presented may be at an early conceptual stage. It is crucial, however, that a theoretical and methodological approach, which may be still preliminary in character, has been formulated for each project. Presenters will receive a small allowance for their participation. The organizing team will help you find accommodation and provide directions upon request.

We invite researchers and students interested in presenting their work to send a short outline of their projects (2 pages), including a title for their presentation by

31 October 2013

to ws-netzwerk-2014@zegk.uni-heidelberg.de.

The workshop will be open to those who only wish to participate in discussion, rather than present papers of their own. We kindly request interested attendants to register via email by **31 January 2014**.

Venue

Heidelberg University
History Department
Grabengasse 3-5
69117 Heidelberg
Rooms: Übungsraum (ÜR) 1 & 2

The workshop will start on 21 February 2014, at 1.30 p.m. and end on 22 February at 5 p.m. A joint dinner is planned on the evening of 21 February.

Please find further Information on <http://vonknotenundkanten.wordpress.com/>

² Cf.: Hertner, Peter: Das Netzwerkkonzept in der historischen Forschung, in: Bommes, Michael, Tacke, Veronika (ed.): Netzwerke in der funktional differenzierten Gesellschaft, Wiesbaden 2011, p. 67.

Organisation

The workshop is hosted and funded by the Professorship for Economic and Social History, Prof. Dr. Katja Patzel-Mattern, at the Department of History, Heidelberg University. The organisers, Ayşegül Arıt, M.A. and Rabea Limbach, M.A. are doctoral students of Prof. Dr. Patzel-Mattern. Their research projects deal with economic networks of early industrial entrepreneurs in the “Rheinkreis”, a Bavarian province on the left bank of the Rhine in the early nineteenth century (Rabea Limbach), and with communication structures as well as political and societal networks in the late Ottoman Empire (Ayşegül Arıt).

Contact:

Prof. Dr. Katja Patzel-Mattern
z.Hd. Ayşegül Arıt, M.A. & Rabea Limbach, M.A.
Professur für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte
Historisches Seminar der Universität Heidelberg
Grabengasse 3-5
69117 Heidelberg
E-Mail: ws-netzwerk-2014@zegk.uni-heidelberg.de