

## FAMILIAR GROUND

### Unravelling the links between nationalism and tourism (18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century)

Tourism fuels nationalism. At least, that is the impression one gets from a – fairly short – list of books and articles on the topic. Through their excursions to national monuments, heritage sites and landscapes in their own country, tourists are unconsciously turned into proud patriots. Nationhood is all too often presented as the prime motivation and inevitable outcome of (domestic) travel and tourism, while recent theories in nationalism have cast some serious doubt on such assumptions. Drawing on these new insights, our session aims to challenge the idea that tourism automatically – as a sort of *deus ex machina* – feeds nationalism. We'll look at three levels to gain a better understanding of the complex interaction between both phenomena.

First of all, the session zeroes in on the production of national imagery *from above* in the policy of Tourist Information Office's [TIO] in posters, brochures, guide books, promotional films, and other material. Secondly, we will look at the meso-level of commercial stakeholders (travel agencies, touring operators, hotels,...), associations (touring clubs, youth associations, camera clubs,...) and other initiatives. Last but not least, the session aims to uncover nationalism from below. Innovative concepts, including theories on banal nationalism and national indifference, have challenged the idea that top-down initiatives were swallowed hook, line and sinker by ordinary citizens. National identities rather refracted in fifty shades of grey, as people had the agency to appropriate nationhood idiosyncratically, haphazardly, or selectively – not to mention the option to deflect or even to reject it.

We invite participants to reflect on the interaction between grassroots and top-down initiatives in a variety of countries (Europe and beyond), periods (from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century), and angles. Drawing on the insights from the performative, spatial, and other “turns” we also encourage participants to move beyond a traditional focus on discursive practices. Nationhood is not only constructed in what tourists say or write, but also in images (photos & films), objects (souvenirs), (everyday) rituals/performances, space (destinations & itineraries), emotions and corporality (pride, shame, reverence,...).

Abstracts (max. 500 words) and a short CV should be sent to [andreas.stynen@kuleuven.be](mailto:andreas.stynen@kuleuven.be) or [gerrit.verhoeven@uantwerpen.be](mailto:gerrit.verhoeven@uantwerpen.be) before 13 April 2019.

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