

International Conference:

History of Transparency in Politics and Society (June, 18. & 19. 2019)

(Lichtenberghaus at TU Darmstadt)

The demand for "transparency" is omnipresent. Transparency is the standard demand of critical observers in almost all areas: in health care, in football, at the university - shortcomings in this respect are diagnosed everywhere, and those responsible are eagerly committed to greater transparency. Moreover, transparency is considered a prerequisite for good governance, for political participation and thus for a developed civil society.

On closer inspection, however, transparency proves to be a problematic concept. For transparency is only apparently the characteristic of a political system. In reality, it is mainly reflected in political demands - complete transparency has not yet been achieved anywhere. Transparency seems to function primarily as an ideal, coupled with continuing experiences of deficits. Therefore, measures to increase transparency often stir up mistrust.

While transparency in day-to-day political business continues to be a miracle formula, a largely sceptical scientific research of this concept has begun in recent years. Especially in the fields of political and social sciences, media studies and law, a research context with conferences and publications has emerged. However, historians are just beginning to discover the topic. The conference is intended to provide a forum for historical research which deals with the concept of transparency in politics and time diagnosis since the Enlightenment.

During the conference we will focus on the invention of the concept of transparency, elucidate corruption and transparency and political parties. We will discuss instruments for 'transparency', the role of transparency actors and the construction of the transparent politician. The limits of transparency will be analysed in such contexts like secret services and economic policy. The empirical examples are from the period of modern history with a strong focus in the 20th century. Geographically, European countries and North America will be privileged.

The conference is organised by the Franco-German research group HISTRANS (headed by Frédéric Monier, Olivier Dard and Jens Ivo Engels) and financially supported by ANR and DFG. The scientific selection committee for the conference also includes Andreas Fahrmeir, Ronald Kroeze, Silvia Marton and Gemma Rubí.

Program:

18.06.2019

09.00-09.30: Jens Ivo Engels (Darmstadt): Welcoming and Introduction

Panel 1: The 'Invention' of Transparency and Criticism of Opacity

09.30-10.30: Olivier Meuwly (Lausanne): *Entre anarchisme et libéralisme: Les premiers débats autour de l'idée d'une société transparente*

Theo Jung (Freiburg): *The Political Sphinx: Political Opacity as Resource and Risk in Napoleon III and Benjamin Disraeli*

10.30-11.00: Discussion

11.00-11.30: **Coffeebreak**

Panel 2: Transparency, Corruption and Party Finance in Romania around 1900

11.30-12.30: Silvia Marton (Bucharest): *Transparency and corruption in Romanian electoral politics (1866-1914)*

Alexandra Iancu (Bucharest): *'Everything must change if everything is to stay as it is': Party finance contingencies and intra-party transparency in the beginning of the 20th century Romania*

12.30-13.00: Discussion

13.00-14.30: **Lunchbreak**

Panel 3: Transparency Instruments: Parliamentary Enquiries in the 20th Century

14.30-15.30: Sandra Zimmermann (Darmstadt): *Between "clarity" and "darkness". The role of public disclosure in the Barmat-parliamentary committees (1925)*

Ronald Kroeze (Amsterdam): *Transparency's rise: the Dutch RSV-enquiry and the context of the 1980s*

15.30-16.00: Discussion

16.00-16.30: **Coffeebreak**

Panel 4: Secret Services: In Opposition to Transparency?

16.30-17.30: Florian Altenhöner (Berlin): *Selective Transparency. Private intelligence services in Germany, 1918/ 1934*

Christopher Kirchberg (Bochum): *Surveillance, control and transparency. Reflections on the relation of intelligence service and society*

17.30-18.00: Discussion

From 19.00: **Conference Dinner** at the restaurant 'Die Sitte'

19.06.2019

Panel 5: Transparency Actors: Whistle-Blowers and the Media

- 09.00-10.00: Joris Gijsenbergh (Nijmegen): *Struggling for the right to know. Whistle-blowers, their supporters and their opponents in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Germany (1945-2018)*
- Martin Mainka (Darmstadt): *Media as Transparency-Actors. The case of the SPIEGEL during the Flick-Affair (1980s)*
- 10.00-10.30: Discussion
- 10.30-11.00: **Coffeebreak**

Panel 6: The (Auto-)Production of the Transparent Politician

- 11.00-12.00: Harm Kaal (Nijmegen): *The private becoming public: politics, popular culture and the mediatization of politicians' private persona in the 1960s and 1970s*
- Vojin Saša Vukadinović (Basel/Berlin): *"Let me make one thing perfectly clear". Richard Nixon's attempted language of transparency*
- 12.00-12.30 Discussion
- 12.30-14.00: **Lunchbreak**

Panel 7: Implementing Transparency in Public Bodies: An Ambivalent Task

- 14.00-15.00: Cora Schmitt-Ott (Tübingen): *Saving Secrecy. The "Commission on Protecting and Reducing Government Secrecy" and its origins, ca. 1965-1995*
- Eric Dehay (Arras) / Nathalie Lévy (Tours): *Une histoire de la transparence des banques centrales dans la littérature économique*
- 15.00-15.30: Discussion
- 15.30-16.00: **Concluding Remarks**
- 16.00-16.30: **Coffee**



