

Lucerne, May 1, 2012

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Graduate School of Humanities and Social
Sciences

***International Conference:
New Forms of Multiple Belonging – Multidisciplinary Perspectives***

Call for Papers

Since Georg Simmel we are used to see modern individuality as being formed and characterized by the fact that each person belongs to a multiplicity of different and overlapping social “circles” (groups, communities or organisations). Modern individuality and multiple belonging are thus seen as resulting from the processes of functional differentiation within modern societies. At the beginning of the 20th Century there were fears that this phenomenon endangers social cohesion and individual coherence. Later on it has been realized that functional differentiation and membership in distinct and overlapping communities and organizations is not only a productive feature of a dynamic society but that most individuals learn to cope with the resulting difficulties and to exploit the opportunities of their multiple belonging.

Recently, we discover forms of multiple belonging of a different kind: individuals belong to multiple communities or organizations that are functionally identical or at least highly similar: citizens who are members of two or more national polities (dual citizens); circular migrants and mobile workers who are connected to two or more national cities/societies/economies; children who are embedded in two families when their parents split up and formed new separate but overlapping families; scholars who are affiliated with more than one university, believers who’s religious practices go beyond the canon of one religion and so on.

At the beginning of the 21st century these new forms of multiple belonging are getting recognized in the public and scholarly discourse. Once again, a dispute is emerging about the relevance and characteristics as well as about the causes and consequences of this phenomenon: Do these new forms of multiple memberships and belonging represent a similar important feature of “late modernity/second modernity” as has been assumed for multiple belonging in functionally different communities and organizations for “early/first modernity”? How new and distinct is it really – if we com-

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pare the new form of multiple belonging not only with the classic modern expressions but also with earlier times? What are the driving forces for the new phenomenon? What are the resulting challenges and opportunities for individuals as well as for communities/organizations?

Recent debates on multiple belonging have, however, been largely cantoned to different disciplines in the social sciences and humanities without sparking interdisciplinary dialogue between the disciplines. It is therefore the aim of the graduate conference to welcome contributions of these different disciplines in the social sciences and humanities (such as political science, study of religions, Jewish studies, philosophy, ethnology, sociology, history or related disciplines) in order to discuss and exchange views and insights with regard to the contemporary challenge of multiple belonging.

Organisational scheme

Participating disciplines:	Political science, study of religions, Jewish studies, philosophy, ethnology, sociology, history or related disciplines
Date of conference:	26 th -27 th of October 2012
Venue:	University of Lucerne, Switzerland Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Deadline for the submission of proposals	31st of July 2012
Number of active participants:	20
Overall scheme:	Three to four panel sessions and one keynote speech (in the evening):
Time Scheme:	Presentation: 20-25 minutes Discussion: 20-25 minutes
Keynote speech:	to be determined.
Support:	Subsidies for travel and accommodation will be available for participants without funding possibilities from their home institution
Address:	Please send your proposal (title, abstract, brief CV) in an attachment to the following e-mail-address: gsl@unilu.ch
Contact:	For questions contact Dr. Michael Bloch: michael.bloch@unilu.ch