

## ABOUT US

The International Research Training Group (IRTG) “Diversity” proposes an innovative research program in the contested fields of diversity, multiculturalism, and transnationalism by examining paradigmatic changes and historical transformations in interpreting multicultural realities in North America (Québec and Canada in particular) and Europe (Germany and France in particular) since the 18th century.

Focusing on dynamic processes that engender diversity, its analytical framework offers new perspectives for transnational and area studies as well as cross-cultural research.

Through the transversal analytic lenses of politics, practices, and narratives, the IRTG investigates the mediation and translation of cultural differences in micro-, meso- and macro-level empirical constellations, yielding fruitful and innovative topics for these.



## PARTNER



## INTERNATIONAL TRAINING RESEARCH GROUP



## MEDIATING DIFFERENCE IN TRANSCULTURAL SPACES

## CONTACT

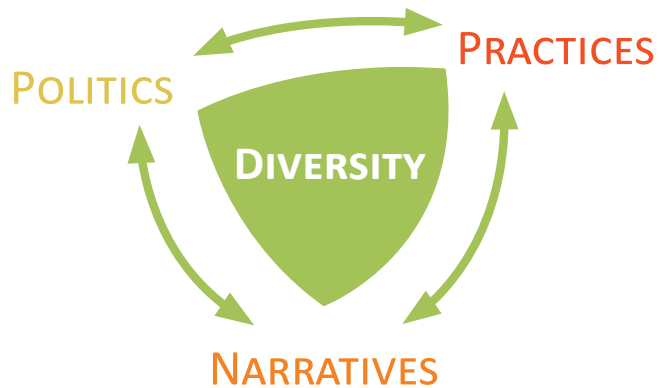
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# research program ◆

The IRTG will investigate diversity and the mediation of difference in North America and Europe since the 18th century through the lenses of three dominant modes of social action that will serve as transversal themes structuring the research program: the *politics*, the *practices* and the *narratives* of diversity.

Empirically, these modes of social action are inseparable, of course. But we wish to make the analytical distinction between these three modes in order to explore the *conflictual*, the *quotidian*, and the *communicative* character of mediation (of difference) as a complex social interaction producing distinct, yet often overlapping localities of diversity as well as transcultural spaces.



Studying modes of social action requires taking change, ruptures, breaking points and contestations into account. As analytical concepts they thus help to avoid falling into the trap of reproducing the teleological narratives of modernity (such as evolution, modernization, rationalization, secularization, etc.).

We define each of these terms broadly in a way that cuts across disciplinary boundaries. Hence, these transversal themes also serve as platforms promoting interdisciplinary collaboration in the IRTG.

## ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The IRTG analyzes:

- ◆ the spatial and temporal contextualization and social constructedness of difference
- ◆ mediation and translation processes as drivers of cultural and social change Via the exploration of politics, practices and narratives of diversity we will learn how cultural difference and diversity is mediated in North America and Europe. We will unveil the mutually conditioning factors and parallel processes accounting for the transformative power of diversity.

SPACES / PLACES	GEOGRAPHIC - SYMBOLIC			
TIME; PATTERNS OF INTERPRETATION	Pre-modern era	Nationalist period	Post-national Interval	Time of transnational ambiguity
MODES OF SOCIAL ACTION	POLITICS - PRACTICES - NARRATIVES			

## RESEARCH FOCI

The IRTG investigates:

- ◆ *changing discourses and representation* of diversity over time, including semantic transformations and patterns of intertemporality
- ◆ the *hidden histories* that discursively frame the different paths that Canada/Québec and Germany/France/Europe have taken
- ◆ *mediation and translation* processes as potentially conflict-ridden social practices shaping localities of diversity
- ◆ *espaces vécus*, that is, specific geographic and symbolic spaces to be analyzed from the perspectives of the actors living in these spaces
- ◆ the *overlapping zones of geographical and chronological reach* that include transatlantic interactions and discursive projections.

## THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The research program is based on three interrelated methodological and theoretical principles:

