
Université d’Angers
June 19-20, 2024

Call for papers

This conference of the ANR program EN-MIG https://enmig.hypotheses.org/ is organized at the University of Angers by the UMR TEMOS https://temos.cnrs.fr/, the Pôle universitaire ligérien d’études sur l’enfance-jeunesse https://enfance-jeunesse.fr/ and its chair ‘Parole et pouvoir d’agir des enfants et des jeunes’. It aims at restituting the program’s results on the French case and to start a comparison and to open a dialogue with other colonial empires and territories where children were subjected to forced migrations during the decolonization process.

Argument:

The ANR EN-MIG program (2022-2024) questions the effects of biopolitics on the individual construction of children who have experienced forced migrations. It focuses on forced migration to France or its possessions involving children from different parts of the decaying French colonial empire, primarily Indochina (mixed-race children, children from the troops), Algeria (children from repatriated families from Algeria, including Harki families) and Madagascar (mixed-race and Reunionese children); but also less affected territories such as those of French Equatorial Africa (AEF) or French West Africa (AOF) with the study of minors migrating to mainland France; or even those that experienced decolonization without independence (and became overseas territories and departments, Reunion in particular). These flows that converge on the metropolis have taken place within a common matrix constituted by the processes of decolonization. The comparative dimension lies at the heart of this symposium. It should make it possible to shed light on both the common points and the specificities of each collective migratory history. The trajectories of migrant children are often intertwined and also benefit from being studied from a connected history perspective. The period studied includes migrations that took place until the 1970s, without refraining from taking into account their current extensions. The project also considers the great variability of spaces, contexts and modalities of these migrations.

We define childhood as the age category between birth and civil majority. Young children as well as adolescents and young people are therefore taken into account. This conference is inspired by child-centered research which starts from children's point of view and give them an agency, in particular through the use of children's sources and oral sources with former children. It intends to nuance the notion of constraint in the light of empirical data, a fortiori for children who move without their biological parents. It is indeed important to see migrations both as a source of vulnerability and as a support for building their autonomy and to understand how children and adolescents navigate between constraints and opportunities. Their identity is constructed through an articulation of the framework, the environment (racialization, organization of care, place and type of accommodation, school, camps, homes, etc.), the relationship with others (families, parents, brothers and sisters, other children, religious or secular educators, French people from metropolitan
France, etc.) and identification processes (race, gender, country of origin, religious affiliation, climate and food, language and culture, change of first and/or surname, family left behind, etc.). Proposals may be about all colonial spaces in time of decolonization and follow one or several of these three themes:

1/ Postcolonial challenges of mixed-race children forced migrations

We invite proposals on mixed-race children born from relationships between colonial fathers (soldiers, settlers, etc.) and indigenous mothers. Mixed-race childhood and youth face postcolonial and biopolitics challenges during the decolonization process. Proposals can be about: actors of mixed-race children’s displacements; the postcolonial dimension of the roles assigned to mixed-race children (social construction of crossbreeding, integration’s injunctions, the desire to build a bridge between the metropolis and the lost colonies through the mixed-race children; resilience and the way children reconstructed themselves after these events).

2/ Forced migration and their impact on families

Forced migrations affects individuals’ ties among families. The gap between the society known in early childhood and the host society implies to adjust and modifies identities. Children separated from their families are impacted by postcolonial biopolitics. We encourage proposals on all type of family relationships: parents and children but also internal family relationships – grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins – and especially relationships between brothers and sisters. Some children faced multiples separations and we question the evolution of relationships during migrations. Several generations can be affected by these migrations and separations: how and why? Finally, we are interested by family reunion, be they permanent or temporary, during childhood or later.

3/ Multiples trajectories of children regarding age and genre

We welcome proposals on politics of “integration” and on their impact on the way children aim to integrate into host societies. Be it a thin agency, children have an agency and can seize opportunities in different contexts and despite several constraints. These children often did not understand what they were experiencing during migrations. Different people and institutions have sought to shape their identities, with regard to criteria of gender, age and race. How were these children able to construct themselves as a subject, woman/man, mixed-race/non-white person and migrant? What colonial and postcolonial memories has these childhood experiences produced? We are also interested by transgenerational memory: descents indeed sometimes claim a “story of origins”.

NB:
We particularly welcome proposal based on ego-archives and especially on photographs, because of their crucial role they can plan in the construction of identities.
If the historical approach is privileged, specialists of all social sciences are encouraged to apply to foster multidisciplinary dialogues.

How to apply
Proposals should not exceed more than 2000 characters and should include a title, explain their methodology and present their sources. They should be sent, with a brief CV (1 page), to yves.denechere@univ-angers.fr and zoe.grumberg@univ-angers.fr before October 15, 2023. The
proposals will be selected by the scientific committee and the organizers will send an answer
November 15, 2023.

NB: Before the Conference, in April 2024, each participant will be asked to send a one-page
summary of its paper. A publication project is planned. The final texts must be submitted in
September 2024 and will only be accepted after scientific evaluations.

Accommodation and catering costs will be covered by the organization, travel as far as possible.

Organizers:
- Yves Denéchère, professeur d’histoire contemporaine, scientific coordinator of EN-MIG,
  Université d’Angers-UMR TEMOS
- Raphaëlle Branche, professeure d’histoire contemporaine, scientific officer of EN-MIG,
  Université Paris-Nanterre-ISP
- Violaine Tisseau, chargée de recherche CNRS en histoire contemporaine, scientific officer of EN-
  MIG, CNRS-IMAF
- Zoé Grumberg, postdoctoral researcher in contemporary history in EN-MIG, Université d’Angers-
  UMR TEMOS

Scientific committee (in progress):
- Jennifer Boittin, Professor of French and History, PennState
- Raphaëlle Branche, professeure d’histoire contemporaine, Université Paris-Nanterre
- Yves Denéchère, professeur d’histoire contemporaine, Université d’Angers
- Daniel Foliard, professeur d’histoire contemporaine, Université Paris-Sorbonne
- Zoé Grumberg, chercheuse post-doctorante EN-MIG, Université d’Angers
- Amandine Lauro, chercheuse qualifiée du FNRS en histoire, Université Libre de Bruxelles
- Emmanuelle Saada, professor, departments of French and of History, Columbia University
- Violaine Tisseau, chargée de recherche CNRS en histoire, CNRS-IMAF

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