

Area Studies and transnational scientific careers - shifting expectations

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The creation of the European higher education area and the European research area, known as the Bologna process dramatically increased transnational mobility among young researchers in Europe. The number of foreign PhDs tripled in Germany as well as in France during the last ten years. This increased transnational scientific mobility has also a strong impact on area studies, increasing at the same time the number of non-European doctoral students working on "their" region or country abroad and increasing the mobility among European doctoral students in area studies. The area studies seem particularly open to this mobility, since their systematic integration of scientific literature of the respective regions and their sensitivity for translational issues facilitate the "borderless" circulation of young "knowledge workers" in Europe. However, increased mobility also creates specific challenges for transnational PhDs in area studies in a common European research and education area.

My presentation develops a comparative perspective between France and Germany based on my own research on humanitarian government in Haiti. In order to establish methodological distance from my own production of knowledge my analysis will concentrate on the different written summaries of my thesis project that I produced both in Germany and in France.

The presentation is organized in three parts. First, I will analyse how "Haiti" is conceptualized in terms of general bibliography, main references and major issues in Germany and France. Second, I will show how the socio-historical conditions in France and Germany place Haiti in different territorial conceptions of area studies.

Finally, I will concentrate on area studies research institutions and their impact on my research in both countries.