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Department of Sociology

Award Received Year: 2021

IRIS Area and International Studies Awards for Incoming Graduate Students

Post-Fieldwork Report

During the 2023-2024 academic year, I had the privilege of using the IRIS award to (a) attend the Population Association of America (PAA) 2024 annual meeting in April; (b) attend the American Sociological Association (ASA) 2024 annual meeting in August; and (c) most importantly, conduct archival fieldwork as a research fellow at the International Institute of Social History (*Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis*, [IISG](#)) from May to June.

Located in Amsterdam, Netherlands, the IISG is one of the world's largest archives specializing in labor and social history. Hosted by [Prof. dr. Karin Hofmeester](#), as a research fellow, I had the opportunity to use the library, connect with scholars, and attend various events there. I am interested in the unintended consequences of individual decisions on the global maritime labor market, how recruitment paths influence historical multinational companies (MNCs), and how colonialism shaped nowadays world through chartered companies. Especially, I study the Dutch United East India Company (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, VOC) during 1700-1795.

I was able to refine the research questions for my study after staying at the IISG for data collection. Drawing from personnel and ship records during the second century of the VOC, my research sheds light on this understudied area of socio-historical research. It opens empirical windows for understanding transnational and transcultural historical interactions. It also provides an ontological lens into the “relational” stance in the field of global historical. Maintained in silent archival records, certain relational patterns such as the trade-off decisions were tracked. They were embedded in individual-level agencies and collectively shaped group-level entities. Therefore, an empirical analysis of recruitment in this historical multinational company not only contributes to theorizing beyond job insecurity and performance management but also underscores the importance of relational trends in global historical inquiries.

Additionally, I built valuable networks within Dutch academia and became involved in professional service. Introduced by [Prof. Anne E. C. McCants](#) and [Prof. Martin Ruef](#), I had the opportunity to schedule a meeting with [Prof. dr. Marco van Leeuwen](#) at the IISG. Prof. dr. van Leeuwen is a leading scholar in comparative-historical sociology, who provided valuable insights on navigating the Dutch academic career path and shared details about the organization of the 2025 European Social Science History Conference (ESSHC), which is also organized by the IISG.

I would like to extend my gratitude to both IRIS and the Department of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for providing me with the opportunity to pursue my passions. I believe I can contribute even more in the future and give back to the academic community by sharing my research findings, mentoring other students, and actively participating in departmental and university-level activities. I am committed to fostering a collaborative environment that encourages learning and growth for everyone involved. Thank you once again for your support and for believing in my potential.