

Diplomatic Networking: New Approaches and Methodologies

Wednesday, 15 June 2022 10:45 (1h 30m)

This roundtable features participants in an emerging collaborative research project which aims to facilitate new understanding of the development of the British Diplomatic Service c.1867-1967. The project draws on innovative methodologies, including digital humanities and prosopography, and is based on collaborations between academics from a number of different universities, as well as external partners, including the UK National Archives and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The starting point for the project is the digitisation of the Foreign Office published personnel records – the Foreign Office List and its successors. Based on analysis of this data, the project seeks to shed new light on:

- i) the changing social composition of the British diplomatic service;
- ii) changing attitudes towards developing staff ‘expertise’, whether regional (e.g. Eastern Europe, Latin America) or thematic (e.g. commercial, security, cultural);
- iii) examining how peripatetic career patterns could still allow a high degree of organisational integration based on iterated interactions between diplomatic staff both in London and in post abroad.

The ultimate objective of the project is to produce a publicly-available dataset that will present the career trajectories of British foreign service personnel in innovative ways (including interactive maps, links to primary sources etc.) This will constitute a valuable public source of engagement for those interested in British foreign policy, diplomacy, social history and network analysis.

Membership

Track Classification: British International History Working Group