

# Planning – a global political religion?

**Veranstaltungsort** University of Strasbourg

**Termin** 27.05.2020 - 29.05.2020 ganztags

## International Conference at the University of Strasbourg.

Social and economic planning became a global phenomenon in the second half of the 20th century. Not only in socialist countries of Eastern Europe but also in Western countries (France, Italy among others), in Africa and Asia (Egypt, Angola, Japan and Brazil i.e.), efforts to modernize society by implementing economic plans in the decades following the Second World War dominated the political agenda. “Modernization”, “development”, “planning” – the labels applied to these schemes could vary while important assumptions remained the same: experts should lead the evolution of society to an advanced stage of history by fostering economic production and the creation of a new political and cultural environment. Broadening an expression Tony Judt coined for postwar Europe one might call planning the “political religion” of elites after 1945 on a worldwide scale.

Recent scholarship has stressed the intimate relations between different settings of planning that cut across the political differences of socialist, liberal democratic and authoritarian regimes. The conference will focus on regions that have only been discussed separately so far in order to bring the results of important contributions on the subject together. It will examine common strategies in European and non-European contexts explored by global historians and social scientists and relate them to concepts of planning developed in Eastern and Southern Europe that have been addressed by scholars of European contemporary history. The combination of these research strands not only promises a more comprehensive picture but, more importantly, offers an opportunity to scrutinize and hone several basic ideas inherent in the concept of planning: first, the idea of the periphery that can be spelled out in various ways but is a driving force in the planning contexts of Southern and Eastern Europe as well as in non-European settings; second, the ideology and reality of statehood and state capacities that in most of these

circumstances were held to be the backbone for social and economic planning; third, the claims for expertise used to legitimize planning projects and their execution. Emphasizing periphery, statehood and experts within different global contexts will deepen our understanding of the heyday of social and economic planning in the 20th century. At the same time, it can help to open up new perspectives on the relationship between global and European history.

Some central themes and questions could be:

1. Networks of planning reaching beyond the borders of East/West, West/South, East/South
2. International organizations as hotbeds of planning expertise
3. Statehood and periphery in the theory and practice of planning
4. Claims of expertise and conflicts between groups of actors involved in planning

The conference will be held at the University of Strasbourg on 27-29 May 2020. Travel costs (economy class) will be reimbursed, hotel accommodation will be provided. The conference language will be English. We invite interested participants to submit a 500-word abstract with a short C.V. to [philipp.mueller\(at\)his-online\(dot\)de](mailto:philipp.mueller@his-online.de) by 15 July 2019. Proposals from history, anthropology, historical sociology, political economy and other neighboring disciplines are highly welcome.

Kontakt

Philipp Müller

Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung

[philipp.mueller\(at\)his-online\(dot\)de](mailto:philipp.mueller@his-online.de)

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