

International Conference – “Internal Peripheries in global comparison, 1500-2015“

Friday, 20 October 2017 – Saturday, 21 October 2017

University of Vienna, Department for Economic and Social History

Debates on economic disparities have led to the emergence of a new category in historical research during the 1990s: internal peripheries. This category is based on Immanuel Wallerstein’s world system framework on the one hand, and on the studies on regional differentiation from a historical perspective that have taken place since the 1960s on the other. Internal peripheries, Hans-Heinrich Nolte claims, are spaces organized in order to benefit people living elsewhere, i.e. in the core area. The focus on the regional level results from the notion that nation states are highly heterogeneous units. Accordingly, in order to enhance our understanding of the genesis and operation of spatial inequalities, exchange processes should be focused on the regional and the local level, which in turn are related to wider national and supranational scales. Regions are spatial entities which, as a rule, are smaller than states and usually are located within their borders, but they can also transcend state boundaries and form inter-state spatial units. Internal peripheries are thus defined in terms of economic geography, and rarely follow relational-political schemes, such as the relationship between a capital city and a border region.

Many indicators signal the structural disadvantages of internal peripheries, including a low per capita-income, low living and education standards and an inadequate access to services, but also less obvious features such as fiscal discrimination and a small capacity to affect decision-making in the political centre. Usually factors from different social subsystems – the economy, politics, culture or education – are combining themselves when producing regional disparities. As reasons for the formation of internal peripheries have to be highlighted geographical disadvantages, military conquest or integration into political territories by civil means that dispose of more power of decision and competence in the mentioned (and also other) social subsystems. It has to be pointed out that spatial inequalities are frequently reproduced between many generations. Hereby, geographical remoteness from the core areas and, it follows, costly access to political and economic decision-making can be the source of discrimination, and, conversely, an excessively intimate association can also cause one-sided misappropriations by central actors and institutions.

The emergence of inter-state developmental gaps can also be exacerbated by the generation of stereotypes about ‘the other’, which are characterized by the degradation of peripheral spaces and actors. In recent times, postcolonial studies have rightfully pointed to the significance of

these cultural constructs and have provided an added momentum to the study of internal peripheries as the confluence of subaltern and peripheral categories.

The conference will address internal peripheries from a multi-perspective focus on a world-wide scale and over a *longue durée* that starts around 1500 and runs until nowadays. Hereby the conference will question whether a general pattern exists for the formation of internal peripheries beyond the West/East and North/South dichotomies. Furthermore, the relationship between larger peripheries – states – and internal peripheries – regions – will be analysed and discussed. Accordingly, we ask for contributions that either present single empirical case studies that can cover world regions worldwide or conceptual papers that study the theoretical framework and its implications for applying them to single case studies.

The conference addresses following issues:

- Trade, migration and production between cores and internal peripheries
- Space of agency (Gestaltungsraum) for peripheries? Political participation and regional policy
- Diachronic comparisons of regional development
- Entanglements of spatial and social inequalities
- Construction of images and visions of (internal) peripheries
- Cultural stereotypes and political practices

The conference language is English. Abstracts no longer than 300 words together with a short CV should be sent to: klemens.kaps@univie.ac.at

The deadline for submissions is 1 september 2016

Travel costs have to be covered by the participants, accommodation costs will be covered if funding is forthcoming. Admitted papers will be published in a collective volume.

Organizing institutions: Department for Economic and Social History, Vienna University;
Verein für die Geschichte des Weltsystems e.V., Hannover

Organizers: Klemens Kaps, Andrea Komlosy, Hans-Heinrich Nolte