

[Government by Expertise: Technocrats and Technocracy in Western Europe, 1914-1973](#)

Announcement published by Camilo Erlichman on Tuesday, July 18, 2017

Type:

Conference

Date:

September 13, 2017 to September 15, 2017

Location:

Netherlands

Subject Fields:

Contemporary History, European History / Studies, Modern European History / Studies, Political History / Studies, Social History / Studies

Conference

Government by Expertise: Technocrats and Technocracy in Western Europe, 1914-1973

University of Amsterdam, 13-15 September 2017

Conveners: Camilo Erlichman (University of Amsterdam) and Peter Romijn (University of Amsterdam/NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies)

Technocracy is the political swearword of our times. From the multiple crises of the European Union to the recent elections in the US, the role of experts in public governance is often invoked as one of the main sources for the political ills of contemporary society, responsible for the exacerbation of social inequalities, the decline in the acceptance of political institutions, and the rise of populist movements. For many, technocratic rule is an elitist project that makes present-day politics unaccountable, detached from the lives and needs of ordinary people, and thus fundamentally irreconcilable with democracy. Defenders of technocracy, by contrast, stress the complexity of the world and the need for specialists with extensive expertise to run what they regard as the increasingly difficult business of government, while pointing to the defects and dangers of a model of democracy that is overly inclusive of and responsive to the people.

Such contemporary discourses around the legitimacy of technocratic governance are not novel, but are part of a long and intricate history of technocratic forms of power in mass democracies. This conference will look at the genealogy of technocracy and the trajectories of various groups of 'experts' in western Europe's mid-20th century. It will explore the relationship between technocracy, war, democracy, and politico-economic orders; trace the role of technocracy in the process of European integration; and explore the gradual ascent of expert groups involved in social engineering, planning, economic management, and the techno-politics of the state. In doing so, it will seek to assess the origins, shape, and legacies of western Europe's 'Age of Technocracy', carving out patterns that continue to influence policymaking in European democracies today.

Citation: Camilo Erlichman. *Government by Expertise: Technocrats and Technocracy in Western Europe, 1914-1973*. H-Announce. 05-27-2022.

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The conference will kick off on 13 September 2017 at 5.00 pm with a keynote presentation by Professor Philip Nord (Princeton University), who will give a lecture on 'France's Age of Technocracy, 1930-1970'. The keynote presentation will be delivered at the VOC Zaal, Bushuis, Kloveniersburgwal 48, 1012 CX Amsterdam. All other sessions will take place at the Doelenzaal, University Library, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam.

All are welcome. There is no charge for attendance, but **registration by 6 September 2017 is necessary**. Please register by following this link: https://www.accesseurope.org/index.php?option=com_civicrm&task=civicrm/event/register&reset=1&id=47

Please check the [conference website](#) for updates on the conference programme:

Programme

Wednesday, 13 September 2017

Venue: VOC Zaal, Bushuis, Kloveniersburgwal 48, 1012 CX Amsterdam

17.00 Keynote Lecture

Chair: Peter Romijn (Amsterdam)

Philip Nord (Princeton): France's Age of Technocracy, 1930-1970

18.30 Conference Reception

Thursday, 14 September 2017

Venue: Doelenzaal, University Library, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam

9.00 Registration and Coffee

9.30 Welcome by Jonathan Zeitlin (ACCESS EUROPE, Scientific Director)

9.40 Introduction: Western Europe's Age of Technocracy

Camilo Erlichman (Amsterdam) and Peter Romijn (Amsterdam)

10.00 Panel 1: Demos and Technos

Chair: Michael Wintle (Amsterdam)

Daniel Knegt (Amsterdam): The Lure of "Realism": French Intellectuals between Technocracy and

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Fascism, 1930-1950

Stefan Couperus (Groningen): A 'Functional Demos' or an 'Expert Technos'? Debating State-Society Relations and State Governance in Interwar Europe

Antonio Costa Pinto (Lisbon): Technocracy, Corporatism, and the Development of "Economic Parliaments" in Interwar Europe

11.30 Coffee

12.00 Panel 2: Technocracy and Political Orders

Chair: Camilo Erlichman (Amsterdam)

Martin Conway (Oxford): Allies or Enemies? Technocracy and Conceptions of a Democratic Order in Europe after 1945

Ido de Haan (Utrecht): Democracy, Keynesianism and Early Neo-Liberalism in Postwar Europe

13.00 Lunch

14.00 Panel 3: Global Expertise

Chair: Peter Romijn (Amsterdam)

Sandra Khor Manickam (Rotterdam): Technocracy in a Time of War: Governing Malaya and Singapore during the Japanese Period

Robin de Bruin (Amsterdam): Dutch High Official Hans Max Hirschfeld (1899-1961) and the Convenient Marriage between Colonialism and Saint-Simonian Technocracy

Marijke van Faassen (Amsterdam): Modelling Society by Migration Management: Exploring the Role of (Dutch) Experts in 20th Century International Migration Policy

15.30 Coffee

16.00 Panel 4: The Ascent of Experts?

Chair: Artemy Kalinovsky (Amsterdam)

Joachim Lund (Copenhagen): Business in Government: Elites, Technocracy and Political Change in Denmark, 1900-1945

Raphael Van Lerberge (Brussels): The Techno-Political Transformation of Social Security in Belgium, 1937-1970

Hervé Joly (Lyon): The Finances and Mines Inspectors: Two Concurrent Groups of Technocrats in the French Power Elite, 1930-1970s

17.30 End of Day 1

Friday, 15 September 2017

Venue: Doelenzaal, University Library, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam

9.00 Coffee

9.30 Panel 5: The Techno-Politics of Space

Chair: Luiza Bialasiewicz (Amsterdam)

Jens van de Maele (Ghent/Antwerp/Brussels): Technocratic Models of Governance in 1930s Belgium: A Case Study on Ministerial Office Architecture

Martin Kohlrausch (Leuven): Modernist Architects as a New Technocratic Elite: Central Europe between the Wars

10.30 Coffee

11.00 Panel 6: Technocracy and European Integration

Chair: Liz Buettner (Amsterdam)

Liesbeth van de Grift (Utrecht): Governing a Green Europe: The Role of Agricultural Interest Groups in Agricultural Policy-Making in Postwar Europe

Koen van Zon (Nijmegen): Brokering Expertise: The European Communities between Dirigisme and Decentralization, 1952-1967

Patricia Clavin (Oxford): Technocracy and the Boundaries of Europe in the World, 1920-1973

12.30 Lunch

13.30 Final Roundtable

14.30 End of Conference

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URL:

<https://www.accesseurope.org/component/jevents/eventdetail/294/8/government-by-expertise?Itemid=142>

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