

Střed 2/2020 – Call for Papers

Issue topic: Varieties of technocracy in Central and East-Central Europe, 1918–1989. From political, social and economic thinking to exercising state power

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The phenomenon of technocracy is one of the central themes in exploring the relationship between power and knowledge in modern societies. Technocracy can be seen as a form of arrangement of power politics, where experts and scientists become the ruling social class. This concept of technocracy has always been more of an ideal rather than reality. In the Central and East-Central European context, this model was particularly evident after World War II as an effort by some expert groups to restore their influence on political developments, gradually dominated by career party members. The roots of these processes can be traced back to before the First World War. Another somewhat looser concept of technocracy underlines the growing interaction between expertise and state interventionism during the 20th century. It was politicians who wanted to present modern politics as a concept of public interest formed under the influence and in contact with expert knowledge. Research based on this analytical perspective focuses on the interconnected role of politicians and experts and expert communities (or expert cultures) in

shaping governance strategies or directly in the exercise of state power. These approaches show the growing political role of experts and expert knowledge in an era characterized as organized or high modernity, beginning at the turn of the 19th century and culminating in the three decades following the year 1945.

Research into technocracy in Central and East-Central Europe raises the issues of continuity between otherwise different political and economic orders – liberal democracies, right-wing authoritarian regimes, Nazism, and state socialism. These otherwise various political establishments mobilized expert knowledge and created situations with often a very conflicting interaction between expert groups and representatives of political power. Technocracy thus becomes a topic on which we can illustrate the longer development trends of modern governance.

The current issue of the journal *Střed/Centre* will, therefore, be devoted to studying the history of technocracy and expert governance in Central and East-Central Europe in the 20th century. Submitted articles may include, but are not restricted to the following topics:

- 1) Transformation of the concept of expert governance in Central and East-Central Europe.
- 2) Technocratic tendencies in political and economic thinking.
- 3) Technocracy in architecture and urban planning.
- 4) Technocratic biopolitics? Modern state and eugenics between liberal democracy and state socialism.
- 5) Technocracy and technology. The role of technological change in modern governance.
- 6) The economy as a space for technocratic governance – economic planning and corporate management in capitalism, fascism, and other right-wing authoritarian regimes, as well as state socialism.
- 7) Cultural and scientific structuralism – elements of purpose and systemic perception in culture and humanities as a parallel picture of the application of technology and technocracy in a public space