

Abstract

The sub-project will pursue the goal of comparing the political participation of notables of the Rhine Province, which was based on social and economic inequality, to participation in the three French Departments in the Southeast of France (Saône et Loire, Loire and Rhône). The sub-project will break new ground not only because of this comparative perspective. The so called period of restauration has attracted much less attention by German and French research than the troubles caused by the Revolution. The sub-project will research ways of the political participation of the elites in mid-level state institutions: In France this refers to the General Councils of the Departments, the leading personnel of the prefectures and the maires of the big cities. In Prussia this refers to the deputies of the Provincial Assembly of the Estates as well as to the leading personnel of the provincial government with the district presidents, the district administrators and the mayors. Concerning both regions, also the political behaviour of the actors of societies, academies, chambers of commerce and municipal councils will be included. The sub-project starts out from observations on the history of administration. According to these, when it came to actual administrative proceedings, the leeway of administrations was considerably determined by the interests and behaviour of the respective local actors. In a comparative way it will be analysed how political participation, issues of economic development as well as the social question were made a topic of discussion and politically-administratively dealt with in this context. In terms of methods, approaches of the history of political ideas (discourse analysis) and of social history (network analysis) will be combined, to this way take those actors into account who, based on the given social situation, formulated their claims to participation. On the one hand claims to political participation and independence from the conservative governments and, on the other hand, the problem of the different dimensions of economic and socio-cultural inequality (status) and, last but not least, of class inequality in times of restauration will be analysed. Thus, what will be researched is the interaction of political participation and the various dimensions of inequality, on the one hand within the group of actors (controversies between nobility and bourgeoisie) and on the other hand in view of the politically excluded middle and lower classes. The sub-project will deal with four dimensions of inequality: firstly, social and economic inequality, secondly legal (suffrage) and status-related differences (re-privileging of the nobility), thirdly the obviously disparate ways of representation as well as, fourthly, the refusal of democratic norms of equality. What will be taken into account is the evident connection of participation and inequality which clearly indicates the existence of relational and participation inequality.