

Call for papers

**Legal orders under pressure:  
Non-Western experiences of legal transformations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries**  
7<sup>th</sup> December-9<sup>th</sup> December 2022 (virtual)

**Symposium Theme**

From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, many regions underwent fundamental legal changes by following Western models, driven by both internal and external diplomatic or economic pressures. The most prominent example of this kind of pressure is the extraterritoriality that was applied e.g., to the Ottoman Empire, China, Japan, Siam, and Ethiopia, which deprived these countries of their judicial sovereignty, without abolishing their statehood altogether. Many other non-colonised regions were also subjected to other forms of strong pressure for legal reforms, such as in Eastern Europe, Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, among others.

The legal reforms initiated in these countries are usually examined with a focus on codifications. However, such a perspective limits the understanding of the complexity of the transformations that took place. Therefore, this symposium invites participants to tackle broader layers of law, and to look at the actors, the agencies, the dynamics of cultural translations, the diplomatic relations, and the interconnectedness between the spaces that were located neither in Western Europe, nor in North America. It will cover a time frame loosely running from ca. 1850 to 1940, according to each region's own itinerary.

Thereby, the symposium offers a platform for gaining a better understanding of the characteristics of the legal translations and transformations that took place in spaces that were under the pressure of the Western European Powers. Encompassing a broad scope of different countries and settings will allow us to rethink the alleged universalisation of Western European law in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By looking at the different experiences of translation and invention, radical transition and complex continuities, resistance and internal conflicts, the symposium aims at contributing to a broader framework of current research that reassesses what legal 'modernity' as well as the 'West' meant. By connecting legal histories, which have mostly been studied in isolation from one another, and by analysing them against the backdrop of global imperialism and colonialism, the symposium offers the opportunity to reconsider historiographical narratives. Theoretical, empirical and interdisciplinary approaches are equally welcome.

**Subjects for papers** may include, but are by no means limited to:

- The autonomy/heteronomy of the legal transformation processes: multiple agencies and layers, complex positioning towards Europe and European law; negotiating tradition, religion, and identity within the reform processes.

- The connections/disconnections between the countries under pressure: To what extent did they observe, emulate, contest, or hamper each other? What impact did these connections and/or disconnections have on the legal reform processes in the respective countries?
- To what extent did non-state actors play a role in the legal reform processes, not only on the local and national levels, but also on the supra and transnational levels? What role did transnational movements such as Pan-Asianism, Pan-Islamist, Pan-Arabism, Anti-colonialism, or the transnational dimension of nationalism play in the exchange between the countries?
- How did the concept of justice and the understanding of law change? How did such an epistemological shift translate into legal practice?

The organisers are keen to give advanced PhD-students, as well as post-doctoral and senior researchers the opportunity to present their research in a panel session, commented by a leading scholar of the field. Submissions by researchers from all jurisdictions are welcome, and applicants from the Global South are particularly encouraged to apply.

### Submission process and Organisation

The Symposium will be conducted in English. Applicants are invited to submit an abstract of up to 350 words (including a title, full name, email address, and institutional affiliation), and a short biography of up to 100 words to [zuelal.muslu@univ.ac.at](mailto:zuelal.muslu@univ.ac.at) by **25<sup>th</sup> May 2022**. Successful applicants will be informed by **15<sup>th</sup> June 2022**. Symposium papers are expected by **20<sup>th</sup> November 2022**, and the symposium will take place virtually from **7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022**.

The Symposium is organised by the Max-Planck-Research Group “Translations and Transitions: Legal Practice in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Japan, China, and the Ottoman Empire”, at the Max-Planck-Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory (Frankfurt), and by the Chair for Globalisation and Legal Pluralism, Department of Legal and Constitutional History, University of Vienna.

The Organisers are: Egas Bender de Moniz Bandeira, Lena Foljanty, and Zülâl Muslu.

Contact information: [zuelal.muslu@univie.ac.at](mailto:zuelal.muslu@univie.ac.at)

