

Biopolitics, regions and demography

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Historical, social philosophical thinking about the spatial organization of population looks back to a long history. But in the 18th century some very important techniques were developed to put these ideas into the forefront of population management. These notions, ideals and set of ideas have been shaped by local political and demographic developments, dynamically linked global positioning of various thinkers, global demographic changes and the overall progress of science and technology. In this global-local interpretative framework the paper explores phases of development from moral geography (e.g. Montesquieu, Süssmilch, le Play) and ideas of global control (Malthus) to an increased biopolitical fight for resources between the two world wars (e.g. Thompson, Landry, Notestein, Gini, Conze) to the Hajnal line and then the deconstruction of historical regions based on differential fertility and nuptiality (e.g. Laslett, Goody, Todorova, Szoltysek). On the basis of global-local interplay the paper argues that ideas of regions should be understood as complex techniques to manage and control populations in the framework of competitive fight for resources and not just as a development science in terms of methodologies and empirical materials, which of course also mattered.