

CEPOC (Centro di studi le polizie e il controllo del territorio)

In collaboration with: Department of Historical Studies of the Università di Milano

Department of Italian and Supranational Public Law of the Università di Milano

Department of Civilization and Forms of Knowledge of the Università di Pisa

**Intermediaries: methods, figures and institutions of the inter-connection between central authority and local communities (Pisa, 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> October 2020)**

The meetings organized by the CEPOC have been held annually for over twenty years, addressing, from continuously renewed perspectives, the macro-theme of territorial control in all its aspects (see the meetings held so far at [www.cepoc.it](http://www.cepoc.it)).

This year's topic encourages scholars to look at a significant topic that is rarely dealt with in a systematic way: the manner by which the connection between local communities and government institutions is concretely achieved.

The historiographical perspective on the subject has so far been mainly top-down: there are in fact several studies examining the diffusion of figures and institutions that articulate the central power's presence in the periphery or the official representation of the peripheries when faced with the government apparatus (one thinks, for instance, of intendants and government commissioners).

Yet there are less defined and more elusive strata, connecting local communities, or specific social components within them, to government institutions. The reasons behind these connections were primarily interrelated, and would be so for a long time, to the military or para-military aspects of territorial control, fiscal policies and the administration of justice. We are talking about the necessity to ensure the security of a territory, to prepare defensive measures, to enforce administrative and judiciary decisions, to monitor extraneous presences, to carry out formal acts, and much more. These liaison figures, as it should be noted, were not simply intended to meet demands imposed from above, but were also meant to fulfil guarantor functions within their communities (not least due to the existing forms of joint responsibility), and to represent local bodies, allowing them to communicate with the higher authorities. We therefore refer to figures who function as guarantor of property, health, hereditary transmission, etc., not only vertically but also horizontally (for instance, for the responsibility *in solidum* of the community, as could be possible in times of property confiscation).

Everywhere and in every context we can recognize these intermediaries, always present in every community, in every elementary social organization within the territory, starting with those forms of vicinal organization that archaeologists and anthropologists have identified as the basic form of human groups over a very long period. These figures of mediators are widespread during the Middle and the Early Modern ages, when the territorial, religious, social and economic bodies produce their representatives (paradigmatic, in this regard, is the figure of the English constable), but we can find them at a more or less informal level even during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Even during the era of triumph for the nation-state formula, when territorial ramifications of central institutions appear dense and successful, there is no lack of forms of intermediation of this nature: from district representatives who are also supported by totalitarian states, to the liaison figures created during political demonstrations throughout the student protest seasons, to the leaders of organised football clubs.

This year's meeting intends to examine these forms of intermediation in the long term, highlighting their specificity according to epochs and places. While being aware of the extreme elusiveness of these figures, it is first hoped that one might describe how these connections of low institutional structuring are formed and work or were formed and worked. At the same time, by linking to the tradition of both British and continental European studies highlighting the processes of institutionalization from below, one aim will be to investigate the following aspect: how many peripheral institutions of states can be read as an expression of processes of absorption and inclusion in the government apparatus of intermediaries originally expressed by local communities and the result of a long bargaining between interests and pressures from below and ever new tasks imposed from above?

The meeting will be held in Pisa (for the first-time venue of the Cepoc events) from 22nd to 24th October 2020 at the University of Pisa and at the Domus Mazziniana (Via Mazzini, 71). It will begin at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday 22nd, at the University, and continue, from Friday morning until the end of the event, at the Domus Mazziniana. The afternoon sessions of Thursday and the whole day of Friday 23rd will be dedicated to the presentations of papers (up to 30 minutes each). The morning of Saturday 24th will be open to free discussion among all participants, with closing of the session at 13:00 and subsequent final lunch.

There will be the possibility to take part in the seminar both as speaker and discussant, or only as a discussant. Participation will be by invitation or call for papers. Proposals for participation accompanied by the title of the communication and related abstract will be evaluated, to be sent to [livio.antonielli@unimi.it](mailto:livio.antonielli@unimi.it) by 30 May 2020.

The organization will cover room and board expenses for the participants, but not those of travel.

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