

# Legal Expertise in Theory and Practice

Workshop, Hamburg Institute for Social Research, 25th and 26th February 2021

Organised by the Research Group Sociology of Law

This workshop sets out to explore the role of experts and expertise in creating, shaping and negotiating law and its conceptual and theoretical framing. We are interested in how legal expertise is established, transformed or lost in different contexts.

Beyond traditional sources of legal expertise from academia and legal practice, courts have been heavily relying on expert opinions for topics ranging from financial consultancy to cybersecurity. This workshop asks: How can we conceptualize “experts” and “legal expertise” from different theoretical perspectives and how do these perspectives impact law-making? What does “expertise” mean for practice theory, discourse theory, systems theory, and critical theory? Does the concept of “expert” have the same meaning for all theoretical stances? If not, how do they complement each other or challenge one another?

In addition to theorising legal expertise, this workshop seeks to discuss it through empirical case studies. We ask: What counts as expert knowledge? How do different contexts change the perception of expertise? What role do experts play in processes of law(-making)?

We invite contributions from all disciplines that engage with either one of the two proposed strands, or both. We are especially interested in presentations that address the temporalities and geographies of expertise as well as its role in legal practices. How does expertise change over time? How does it fare when subjugated to transnational networks and how do these practices reaffirm or transform it? What is the relationship between the “legal profession” and expertise? In light of the growing importance of “non-legal experts” as well as artificial systems that provide legal expertise, we would like to investigate the different ways in which these constitute, challenge or affect processes of norm-creation, regulation and legal interpretation.

The workshop will take place both online and in person on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2021 at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research. If you are interested in participating, please submit an abstract (250 words) and a brief biographical sketch (50 words) by the 5<sup>th</sup> of December to [friederike.bahl@his-online.de](mailto:friederike.bahl@his-online.de). Please also indicate whether you would be available to attend the workshop in person.