“Race” and “Space” across borders.
Cooperation between National Socialism and Italian Fascism
in the field of population policies 1933-1943

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At the centre of my current research project is the fundamental question: how closely related were Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy? My project seeks to answer this question by looking at cooperation between the two totalitarian regimes in the crucial area of population policy. "Race" and "Space" were not central only to Nazi Weltanschauung and policies. Today some historians are beginning to use the term racial state also in relation to Mussolini’s regime. However, the Fascist regimes’ collaboration in this field has not as yet been the subject of serious study. My project will thus close a major omission in research.

Until recently, the “Berlin-Rome Axis” was considered a temporary coalition of common interest, and at least for the mainstream of researchers it was characterized by a low degree of ideological parallels. However, my studies to date, point in the opposite direction. It turned out that cooperation between the regimes was very close and affected elements in these two systems of government that were both central and strongly loaded with ideology. The Fascist regime, for example, adapted the so-called Reichserbhofgesetz, the legal nucleus of the Blood and Soil ideology. Conversely, the Italian concept of Colonial Fascism apparently even influenced the infamous Generalplan Ost. A connection between colonialism and the Nazi settlement policy in Eastern Europe had long been assumed by scholars but was yet to be established as fact. Convergences like these provoke the very fundamental questions of where the substantial differences between the two regimes are to be found and whether it would not be better to understand Fascism as a generic term.