

As Malefiz became Barricade – transnational board games’ history of the 1960s and 70s

Abstract

The project is aimed to reevaluate board games within academia and to historicize them for the first time as popular cultural products of the 1960s and 70s, especially in a transnational and interdisciplinary way. It is intended to do fundamental research on the interface of cultural history, *histoire croisée* and *Spielwissenschaften*.

Based on the current state of rudimentary historical research, the Federal Republic of Germany was Europewide, even internationally leading the way as producer of board games during the 1960s. The 1970s then marked a “boom” which caused a differentiation of the board games’ landscape. Against this background, the project is aimed to verify the FRGs role as pioneer within the international board games’ culture of that time. So, the study is trying to trace processes of cultural transfer during the 1960s and 70s starting from the FRG via Great Britain, France and the Benelux countries that were the prime customers of German game licenses. Furthermore, the role of the USA in this context is analysed, too.

Thereby, the project is questioning board games in terms of their potential to construct specific ideas of the society from which they emerged as products and that they likewise reflected as popular cultural phenomena. Furthermore, it is intended to figure out in how far these societal models, also ideas of “community” and “family”, have European or transnational significance or are rather national specificities. It can be assumed that popular board games had the potential to socialise, to communitise – a potential that has often been used strategically by family affairs, education policy as well as by pedagogues.