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INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

ARBEITSVORHABEN DER FELLOWS
FELLOWS' PROJECTS 2026/2027

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VORWORT

In dieser Broschüre werden die Fellows des Wissenschaftskollegs im akademischen Jahr 2026/2027 vorgestellt. Im Zentrum steht die Beschreibung der Arbeitsvorhaben, denen sie sich während ihres Aufenthaltes am Wissenschaftskolleg widmen wollen. Dazu kommen bibliografische Empfehlungen mit den Titeln einiger Aufsätze oder Bücher, die sie Interessierten zur Lektüre empfehlen, sowie kurze biografische Angaben.

Die meisten Fellows kommen für ein volles akademisches Jahr. Eine kürzere Aufenthaltsdauer ist jeweils vermerkt.

In der Zeit zwischen dem Redaktionsschluss dieser Broschüre und dem Beginn des akademischen Jahres am 1. September 2026 können sich noch Änderungen ergeben. Aktualisierte Informationen zu den Fellows und ihren Arbeitsvorhaben sowie zu Veranstaltungen mit Fellows und zum Wissenschaftskolleg insgesamt stehen auf der Internetseite des Wissenschaftskollegs – www.wiko-berlin.de – zur Verfügung.

Berlin, im Juli 2026

Wenn nicht anders angegeben, erstrecken sich die Fellowships vom 1. September 2026 bis zum 30. Juni 2027.

PREFACE

This brochure presents the Fellows of the academic year 2026/2027. Each Fellow provides a short description of the work he or she plans to pursue during the stay at the Wissenschaftskolleg. Also listed are brief biographical notes as well as recommended reading.

The majority of the Fellows come for an entire academic year. A shorter planned stay is noted for each Fellow, where applicable.

Between the submission deadline to this brochure and the beginning of the academic year on September 1, 2026, some changes may arise. Up-to-date information on the Fellows, their projects, Fellows' events and the Wissenschaftskolleg in general is available on the Wissenschaftskolleg's website www.wiko-berlin.de.

Berlin, July 2026

If not otherwise indicated, the fellowships extend from September 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

LEILA ADU-GILMORE

PhD, Associate Professor of Music Technology
New York University

Born in London

BMus (Hon), Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington, MFA in
Music Composition and PhD in Music Composition, Princeton University

AN AFRODIASPORIC OPERA: VOCAL WORKS AS CREATIVE RESEARCH THROUGH CRITICAL SONIC PRACTICE

For years, I have composed short and medium-length pieces using classical instruments, focusing on the voice where possible. I love the medium of the voice and words to cut through with meaning. Classical music as an art form can become viewed as elite and stale with less relevance to the people (especially in countries where entry to these concerts is not subsidized). Therefore, intention, emotion, society, and connectedness are essential aspects for this medium to continue as a living art form.

I thought of the idea behind this pacifist opera project a few years ago, and since then, the meaning has become more relevant. Rather than a work-in-progress, I think of this project as a series of completed stages, or snapshots. Each of these phases will be part of a final creation or work in itself. I will create short scores or sketches of each song by researching themes and working the lyrical content into poetic renditions. Then, I will arrange the songs for work-shops to show a small audience with a piano and voice, then with a small instrumental group. I will have meetings with the larger collaborative team of the movement, visual art, and costume creators and the dramaturg over time to prepare for a full operatic staging in the future.

I also collaborate in the Critical Sonic Practice Lab, researching music theory, composition, and technology with NYU, PhD students from NYU, and external professors from the UK and USA. We will advance our research and publishing

on traditional Ghanaian tuning and harmony, engaging machine learning, culturally-relevant music education, and investigate ethical AI practices in music technology.

The power of music in divisive times comes from connection and community in shared spaces. As a composer-performer, I will expand my practice of voice, piano, and electronics, solo and in collaboration with local musicians. I am honoured to show creative output through shared presence in a room at the Wissenschaftskolleg.

Recommended Reading

Adu-Gilmore, Leila. "Critical Sonic Practice: Decolonizing Boundaries in Music Research." *Continental Thought & Theory* 3, no. 3 (2021): 187–208.

<https://doi.org/10.26021/12233>.

—. *Colouring-In Book*. For SATB Chorus unaccompanied. E. C. Schirmer, 2023.

—. "Authentic Intelligence Mixtapes: DJs and Producers' Communal Radical Archiving and Teaching in the Age of AI." *Organised Sound* 29, no. 2 (2024): 162–173. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S135577182400013X>.

TERESA BARUCCI

PhD, Research Fellow

University of Oxford

Born in 1996 in Florence, Italy

BA in Ancient History, Durham University, MSt in Medieval History,

University of Oxford, PhD in History, University of Cambridge

PAPERS ACROSS BORDERS: REGULATING AND DOCUMENTING MOBILITY IN LATE MEDIEVAL ITALY

Who are you? Where are you from? Do you have the right to be here? These questions are urgent not only today—they were a real preoccupation in the Middle Ages too. Although passports and visas are commonly viewed as a feature of the nation state, the precursor of the modern border management system has a long (and largely unexplored) history. My project explores the development of travel documentation, and more broadly of mobility control, in late medieval Italy.

At the time, Italy was fragmented into dozens of autonomous cities and polities. After a period of economic expansion in the thirteenth century, the combined pressure of political instability and the Black Death led authorities to develop mechanisms to control who was allowed to enter, work, and settle in their spaces.

Traditional narratives suggest that Europe witnessed a shift from physical boundaries to systems of documentation only after the year 1500. By focusing on the uniquely complex space of the peninsula, I argue instead that a radical bureaucratic change took place in the fourteenth and the fifteenth century, which provided a fundamental infrastructure for the later emergence of a central bureaucracy of movement.

The project understands bureaucratic change as a fundamentally social and political process, involving people as well as institutions. On the one hand, I look at the formal development of passes, permits, and other comparable papers. On

the other hand, I examine the experience of mobile people—how they were affected by, engaged with, and shaped these emerging documentary practices, including cases of violation and fraud.

By combining traditional archival research with approaches drawn from the social sciences, political theory, and migration studies, the project also attempts to situate the question of medieval mobility control in the context of contemporary debates about power, borders, and identity.

Recommended Reading

Barucci, Teresa. “Self-Presentation and Geographical Origin at the Fifteenth-Century University of Paris: An Analysis of Manuscript Decoration.” *Journal of Medieval History* 49, no. 4 (2023): 558–582.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03044181.2023.2235367>.

—. “The Medieval Public Sphere and the Response to a Condemnation for Heresy in Bologna, 1299.” *The English Historical Review* 139, no. 598–599 (2024): 651–679. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/ceae109>.

ALISON BASHFORD

PhD, Scientia Professor of History

Co-Director, New Earth Histories Research Program

University of New South Wales, Sydney

Born in 1963 in Sydney, Australia

BA (Hons and Medal) in History, University of Sydney, MA in History,

University of Cambridge, PhD in History, University of Sydney

LANDS BEFORE TIME: ATLANTIS, LEMURIA, GONDWANALAND

This is a history of three lost worlds: Atlantis, Lemuria, and Gondwanaland. Mythic and real, over centuries they have been created and recreated by the philosophically learned, the geologically and bio-geographically trained, and the religiously inspired. Across registers from the strictest earth sciences to eco-poetry, from the landscape pedagogies of botanical gardens to the design of Gondwanaland theme parks, these lands before time have been persistently linked in modern worldmaking. Why? How? And with what effect on our understanding of the Earth's past and future?

Lands Before Time analyses four kinds of knowledge claims: those explicitly fictional or fabled (e.g. Francis Bacon's New Atlantis); those hypothesized within a scientific method (e.g. Ernst Haeckel's Lemuria); those that have been falsified or verified in scientific traditions (e.g. current plate tectonics that substantiates "Gondwanaland" as real, but not "Lemuria"); and finally cosmological belief systems (e.g. Christian theologies of the age of the Earth; twentieth-century Theosophy and Anthroposophy of Lemuria and Atlantis). In the tradition of *New Earth Histories* (Bashford, Kern, Bobbette, 2023), this project understands historically analysable earth knowledge to exceed as well as include earth science and its natural history antecedents.

How did the linked Antiquities of Atlantis, Lemuria, and Gondwanaland become the landscapes through which human time and deep time were worked

out, and by historical actors ranging from geoscientists to Gond indigenous people to Theosophists? How did this political geology translate into actual geopolitics (India's claim to parts of Antarctica, for example, argued through an ancient Gondwanaland territorial connection)? What can Atlantis, Lemuria, and Gondwanaland yield for the present?

Recommended Reading

Bashford, Alison, Pratik Chakrabarti, and Jarrod Hore. "Towards a Modern History of Gondwanaland." In "Environmental History", edited by Simon Goldhill and Georgie Fitzgibbon, supplementary issue, *Journal of the British Academy* 9, no. s6 (2021): 5–26. <https://doi.org/10.5871/jba/009s6.005>.

Bashford, Alison. *The Huxleys: An Intimate History of Evolution*. University of Chicago Press, 2022.

Bashford, Alison, Emily M. Kern, and Adam Bobbette, eds. *New Earth Histories: Geo-Cosmologies and the Making of the Modern World*. University of Chicago Press, 2023.

SVEN BECKERT

PhD, Laird Bell Professor of History

Harvard University

PhD in History, Columbia University

TOURISM AS A COMMODITY FRONTIER: A GLOBAL HISTORY

The history of the making of the modern world is a history of the expansion of commodity frontiers. Over the past 600 years, these commodity frontiers—processes and sites of the incorporation of resources (land, energy, raw materials, knowledge, and labor) into the expanding capitalist world economy—have moved at ever accelerating speed across vast areas of the globe, incorporating ever more land, ever more labor, and ever more resources. If the seventeenth century's most important commodity frontier was sugar, the nineteenth century's cotton, and the twentieth century's fossil fuels, in the twenty-first century the most consequential commodity frontiers might very well be tourism. Last year, a staggering 1.4 billion tourists crossed international boundaries. They spent time along the world's coastlines, visited historic sites, enjoyed urban life, and climbed the world's highest mountains.

As a commodity frontier focused on services, not agricultural or mineral commodities, the rapidly growing number of tourists draw on the land, labor, and resources of the places they are visiting—leading to local economic growth, to be sure, but also to vast dispossessions, exploitation, commodification, and environmental degradation. In Barbados, local farmers are displaced from coastal areas to make space for resorts; in Venice, inhabitants lose access to housing to tourists; in Korea, foreign sex workers serve the tourist clientele under conditions of servitude, and tourism-induced water shortages wreak havoc on local ecosystems. The CO₂ emissions produced by tourism, an estimated 8 percent of the world's total, undermine the very viability of human life on earth.

Unlike existing studies of tourism, I want to research tourism as a new kind of commodity frontier, comparable to that of sugar, rubber, or copper, and I want to study it historically as well as from a global perspective. I will chart how that commodity frontier has moved around the globe since 1850, touching down in ever more places, accelerating after 1945 and then becoming a tsunami-like force in the twenty-first century. I want to chart the global trend but also look closely at a variety of very local histories to understand how tourism has affected local labor markets, environments, and societies.

Recommended Reading

Beckert, Sven. *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850–1896*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

—. *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*. Knopf, 2015. German: *King Cotton: Eine Geschichte des globalen Kapitalismus*. Translated by Annabel Zettel and Martin Richter. C.H.Beck, 2019.

—. *Capitalism: A Global History*. Allen Lane, 2025. German: *Kapitalismus: Geschichte einer Weltrevolution*. Translated by Helmut Dierlamm, Werner Roller, Sigrid Schmid, and Thomas Stauder. Rowohlt, 2025.

GIOVANNI BIAGGINI

Dr. iur., Professor em. für Staats-, Verwaltungs- und Europarecht
Universität Zürich

Geboren 1960 in Stans, Schweiz

Lic. iur. und Dr. iur., Universität Basel

VERFASSUNGEN UNTER ZIVILGESELLSCHAFTLICHEM ANPASSUNGSDRUCK – EINE UNTERSUCHUNG ZUM WANDEL DES VERFASSUNGSVERSTÄNDNISSES UND ZUR ROLLE DER VERFASSUNGSGERICHTSBARKEIT

Verfassungen bezwecken, politische Herrschaft dauerhaft zu fundieren, rechtsstaatlich zu begrenzen und demokratisch zu legitimieren. Im politischen Alltag bilden sie gewöhnlich den ruhenden Pol. Heute stehen Verfassungen allerdings zunehmend unter Änderungsdruck. Eine gut untersuchte Ursache dafür ist die fortschreitende Europäisierung und Internationalisierung des Rechts. Weniger Aufmerksamkeit erlangte bisher eine andere Ursache: der steigende Anpassungsdruck aufgrund gesellschaftlicher, ökologischer und technologischer Herausforderungen (z. B. Öffnung der Ehe, Gewährleistung einer gesunden Umwelt, Umgang mit der Digitalisierung). Vermehrt versuchen zivilgesellschaftliche Akteure, die Verfassung zu mobilisieren, um diesbezügliche Anliegen vorzubringen. Während man in direktdemokratischen Verfassungsordnungen (wie der Schweiz) auf Verfassungsinitiativen setzt, richten sich entsprechende Forderungen in repräsentativen Demokratien vornehmlich an die Justiz: Man verlangt von ihr die Neudeutung bestehender Verfassungsnormen oder die gerichtliche Anerkennung neuen, „ungeschriebenen“ Verfassungsrechts – in jüngerer Zeit mit einigem Erfolg. Es erweist sich als attraktiv, politische Forderungen als Verfassungsfragen zu formulieren. Dieser Ansatz berührt nicht nur die Verfassungsinhalte, sondern ist auch verbunden mit einem Wandel der Verfassungsfunktionen und des Verfassungsverständnisses. Gängige Schlagworte und Metaphern – wie Grundrechtswandel, schöpferische

Auslegung, Verfassung als „living tree“ – erfassen dieses Phänomen nur unzureichend. Es wird verfassungsvergleichend zu untersuchen sein, welche praktischen und theoretischen Konsequenzen dieser Veränderungsprozess hat. Ein besonderes Augenmerk gilt der Doppelrolle der Verfassungsgerichtsbarkeit: einerseits als Hüterin des überkommenen, wissenschaftlich durchdrungenen Verfassungsrechts („Juristenverfassung“), andererseits als Türöffnerin für zivilgesellschaftlich angestoßene Neuerungen („Bürgerverfassung“).

Lektüreempfehlung

Biaggini, Giovanni. „Verfassungsgerichtsbarkeit in der Schweiz.“ In *Handbuch Ius Publicum Europaeum*. Band 6: *Verfassungsgerichtsbarkeit in Europa: Institutionen*, herausgegeben von Armin von Bogdandy, Christoph Grabenwarter und Peter M. Huber. C.F. Müller, 2016.

—. „Verfassungsauslegung.“ In *Verfassungsrecht der Schweiz*. Band 1: *Grundlagen – Demokratie – Föderalismus*, herausgegeben von Oliver Diggelmann, Maya Hertig Randall und Benjamin Schindler. Schulthess, 2020.

—. „Der schweizerische Bundesstaat und seine Verfassungen.“ *Zeitschrift für Schweizerisches Recht (ZSR)* 142/II (2023): 5–150.

KATE BROWN

Ph.D., Thomas Siebel Distinguished Professor in the History of Science
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge

Born in 1965 in Naperville, Ill., USA

B.A. in Russian Literature, University of Wisconsin–Madison,

Ph.D. in History, University of Washington

THE FUTURE OF FOOD IS URBAN

This project focuses on urban metabolisms in the past in order to reshape the vision of modern food economies from one of scarcity to one of bounty.

Urban agriculture has thrived for millennia, but often overlooked is the surge of self-provisioning with the emergence of the first large industrial cities in the mid-19th century. In 1900, for example, 2,000 urban farmers grew fresh produce on tiny lots for two million Parisians. During crises such as the two world wars, gardeners in cities across Europe and the United States transformed open space into productive gardens that produced from 40% (US) to 100% (USSR) of the food people ate. So-called “Victory Gardens” emerged so quickly because urban self-provisioners laid the groundwork.

Waste constituted the essence of urban food production. Cities serve up a wealth of organic nutrients in the form of food scraps, industrial discards, and human and animal waste. Urban farmers used these nutrients to build human-engineered soils. They took advantage of heat islands, sunbaked walls, and wind-blocking buildings to extend the growing season and range of crops. Global food supply chains, in contrast, consume ghost acres, while requiring a great deal of fuel, and releasing carbon and chemical toxins. Growing food in cities has the advantage of shortening supply chains and reducing food waste and reliance on fossil fuels and chemical additives. A city of garden beds and edible boulevards also sequesters more carbon, holds water, has greater biodiversity, and supports human health.

When people come together over urban gardens, they also cultivate social institutions, such as communal child care, funds for microloans and unemployment, health care, and educational programs. This project will explore how urban food economies drawing on the bounty flowing from organic nutrient waste also serves up green democracies.

Recommended Reading

Brown, Kate. *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters*. Oxford University Press, 2013. French: *Plutopia: Une histoire des premières villes atomiques*. Translated by Cédric Weis. Actes Sud, 2024.

—. *Manual for Survival: A Chernobyl Guide to the Future*. W. W. Norton; Allen Lane, 2019. French: *Tchernobyl par la preuve: Vivre avec le désastre et après*. Translated by Cédric Weis and Marie-Anne Béru. Actes Sud, 2021.

—. *Tiny Gardens Everywhere: The Past, Present, and Future of the Self-Provisioning City*. W. W. Norton, 2026.

JUTTA BRUNNÉE

Dr. jur., Professor of Law
University of Toronto

Born in 1961 in Wiesbaden, Germany

Master of Law, Dalhousie University, Dr. jur., Johannes Gutenberg University
Mainz

INTERNATIONAL LAW IN PRECARIOUS TIMES

Like all law, international law is a type of social practice, rooted in shared norms that are shaped and maintained by distinctive practices of legality. What then happens to international law when its constituent understandings and practices fray? And what can be done to check such dynamics?

These questions are of more than theoretical interest. In fact, at the current juncture, the concern is not merely that important rules are being weakened or destroyed, but that the international legal order as such might be at stake. A growing number of governmental and other actors appear intent on undermining the rule of law, domestically and internationally. And, with the apparent rejection of the very idea of globally binding rules by the state that has been, for better or for worse, the lead supporter and shaper of the post-war order, many other states appear uncertain how to respond.

It is imperative, then, that we consider how best to maintain the core planks of international law, while also seeking opportunities to improve and strengthen it, notably by taking seriously the aspiration for a genuinely universal legal order. After all, what some observers in the Global North perceive as a “rupture” in the global order may well be seen in other parts of the world as particularly stark manifestations of a long-standing experience of double standards and powerful states’ self-exemption from inconvenient rules.

My project is to explore what states and non-state actors can do to counteract the weakening of the understandings and practices that sustain international legality. What options are there for the reinforcement, clarification, or even fur-

ther development of international rules when previously influential states are unwilling or unable to drive norm development? Can smaller states, international courts and expert bodies step into the breach? I plan to pursue these questions in the context of the rules on inter-state use of force and on the protection of the global environment, including the climate system.

Recommended Reading

Brunnée, Jutta, and Stephen J. Toope. *Legitimacy and Legality in International Law: An Interactional Account*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Brunnée, Jutta. "Völkerrechtskritik: Gestern und Heute." In *Rückblick nach 100 Jahren und Ausblick – Migrationsbewegungen*, Berichte der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Völkerrecht, no. 49, edited by Nina Dethloff, Georg Nolte, and August Reinisch. C.F. Müller, 2018.

—. *Procedure and Substance in International Environmental Law*. The Pocket Books of The Hague Academy of International Law 40. Brill, 2020.

HELENE BUBROWSKI

Dr. jur., Chefredakteurin

Table.Media, Berlin

Geboren 1981 in Hamburg, Deutschland

Maîtrise en droit/LL.M., Université de Paris I/Universität zu Köln,

Dr. jur., Universität zu Köln

HELENE WESSEL – KATHOLIKIN, FEMINISTIN,
EUGENIKERIN. POLITISCHE BIOGRAFIE EINER
UNBEQUEMEN MUTTER DES GRUNDGESETZES

In einer Zeit, in der die Verächtlichmachung des demokratischen Rechtsstaats zur Floskel zu werden droht und die Erinnerungskultur im Umbruch begriffen ist, bekommt der Blick auf die Gründerzeit der Verfassung eine neue, existenzielle Bedeutung. Auf der Suche nach autoritativer Rückversicherung rekurren Politiker gerne auf „die Mütter und Väter des Grundgesetzes“, ohne dass sie deren Namen oder geistigen Anteile nennen. Nicht ohne Grund angesichts der kontroversen bis widersprüchlichen Erblasten dieser Vater- bzw. Mutterschaft. Am Beispiel der feministischen Sozialreformerin und katholischen Politikerin Helene Wessel soll die deutsche Stunde Null neu berechnet werden. Wie wirkte die Prägung der Weimarer Republik über die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus hinweg? Welche Paradigmen ermöglichten beziehungsweise erschwerten den Übergang vom Totalitarismus in die demokratische Ordnung? Helene Wessel ist heute von der Öffentlichkeit weitgehend vergessen, aber in ihrem Leben und Wirken finden wir wertvolle Hinweise zur Beantwortung dieser Fragen. Helene Wessel war eine Frau voller Widersprüche. Eine „Mutter des Grundgesetzes“, die sich im Parlamentarischen Rat kraftvoll eingesetzt, aber gegen die Verfassung gestimmt hat. Eine Feministin, die sich aber explizit nicht auf Frauenthemen festlegen ließ. Eine Kämpferin gegen den Nationalsozialismus, die bis in die Fünfzigerjahre Anhängerin eugenischer Ideen blieb. Im Rahmen einer politisch engagierten Biografie will ich dieser Frau, ihren Erfahrungs-

räumen und Erwartungshorizonten nachgehen. Die Fragen, die sich an das Leben und Denken von Helene Wessel richten, sind Fragen unserer Zeit, die von spezifischen Erinnerungskulturen und Gegenwartswendungen beeinflusst sind.

Lektüreempfehlung

Bubrowski, Helene. *Internationale Investitionsschiedsverfahren und nationale Gerichte*. Mohr Siebeck, 2013.

—. *Die Fehlbaren: Politiker zwischen Hochmut, Lüge und Unerbittlichkeit*. dtv, 2023.

—. „Frohes neues Jahr.“ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 31. Dezember 2023.

SEBASTIÁN CARASSAI

PhD, Professor of History

University of Buenos Aires

National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET)

Born in 1972 in Bell Ville, Córdoba, Argentina

BA in Sociology, University of Buenos Aires, MA in Economic Sociology,

Universidad Nacional de General San Martín, PhD in History, Indiana

University

THINGS THAT HAPPENED IN THE MEANTIME. ARGENTINE HISTORY FROM A MICROHISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (1966–1983)

This project investigates five significant events that took place in Argentina between the military coup of 1966 and the return to democracy in 1983.

Through the lens of microhistory, it seeks to uncover overlooked aspects of those turbulent decades, shedding light on everyday life to deepen our understanding of the recent past—not only in Argentina but also in other countries that experienced similar historical processes. The project also aims to contribute to theoretical and methodological debates in historical studies by critically examining the potentials and limits of microhistorical analysis.

The selected events are: the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of independence in Tucumán on July 9, 1966; the confrontation between thirty slum priests and a bishop in several towns of Santa Fe province in April 1969; the response of a Jewish community in Buenos Aires to its rabbi's commitment to denouncing human rights violations in 1977; the Corrientes carnival during the last military regime, examined through an accident suffered by one of its emblematic troupes in 1978; and the actions of ordinary people in a village of 5,000 inhabitants when the Argentine military decided to occupy the Falkland/Malvinas Islands in 1982.

These events share four common characteristics: They serve as specific vantage points from which to address broader issues; they have been largely overlooked by other studies; four of them took place far from major urban centers; and all are approached from a microhistorical perspective, involving a detailed analysis of the actors involved.

The collective result is revealing. The conclusions drawn from microhistorical analysis sometimes complement our existing knowledge, but more often they qualify or even contradict it, casting new light on Argentina's recent history as well as on broader questions that transcend this national case.

Recommended Reading

Carassai, Sebastián (2014). *The Argentine Silent Majority: Middle Classes, Politics, Violence, and Memory in the Seventies*. Duke University Press.

Carassai, Sebastián, and Kevin Coleman (2025). *Coups d'État in Cold War Latin America, 1964–1982*. Cambridge University Press.

Carassai, Sebastián (2026). *Beyond the War: Argentines and Islanders in an Unknown Falklands*. Cambridge University Press.

JOSÉ CÁRDENAS BUNSEN
Ph.D., Associate Professor of Spanish
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.

Born in 1971 in Lima
B.A. in Spanish Linguistics and Literature and Licenciatura in Spanish
Philology, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, M.A., M.Phil., and
Ph.D. in Spanish and Portuguese, Yale University

THE POLITICS OF SECRECY AND REVELATION:
FOUNDLINGS, INTERGENERATIONAL ALLIANCES,
AND THE INVENTION OF IDENTITY IN THE EARLY
MODERN COLONIAL WORLD

This project takes up the subject of child abandonment throughout the Spanish Empire and its impact on legal, institutional, and literary representation. Entirely based on newly retrieved archival data, it asks how foundlings, who officially ignored their parents, construed their own identities before authorities; it argues that an intergenerational alliance between them and their protectors either revealed or concealed actual information about the foundlings' provenance to help them attain their legal goals. The tense dynamics of revelation and concealment illuminate the history of privacy and the changing identities that foundlings adopted as they embraced social positions on their way to adulthood. Cast away from the institution of the family, foundlings did not have a clear personhood under Spanish law; but following the lead of Church law, Spanish authorities progressively opened paths to habilitate them case by case until the king legitimized all foundlings in 1794. These beneficial provisions required a confirmed foundling status defined by the official absence of parents, which explains the secrecy foundlings maintained even when they and their associates knew their provenance. I investigate the orphanages of Córdoba, Havana, and Lima to establish common patterns throughout the Spanish world while detecting social and racial differences between metropolitan child abandonment and

abandonment in the colonies. Historians of childhood and literary critics have largely omitted the role of secrecy in shaping foundlings' identities and have tended to rely almost exclusively on the notion of family in interpreting cultural phenomena. My project seeks to fill that lacuna and to reconceptualize trends of interpretation considering early modern foundlings and their lives.

Recommended Reading

Cárdenas Bunsen, José. *Escritura y derecho canónico en la obra de fray Bartolomé de las Casas*. Iberoamericana Editorial Vervuert, 2011.

—. "Consent, Voluntary Jurisdiction and Native Political Agency in Bartolomé de las Casas' Final Writings." *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 91, no. 6 (2014): 793–817. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14753820.2014.888887>.

—. *La aparición de los libros plúmbeos y los modos de escribir la historia: De Pedro de Castro al Inca Garcilaso de la Vega*. Iberoamericana Editorial Vervuert, 2018.

XI CHEN

Ph.D., Political Science
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Born in 1972 in Hunan, China

B.A. in Law, East China University of Political Science and Law, M.Phil. in
Law, Peking University, Ph.D. in Political Science, Columbia University

PANDEMIC, PROTEST, AND POLITICAL STABILITY IN CHINA

Combating the COVID-19 pandemic placed immense pressure on the Chinese government. Its extreme measures of social control triggered striking social reactions, including a rare political movement that spread across the nation and to many other parts of the world. An examination of contentious government-citizen interactions during this unusual historical period reveals not only the conditions and mechanisms that helped sustain this authoritarian regime's remarkable durability, but also the ways its political order can be challenged in an era of digital communication.

Drawing on a dataset of 354 contentious events and 155 in-depth interviews, this project investigates how state institutions shaped Chinese citizens' claim-making under different conditions. In ordinary times, the CCP suppresses political activism not only through coercion but also by managing social discontent in sophisticated ways—channeling grievances into complaints and petitions, and often tolerating social protest. Ordinary citizens thus engage in contentious bargaining with state authorities but almost always refrain from political activism. I examine how these depoliticizing mechanisms continued to function during the pandemic, when they reached their limits, and how everyday grievances over social and economic issues began transforming into political discontent. This project reveals how citizens mitigated formidable risks through innovative tactics and how isolated, unobtrusive, symbolic, and virtual forms of activism were transformed into widespread, open, and disruptive street protests. It also illumi-

nates how previously nonpolitical civil society groups facilitated political activism during the pandemic. This study advances our understanding of authoritarian stability and the possibilities for future change.

Recommended Reading

Chen, Xi. *Social Protest and Contentious Authoritarianism in China*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

—. “Civic and Noncivic Activism under Autocracy: Shifting Political Space for Popular Collective Action.” *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 25, no. SI (2020): 623–640. <https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-25-5-623>.

Chen, Xi, and Kai Yang. “The Puzzle of Cross-Provincial Activism in China: From Relational Dynamics to State Strategies.” *Comparative Politics* 55, no. 4 (2023): 597–615.

SAM CONTIS

Artist, Senior Critic in Photography
Yale School of Art

Born in 1982 in Pittsburgh, Pa., USA
BFA, New York University, MFA, Yale University

PHASES

I am an artist whose practice centers around photography and moving image. During my time at the Wissenschaftskolleg, I will be working on a new book project titled *Phases*. In this project I am interested in the camera's distinctive ability to measure time—across fractions of a second, days, and years. The book is based on a series of photographs and a three-channel film of runners in the landscape. In the film, three young women run a five-kilometer race through the countryside at different times of day: one in the morning, one at midday, and one in the evening. Each runner occupies her own frame, and each run is a single uninterrupted take, the distance itself being its own measure of time. The black-and-white photographs, made over the course of five years, are intimate studies of the faces of teenage runners as they approach or cross the finish line of a race. In my work, making books is a means to explore the relationships between images, in terms of rhythm, narrative, and form. I will also be researching a new film project, currently in the early stages of development, drawing on material from the archives of a late 19th-century writer and naturalist.

Recommended Reading

Contis, Sam. *Deep Springs*. MACK, 2017.

Lange, Dorothea, and Sam Contis. *Day Sleeper*. MACK, 2020.

Contis, Sam. *Overpass*. Aperture, 2022.

LORRAINE DASTON

Permanent Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg

Ph.D., Director emerita

Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin

Professor, Committee on Social Thought, University of Chicago

Born in 1951 in East Lansing, Mich., USA

Studied History, Philosophy, Mathematics, and History of Science
at Harvard and Cambridge

THINKING WITH NATURAL DISASTERS

There has never been a time without disasters: sudden eruptions of concentrated destruction and suffering, death and devastation on a grand scale. The annals of human history are stained with the records of such events; indeed, the prototype of what counts as a historical event worth reporting and recording, from the earliest chronicles to yesterday's newspaper headline, is the disaster—whether an earthquake, a bloody war, an epidemic, an infestation of rats, a flood, or any of the other misfortunes that can befall a community. Disasters intensify experience, rupture the continuity between past and present, and make a mockery of human plans and promises. More than just memorable events that take their place alongside revolutions and dynasties in chronicles, disasters define what an event is: an unexpected explosion that bursts into the smooth sameness of the everyday. In the most ancient records and in many cultures, disasters punctuate the prose of history like exclamation points.

In the very long history of disasters, there are occasionally moments when disasters are radically rethought—their causes, their meaning, their implications for how we do live and how we should live. These moments are rare, but when they occur, they transform more than just ideas about disasters. So fundamental are disasters to human experience that rethinking them also entails rethinking bedrock ideas about metaphysics, ethics, and history. Who or what makes things happen in the world, and who or what is responsible when, from a human

perspective (and a disaster is by definition always from the human perspective), things go very badly wrong?

We are once again in the midst of such a moment. The category of the natural disaster is disappearing before our eyes, and with it, an ethics of blameless evil, beyond human meaning, and a metaphysics of autonomous nature, beyond human will. *Thinking with Natural Disasters* will be a book about these rare historical moments, using thinking about disasters to trace seismic changes in how we make sense of the world.

Recommended Reading

Daston, Lorraine. *Rules: A Short History of What We Live By*. Princeton University Press, 2022.

KATERYNA DYSA

VUIAS Fellow abroad

PhD, Professor of History

National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy

Born in 1977 in Moscow, Ukrainian

BA in History, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, MA in History
and PhD in Comparative History, Central European University

A CULTURAL HISTORY OF PARKS AND GARDENS IN UKRAINE (LATE EIGHTEENTH–NINETEENTH CENTURIES)

In my research, I focus on several contexts in which parks and gardens can be examined. I will begin with the garden as a symbol and metaphor. There is a substantial corpus of late Baroque Ukrainian poetry, sermons, and engravings that employ garden imagery, which I intend to analyse, placing them in dialogue with broader European traditions.

I will look at gardens as loci of economic activity in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The primary focus of this section will be monastery gardens in Kyiv, renowned for their rich variety of trees and medicinal plants and for their involvement in economic activity, producing goods both for internal use and for sale. I will examine how these gardens were established and managed and how they functioned both as a space of material production and of meditation.

The next aspect I will address is private parks on noble estates. For this section, I will combine approaches from the history of art and design with those of environmental history. My key case study is Aleksandriia Park in Bila Tserkva, created in the late 18th and early 19th centuries at the behest of the Branicki noble family. The park's creation and operation will form the core of my discussion of estate park design and its reception by 19th-century visitors (e.g. British physician Dr Robert Lee).

Finally, I am interested in gardens as objects of botanical fascination. This section begins with early descriptions of Kyiv's gardens produced by imperial scientific expeditions and culminates in a case study of the University Botanical Garden in Kyiv. I will examine how imperial science operated in practice: how plants were collected and acquired (including the transfer of the first exotic specimens from the Kremenets Collegium after its closure by the Russian imperial government), how scientific networks functioned (for instance, through the exchange of seeds), and what ideological assumptions underpinned such institutions from an imperial perspective.

Recommended Reading

Dysa, Kateryna. *Ukrainian Witchcraft Trials: Volhynia, Podolia, and Ruthenia, 17th–18th centuries*. Central European University Press, 2020.

—. “From Indifference to Obsession: Russian Claim to Kyiv History in Travel Literature of the 18th–early 19th Century.” *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal*, no. 10 (2023): 193–213. <https://doi.org/10.18523/kmhj270983.2023-10.192-213>.

—. “The Holy Places of Kyiv as Sites of Interest for Travellers of the Long 18th Century.” In *In Search of Centres: Early Modern Kyivan Christianities*, edited by Ivan Almes, Svitlana Potapenko, Oksana Prokopyuk, Vitalii Tkachuk, and Valerii Zema. Böhlau, 2026.

WALTER M. FARINA

Dr, Professor

University of Buenos Aires

Investigador Superior, Institute of Physiology, Molecular Biology and
Neurosciences IFIBYNE-UBA-CONICET, Buenos Aires

Born in 1962 in Buenos Aires

Licenciado in and Dr of Biological Sciences, University of Buenos Aires

BASIC AND APPLIED KNOWLEDGE FOR UNDERSTANDING COMPLEX BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS: SOCIAL BEES AS A MODEL IN INTEGRATIVE BIOLOGY

As pollinator-dependent crops continue to expand globally, effective pollinator-management strategies are needed to meet the increasing demand for pollination services. The scope and challenges of implementing crop-pollination strategies based on the behavior of one of the most widely managed pollinators, the honeybee, have been recently documented across various commercial crops. Honeybees' ability to perceive, learn, and generalize floral odors, their foraging preferences following olfactory experiences, and the transfer of food-source information within the social context of the colony are all key factors influencing foraging decisions. These aspects are particularly relevant when attempting to direct pollinators toward target crops. Building on decades of research, we have developed a platform of crop-specific odor mimics that enhance the activity of treated colonies and increase crop yields. On the other hand, these insects are increasingly exposed to disturbed agroecosystems, where agrochemicals are applied in concentrations that can impair their social organization, cognitive capacities, and survival. The honeybee is considered a sentinel species due to its high sensitivity to environmental changes. Using a range of experimental approaches, we have identified biomarkers that allow the diagnosis of alterations in intensive agricultural landscapes. How to improve global productivity without compromising biodiversity and the environment remains an open ques-

tion. Addressing this challenge requires connecting basic and applied research across different realms of knowledge. Such integration can emerge from multidisciplinary dialogue. This fellowship is an excellent opportunity to synthesize existing evidence and develop new perspectives.

Recommended Reading

Farina, Walter M., Christoph Grüter, and Paula C. Díaz (2005). “Social Learning of Floral Odours Inside the Honeybee Hive.” *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 272: 1923–1928. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2005.3172>.

Farina, Walter M., Andrés Arenas, Paula C. Díaz, Cinthia Susic Martin, and M. Cecilia Estravis Barcala (2020). “Learning of a Mimic Odor Within Beehives Improves Pollination Service Efficiency in a Commercial Crop.” *Current Biology* 30: 4284–4290.e5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2020.08.018>.

Macri, Ivana N., Pablo J. Moja, José M. Latorre-Estivalis, Diego S. Cristos, Jorge A. Zavala, and Walter M. Farina (2024). “Agricultural Intensification Impairs Behavioral Abilities and the Expression of Genes Associated with Social Responsiveness in Honeybees.” *One Earth* 7 (9): 1569–1586. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2024.07.012>.

MARK FLEISHMAN

Ph.D., Professor of Theatre and Performance
University of Cape Town

Born in 1963 in Johannesburg, South Africa
BA and Performer's Diploma in Drama, MA in Drama, and PhD in Drama,
University of Cape Town

APPROACHES TO TRAGEDY IN (POST)APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: RUINS, CAVES, AND THE AFTERMATHS OF COLONIALISM

I will be completing a monograph project examining how tragedy functions as a critical form in South Africa under conditions of colonial aftermath, political transition, and stalled democratization. The research investigates how theatrical practices respond to historical trauma, unresolved violence, and deferred liberation by reconfiguring tragic forms beyond Eurocentric genealogies. The research claims that tragedy in postcolonial contexts is shaped less by catharsis or resolution than by temporal suspension, precarity, and the persistent “not yet” of decolonization.

The monograph engages two dominant but interrelated approaches to tragedy: a political mode, characterized by engagements with the classical archive of Greek tragedy, and a metaphysical mode, grounded in African ritual, cosmology, and indigenous performance traditions. These approaches are analysed through two conceptual metaphors: the “Ruin,” which figures the fragmented remains of colonial cultural forms that are both constraining and generative; and the “Cave,” which signifies ritual spaces of entrapment, transition, and metaphysical negotiation between past, present, and future.

I engage in close readings of three theatrical works created through the Reimagining Tragedy from Africa and the Global South (ReTAGS) project: two of my own works, *Antigone (not quite/quiet)* and *Oedipus at Colonus—#after-sophocles*, and Mandla Mbothwe's *iKrele le Chiza*. I then seek out the genealogies

of these works in works by Athol Fugard, Yael Farber, H. I. E. Dhlomo, and Fatima Dike. Drawing on thinkers such as Mbembe, Boulbina, and Quayson, I reconceptualize tragedy as a structure of feeling shaped by ongoing colonial aftermaths rather than as a fixed genre or closed historical form. Ultimately, tragedy in (post)apartheid South Africa is reframed as a critical site for negotiating unfinished pasts and uncertain futures.

Alongside the work on the monograph, I will begin developing a new performance work together with my partner, Jennie Reznick, and collaborators in Berlin, Vienna, and Johannesburg.

Recommended Reading

Fleishman, Mark. "The Difference of Performance as Research." *Theatre Research International* 37, no. 1 (2012): 28–37.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0307883311000745>.

—. "Making Space for Ideas: The Knowledge Work of Magnet Theatre." In *Magnet Theatre: Three Decades of Making Space*, edited by Megan Lewis and Anton Krueger. Intellect; University of South Africa Press, 2016.

—. "Tragedy, Apartheid, (De)Coloniality." In *Tragedy as a Travelling Form: Itineraries from Thespis to Today*, edited by Philipp Lammers, Juliane Vogel, and Christina Wald. Methuen Drama, 2025.
<https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350466395.0021>.

AUORE GAILLET

Dr. iur., Professorin für öffentliches Recht
Universität Toulouse Capitole

Geboren 1981 in Mulhouse, Frankreich

Diplom, Politikwissenschaften, Institut d'études politiques de Strasbourg,
Maîtrise und DEA, öffentliches Recht, Université Robert Schuman, Strasbourg
III, Dr. iur., Université de Strasbourg/Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg

DIE VERFASSUNGSGERICHTSBARKEIT ANGESICHTS PLURALISierter GESELLSCHAFTEN – AUSGEHEND VON DER ROLLE DES BUNDESVERFASSUNGSGERICHTS IM WIEDERVEREINIGUNGSPROZESS

Sowohl als Wahrer freiheitlich-demokratischer Verfassungsordnungen wie als bevorzugtes Angriffsziel der Gegner des liberalen Konstitutionalismus rücken Verfassungsgerichte derzeit zunehmend in den Fokus der Aufmerksamkeit. Angesichts der Gefährdung des demokratischen Verfassungsstaats im 21. Jahrhundert wird der Ruf nach einer „wehrhaften“ bzw. „streitbaren“ Verfassungsgerichtsbarkeit laut. Deren Rolle als Akteurin in repräsentativen Demokratien ist jedoch angesichts zunehmend polarisierter Gesellschaften sowie der Infragestellung von Rechtsstaatlichkeit alles andere als geklärt.

Mein Projekt befasst sich mit dem konkreten Beispiel des deutschen Bundesverfassungsgerichts im Rahmen des Wiedervereinigungs- und Europäisierungsprozesses am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts. Bislang hatten sich meine Forschungen zur Geschichte des Gerichts auf dessen Gründungsjahre beschränkt, in denen es als zentraler Akteur der im Grundgesetz von 1949 etablierten „liberalen und demokratischen Grundordnung“ instituiert wurde. Die spätere Rolle des Bundesverfassungsgerichts im doppelten Prozess der Wiedervereinigung und der Europäisierung ist hingegen bislang noch wenig untersucht. Gerade sie verspricht indes neue Perspektiven für das Verständnis einer Institution, die auch international nach wie vor als vorbildlich gilt.

Dadurch soll nicht lediglich der Geschichte des Bundesverfassungsgerichts ein neues Kapitel hinzugefügt werden. Vielmehr geht es um eine umfassende, auch rechtsvergleichende und interdisziplinäre Ansätze aufgreifende Reflexion über die Verfassungsgerichtsbarkeit in Zeiten sozialer und politischer Spannungen, wie sie fragmentierte und polarisierte Gesellschaften prägen. Dafür bietet Deutschland, seit dem Aufstieg der extremen Rechten insbesondere in den ost-deutschen Bundesländern, ein ebenso anschauliches wie komplexes Beispiel.

Lektüreempfehlung

Gaillet, Aurore. *L'individu contre l'État: Essai sur l'évolution des recours de droit public dans l'Allemagne du XIXe siècle*. Dalloz, 2012.

—. *La Cour constitutionnelle fédérale allemande: Reconstruire une démocratie par le droit (1945–1961)*. La Mémoire du Droit, 2021.

—. „Französische Sichtweisen auf die Rolle des Bundesverfassungsgerichts.“ *Archiv des öffentlichen Rechts* 149, Nr. 1 (2024): 123–191.

GIOVANNI GALIZIA

Permanent Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg
PhD, Professor of Zoology and Neurobiology
University of Konstanz

Born in 1963 in Rome

Studied Biology at Freie Universität Berlin and Zoology at the
University of Cambridge

LARGE-SCALE BIRD NAVIGATION

Animals can navigate and find their way back to places they have been before. For example, honeybees will find their way back to a flower that has good nectar, and they can even communicate that position to fellow bees in their hives. Humans can find their way back to Villa Walther after a walk in the Grunewald. And migrating birds can travel thousands of kilometers to their winter sites with great accuracy. How do they form a map of the environment? What do they know about space? When they travel to a very distant place, do they remember salient places that they can use as landmarks when they fly the same trajectory a second or third time? Or do they use world-based coordinates, e.g. of the magnetic field of the earth? How does acquired memory interact with innate information?

We study Mantagu's Harriers (*Circus pygargus*), a ground-nesting raptor that migrates to the African Sahel zone in winter. Our colonies are in Spain and suffer from modified land use and changing climate. We tag juveniles with GPS transmitters and follow their trajectories. What we have found so far is that juveniles, who cannot yet have any individual memory of the target area, fly independently from their family members to overwintering sites at different times and via distinct routes and choose sites hundreds of kilometers away from each other. The data indicates an innate knowledge of world geography. However, when returning to Spain, they find their place of birth and build their nests close to those of the previous year. This suggests acquired knowledge of where they

were raised. In their subsequent years, they travel back to exactly the same place they went to in their first winter. However, in most cases, the route flown is different from year to year. Thus, we see that long-distance navigation uses knowledge of the world both innate (apparent in the first year) and acquired (apparent in subsequent years). More data are needed to understand the mechanisms and the ecological validity of these observations.

Recommended Reading

Berger-Geiger, Brigitte, Georg Heine, Ajayrama Kumaraswamy, and C. Giovanni Galizia (2022). “Changing Places: Spatial Ecology and Social Interactions of Female and Male Montagu’s Harrier (*Circus pygargus*) in the Spanish Extremadura.” *Journal of Ornithology* 163: 165–179.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10336-021-01914-9>.

Menzel, Randolph, and C. Giovanni Galizia (2024). “Landmark Knowledge Overrides Optic Flow in Honeybee Waggle Dance Distance Estimation.” *Journal of Experimental Biology* 227 (21): jeb248162.
<https://doi.org/10.1242/jeb.248162>.

Berger-Geiger, Brigitte, Catarina Machado, Alfonso Godino, Manolo Calderón, and C. Giovanni Galizia (2025). “The First Year: Movements and Survival of Juvenile Montagu’s Harriers (*Circus pygargus*) in the Spanish Extremadura.” Preprint, Research Square, December 4.
<https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-8253727/v1>.

JUDIT GÁRDOS

from September 2026 to January 2027

Yehudit and Yehuda Elkana Fellow

PhD, Senior Research Fellow, Head of the Research Documentation Centre
ELTE Centre for Social Sciences, Budapest

Born in 1979 in Budapest

MA in Sociology, Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences, PhD in Cultural
Studies, University of Pécs

SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE-MAKING AND ITS ACTORS IN HUNGARY. THE ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN OF THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY STAFF FORUM

In her project at the Wissenschaftskolleg, Judit Gárdos continues her long-standing research on how scientific data are produced, how scientific explanation is conducted, and the normative dimensions of social scientific practices. She empirically investigates scientific discourses, argumentations, and narratives in Hungarian social scientific knowledge production, in the framework of a project of the Hungarian Academy Staff Forum, originally established in 2019 as a bottom-up movement and now operating as a civil organization.

Over the past decade, the Hungarian government led by Fidesz has initiated fundamental changes to the country's research landscape. It has restructured the research institutes of the 200-year-old Hungarian Academy of Sciences, privatized most universities, and invested heavily in new research institutions and think tanks, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. These have often produced what looks like the results of "objective," empirically based scientific research. In reality, these institutions have consistently supported the political agendas of the government, for example through specific, heavily normative narration of their research results or ideologically guided and biased questionnaires. Judit Gárdos investigates how researchers within these institutions carry out this distinctive mode of social scientific knowledge production and compares

her findings with a parallel analysis of the scientific practices of institutions within Hungary's established academic sphere. She examines the accessibility of non-confidential social science research data, pursues the necessary steps to obtain them, and analyses the normative and argumentative structures that shape social scientific knowledge production, focusing also on how research data are transformed into published texts.

Recommended Reading

Gárdos, Judit (2024). "Questions and Explanations in Sociology: A Science Studies Field Study." *Science and Technology Studies* 37 (1): 44–59.
<https://doi.org/10.23987/sts.111856>.

Gárdos, Judit, Sára Hungler, and Miklós Illéssy (2024): "Anti-Pluralism, Labour Market Policy and the Pandemic: Political Uses and Social Consequences of COVID-19 in Hungary." *Social and Legal Studies* 33 (6): 995–1014.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/09646639241233939>.

DIETER GRIMM

Permanent Fellow des Wissenschaftskollegs

Rektor des Wissenschaftskollegs (2001–2007)

Dr. Dr. h.c. mult., LL.M. (Harvard), Professor (em.) des Öffentlichen Rechts

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Bundesverfassungsrichter a. D.

Geboren 1937 in Kassel, Deutschland

Studium der Rechtswissenschaft und Politikwissenschaft in Frankfurt/Main,

Freiburg/Breisgau, Berlin, Paris und Harvard

DEUTSCHE VERFASSUNGSGESCHICHTE, BAND II (KAISERREICH UND WEIMARER REPUBLIK)

Vor meiner Wahl zum Bundesverfassungsrichter (1987) arbeitete ich an einer deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte. Der erste Band, der die Zeit vom Beginn des modernen Konstitutionalismus (1776) bis zur Auflösung des Deutschen Bundes (1866) behandelt, erschien 1988 bei Suhrkamp (5. Aufl. 2017). Ich möchte versuchen, das Werk abzuschließen, und habe deswegen die Arbeit an dem folgenden Band (Kaiserreich und Weimarer Republik) wieder aufgenommen. Ob es auch noch um eine Verfassungsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik ergänzt wird, muss vorerst offenbleiben.

Außerdem bereite ich einen Band mit meinen wichtigsten Arbeiten zur Geschichte, Theorie und Dogmatik der Grundrechte vor.

Lektüreempfehlung

Grimm, Dieter. *Die Historiker und die Verfassung: Ein Beitrag zur Wirkungsgeschichte des Grundgesetzes*. C.H.Beck, 2022.

ANNETT GRÖSCHNER

Schriftstellerin

Berlin

Geboren 1964 in Magdeburg, DDR

Diplom, Germanistik, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, D.E.A., Germanistik,

Université Paris VIII Vincennes-Saint Denis

1. BERLIN-ROMAN „MENZINGERS DINGE“
(ARBEITSTITEL)

2. „DREI OSTDEUTSCHE FRAUEN ESSEN BRATWURST
IN DER PROVINZ UND RETTEN EUROPA“
(ARBEITSTITEL), BUCHPROJEKT MIT WENKE
SEEMANN UND PEGGY MÄDLER

Ad 1. „Menzingers Dinge“ erzählt die Geschichte der Urberlinerin Gertrud (Trude) Menzinger (1926–2020) anhand der von ihr nachgelassenen Dinge. Es sind Dinge, die keinen Wert haben und deswegen vom Nachlassverwalter für die Entrümpler zurückgelassen wurden. Ding für Ding erzählt aus dem Leben einer Berlinerin, in Prenzlauer Berg geboren, im Krankenhaus Friedrichshain an den Folgen von Corona gestorben. Dazwischen mindestens drei Leben, eins als Hortnerin in der Wilhelm-Böse-Oberschule.

Es sind unscheinbare Dinge, die das Leben der Trude Menzinger erzählen. Der Durchsteckschlüssel, die Leine ihres Hundes, der 2002 bei den Walpurgisnachtswallen am Mauerpark von einem Wasserwerfer überfahren wurde (siehe Roman *Walpurgistag*, 2011). Die ca. fünf Dutzend Gegenstände bilden jeweils ein Kapitel.

„Menzingers Dinge“ speist sich aus meinen jahrzehntelangen Erfahrungen und Gesprächen mit alten Frauen, die im Prenzlauer Berg wohnten und lange tot sind, und ist Sergej Tretjakow, dem Philosophen der Dinge, gewidmet.

Ad 2. Wie im vorangegangenen Buch *Drei ostdeutsche Frauen betrinken sich und gründen den idealen Staat* (2024) verschränken Wenke Seemann, Peggy Mädler und ich in diesem interdisziplinären Buchprojekt Gespräche zu dritt, allgemeinere Einschübe, Texte in der 3. Person, Fußnoten, Listen, Rezepte, Gastrokritik, Postkartengrüße, Flugblätter, Fotos und Zeichnungen miteinander. Wir sprechen mit Menschen aus verschiedenen (europäischen) Ländern und Provinzen, unternehmen Reisen durch Europa (Brüssel, Manchester, Ústí nad Labem, Venedig, Vilnius und zum Mittelpunkt Europas) und eine Schlafwagenfahrt an die polnisch-ukrainische Grenze, sammeln Stimmen und Eindrücke ein und zeichnen unsere Wege durch die europäische Provinz auf. Ausgehend von den zwölf Sternen der EU-Flagge gibt es zwölf Kapitel im Buch.

Lektüreempfehlung

Gröschner, Annett, und Arwed Messmer, Hg. *Taking Stock of Power: An Other View of the Berlin Wall/Inventarisierung der Macht: Die Berliner Mauer aus anderer Sicht*. 2 Bde. Hatje Cantz, 2016.

Gröschner, Annett, Peggy Mädler und Wenke Seemann. *Drei ostdeutsche Frauen betrinken sich und gründen den idealen Staat*. Hanser, 2024.

Gröschner, Annett. *Schwebende Lasten*. C.H. Beck, 2025.

KATHARINA GRÜNEISL

PhD, Human Geography
University of Nottingham

Born in 1988 in Munich, Germany

BA in Political Science and MA in Stratégies Territoriales et Urbaines, Sciences
Po Paris, MSc in Urban Policy, London School of Economics, MRes in Human
Geography Research and PhD in Human Geography, Durham University

BREATHLESS LIVES OF GLOBAL FASHION: RESPIRATORY STRUGGLES OF SOUTH ASIAN WORKERS IN JORDAN'S DORMITORY MIGRANT LABOUR REGIME

In Jordan's garment industry, South Asian migrant women produce clothing for major American brands while living and working in tightly controlled industrial zones. Their daily lives unfold between factory floors and dormitories, where long shifts, airborne cotton dust, overcrowded rooms, and pervasive pollution combine to produce a persistent sense of suffocation. Workers often describe this experience in Hindi or Urdu as *dam ghutna*—a condition that captures both respiratory strain and the feeling of being physically and emotionally confined.

Based on two years of ethnographic fieldwork, this project traces how breath becomes a central site through which feminised labour migration and industrial production are experienced and understood. It examines how women workers locate respiratory risk across the spaces they inhabit—from factory interiors to dormitories and the wider industrial zone—and how these environments shape their physical and mental capacities to endure the present and imagine possible futures. Participatory and arts-based methods, including body and environmental mapping, are used to engage forms of embodied knowledge that often remain difficult to articulate.

Attending to breath also offers a conceptual bridge between feminist political economy and feminist political ecology, revealing how global clothing produc-

tion depends on overlapping forms of human and environmental extraction. Breath foregrounds the entanglement of racialised and gendered bodies with air, infrastructure, and industrial environments across a South–South migration corridor. At the same time, breathlessness emerges as a relational condition that connects bodies to one another and to their surroundings. Breath can thus be re-configured from a sensation of exhaustion into a potential ground for new forms of collectivity and care. In this way, the project rethinks workers’ health beyond the confines of the workplace, situating it within the broader ecologies and extractive dynamics that shape life and labour along one of the world’s most feminised and labour-intensive value chains.

Recommended Reading

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ONUR GÜNTÜRKÜN

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A WIDER VIEW OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Behavioural and neurophysiological data suggest that some bird species are aware of external stimuli and recognise themselves to varying degrees in the mirror. Despite large differences in the general brain organisation of birds and mammals, the requirements for consciousness as outlined in different theories about the neural fundaments of consciousness are mostly met. Furthermore, studies of self-recognition in birds provide further behavioural evidence of the limitations of current behavioural paradigms like the mark test for evaluating signs of self-awareness. These findings could provide insights into the bigger picture of the evolutionary roots of consciousness. It seems that self-awareness is adapted to the ecological constraints of the species. Moreover, consciousness should not be deemed as an “all-or-nothing” cognitive function, but rather as a graded process. These results add to the growing body of evidence that consciousness may be present in many parts of the animal kingdom, across species that are phylogenetically distant from each other and have remarkably different brain structures. It is certainly too early to speculate whether this is the result of convergent evolution or results from a distant common ancestor. But if so many animals with such diverse brain organisations are conscious, it becomes increasingly likely that consciousness adds cognitive abilities that are evolutionarily successful. I will integrate the comparative literature on animal consciousness and aim to expand it by two new studies from my lab. By this, I aim to achieve a new view of consciousness that is less anthropocentric but explores the option that consciousness, once hailed as the ultimate triumph of human evolution, could

constitute in its most basic form a rather mundane cognitive process that allows diverse animal species to simply keep track of what is currently important.

Recommended Reading

Güntürkün, Onur (2021). “The Conscious Crow.” *Learning & Behavior* 49: 3–4.
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Hillemacher, Sonja, Sebastian Ocklenburg, Onur Güntürkün, and Inga Tiemann (2023). “Roosters Do not Warn the Bird in the Mirror: The Cognitive Ecology of Mirror Self-Recognition.” *PLoS ONE* 18: e0291416.
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TAE-YEOUN KEUM

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Intellectual History, University of Cambridge, Ph.D. in Government,
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THE SYMBOLIC POLITICS OF BLUMENBERG, HABERMAS, AND SCHMITT

My research concerns the symbolic dimensions of politics: To what extent can and should politics be shaped by figurative elements in our thinking—such as symbols, metaphors, and narratives—that are not immediately transparent to reason? During the fellowship year, I hope to explore this question through the lens of a distinctive debate sustained between three giants of twentieth-century German philosophy: Hans Blumenberg, the late Jürgen Habermas, and Carl Schmitt.

My project reconstructs the political theory of Hans Blumenberg, who devoted his philosophical career to studying how cultural meaning gets condensed into metaphors, myths, and other figurative forms of discourse that operate through imaginative representations rather than propositional claims. He was defending the dynamic, constructive character of these forms against the influence of Carl Schmitt and his associates, and the sinister reverence they cultivated for the political power of myths and symbols. At the same time, Blumenberg was also challenging the critical account of myth advanced by the Frankfurt School and its intellectual heirs, including its most prominent successor, Jürgen Habermas.

In recovering the surprising ways these three thinkers positioned themselves with and against each other on the questions they shared, I aim to show that the symbolic features of politics are neither trivial nor distractions from substance. I

argue that, in the fault lines of their dispute, we can appreciate not only the indispensability of our political symbols, but also our own capacity to rewrite their content. For Blumenberg, Habermas, and Schmitt, symbolic politics stood in deep tension with some of the most defining principles of modernity, including especially a set of ideals at the heart of how we understand rational discourse and its place in politics. Over a three-way debate that unfolded over a century, they staked out sharply different approaches to navigating that tension.

Recommended Reading

Keum, Tae-Yeoun. *Plato and the Mythic Tradition in Political Thought*. Harvard University Press, 2020.

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JAE EUN KIM

Permanent Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg
Ph.D., Korea Foundation Endowed Associate Professor of Sociology,
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Born in 1978 in Seoul

PhD in Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles

REPERTOIRES OF REDEMPTION: ASYLUM, MIGRATION, RELIGION

Students of international migration have long treated religion largely as an engine of assimilation or a sanctuary from exclusion for migrants. But what if membership in a faith community opens for migrants a path to formal, de jure inclusion into their states of residence, leading to the acquisition of coveted membership in affluent liberal democracies? What kinds of practical challenges, legal intricacies, and moral dilemmas do the actors involved face, and how do they make sense of and respond to these? The book I am completing, preliminarily titled *Repertoires of Redemption: Asylum, Migration, Religion*, seeks to answer these questions. It empirically draws on an in-depth ethnographic investigation of the migration trajectories, legalization strategies, and religious conversion careers of Korean-Chinese migrants to the U.S., focusing especially on those who applied for asylum as Christians in the first two decades of the 21st century.

The book intervenes in three broad subjects. It illustrates the politics of deservingness in the development of immigration relief built on the discourse of “religious freedom” and “global Christian persecution.” It enriches our understanding of migrants’ “unauthorized identity craft”—their transgressive efforts to assume desirable legal personae to achieve their migratory goals. And it sheds light on the complex ecology of for-profit and non-profit intermediaries—including evangelical activists, immigrant churches, and missionaries—that but-

dress, appropriate, modify, or contest the story that the law tells about itself. In so doing, these intermediaries shape migrants' aspirations, future-making, and self-making in distinctive ways. Bringing these three subjects together, *Repertoires of Redemption* offers a multi-perspectival and multi-scalar view of how various state (e.g. the legislative, executive, judicial, and administrative bodies) and non-state actors (e.g. legal professionals, commercial migration brokers, advocacy groups, religious actors, and migrants themselves) make and unmake refugees out of unauthorized migrants from above and below. It shows how migration governance, human rights regimes, and transnational religion are navigated and negotiated on the ground with their full complexity and contradictions.

Recommended Reading

- Kim, Jaeun (2022). "Between Sacred Gift and Profane Exchange: Identity Craft and Relational Work in Asylum Claims-Making on Religious Grounds." *Theory and Society* 51 (2): 303–333. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-021-09468-8>.
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MIRNA ELIZABETA KRAMAR

from September 2026 to January 2027

Fellow of the College for Life Sciences

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Born in 1991 in Zabok, Croatia

BSc in Chemistry, University of Zagreb, MSc in Biophysics, TUD Dresden

University of Technology, Dr. rer. nat., University of Göttingen

FROM SIGNALS TO STRUCTURE: HOW CELLS LEARN TO BE A TISSUE

Living tissues must achieve something remarkable: They remain stable even though their individual cells are constantly sensing, changing, and responding to their surroundings. How this local variability is turned into lasting collective order remains poorly understood, especially when tissues are perturbed and must recover coherence.

This problem is especially pertinent in development, where robustness is not fixed but changes over time. Similar perturbations can be devastating at one stage and recoverable at another, suggesting that tissues differ in how they coordinate, communicate, and retain information as they develop. Understanding these shifts could help clarify more general principles of how living matter stabilizes itself without becoming rigid.

These questions have gained urgency as biology has increasingly turned toward problems of information flow, signal processing, and robustness. We now know a great deal about signaling inside single cells, and we can describe large-scale patterns of multicellular organization, but the connection between these levels is still unclear.

My project addresses this gap by asking how epithelial tissues use shared information to sustain order across time. I am interested in how tissues retain traces of past states and how communication between cells gives rise to collective

stability, helping explain how robust organization emerges in living systems. At the Wissenschaftskolleg, I will focus in particular on the mechanisms of tissue memory, the role of intercellular communication in stabilizing collective behavior, and the possibility that robustness in multicellular systems emerges through learning-like processes over time.

Recommended Reading

Kramar, Mirna, and Karen Alim (2021). “Encoding Memory in Tube Diameter Hierarchy of Living Flow Network.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118 (10): e2007815118. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2007815118>.

Kramar, Mirna, Lauritz Hahn, Aleksandra M. Walczak, Thierry Mora, and Mathieu Coppey (2025). “Single Cells Can Resolve Graded Stimuli.” *PRX Life* 3 (4): 043016. <https://doi.org/10.1103/pyf8-y4kt>.

NICOLAS LANGLITZ

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Born in 1975 in Cologne, Germany

M.A. in Philosophy, Freie Universität Berlin, M.D., Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Dr. med., Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin/Freie Universität Berlin,

Ph.D. in Medical Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley

IS THERE A PLACE FOR PSYCHEDELICS IN LATE MODERN SOCIETIES?

Psychedelic drugs were prohibited around 1970—partly for public health reasons, partly for political ones. Their repression was bound up with the conflict between counterculture and establishment. Since the 1990s, researchers have worked to bring them back: first into mainstream science by capitalizing on the excitement around neuroscience during the “Decade of the Brain,” then into mainstream society through medicalization. In 2012, I published *Neuropsychodelia*, an ethnography of the preclinical phase of this revival. At the Wissenschaftskolleg, I’m planning to write a second book on the psychedelic renaissance, which follows its clinical phase, as part of a transdisciplinary project funded by Germany’s Federal Ministry of Education and Research on the ethical, legal, and social aspects of psychedelic therapies. It examines the changing normative space in which psychedelics have historically and recently been used.

The book builds on what I call the moral psychopharmacology of psychedelics. Psychedelics have been reported to induce mystical experiences “beyond good and evil” and to function as non-specific amplifiers of whatever attitudes and expectations users bring to the experience. As they reach more diverse and polarized publics, this context-dependence generates urgent bioethical questions that regulatory agencies, focused exclusively on the safety and efficacy of drugs, are not equipped to address. Ideologically, the psychedelic renaissance now

sponsors projects ranging from neo-animism and ecofeminism to the healing of racial trauma, right-wing populism, and the MAHA movement in the US.

The book will bring psychopharmacology into conversation with the historical and ethnographic archive of psychedelic cultures, and will engage the growing body of humanist scholarship on psychedelics. It addresses contentious normative questions, and asks how psychedelic drugs might find a place in late modern societies without repeating the mistakes of the 1960s.

Recommended Reading

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—. *Chimpanzee Culture Wars: Rethinking Human Nature Alongside Japanese, European, and American Cultural Primatologists*. Princeton University Press, 2020.

Langlitz, Nicolas, and Clemente de Althaus. “The Moral Economy of Diversity: How the Epistemic Value of Diversity Transforms Late Modern Knowledge Cultures.” *History of the Human Sciences* 37, no. 1 (2024): 3–27.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/09526951231166533>.

LUCIE LAPLANE

Dr., Permanent Researcher in Philosophy of Science

Institute of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology, Centre national de la recherche scientifique/Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Born in 1984 in Paris

Master 2 in Cellular and Molecular Biology, Sorbonne University UPMC,

Dr. in Philosophy of Science, University Paris Nanterre

RETHINKING CANCER TREATMENT

Despite clear improvements, cancer remains a difficult disease to treat. Treatments are often unsatisfactory, either for their lack of efficacy, or for the limited duration of their efficacy, and all too often for their toxicity and impact on patients' quality of life. One of the imperatives of oncology is therefore to understand what generates these limitations and how to overcome them. To this end, several theoretical models have been put forward: clonal selection, cancer stem cell resistance, cellular plasticity, and immune escape, for example. These theories play a central role in oncology. Not only are they mobilized to "explain" cancers and their ability to resist treatment, but they are also the mainstays of therapeutic innovation. The way we conceive of the biological functioning of cancer contributes to determine the ways we conceive of its treatment. For example, somatic mutation theory underpins the development of targeted therapies. This pivotal role of cancer conceptualizations shows the importance of ensuring their quality.

My aim during the fellowship will be to analyze therapeutic strategies, the way they work, the goal they pursue, and the theoretical assumptions on which they rely. On this basis, I will seek to identify and overcome theoretical limitations, as well as to open new directions for cancer treatment.

Recommended Reading

- Laplane, Lucie (2016). *Cancer Stem Cells: Philosophy and Therapies*. Harvard University Press.
- Laplane, Lucie, Paolo Mantovani, Ralph Adolphs, et al. (2019). “Why Science Needs Philosophy.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116 (10): 3948–3952. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1900357116>.
- Laplane, Lucie, and Carlo C. Maley (2024). “The Evolutionary Theory of Cancer: Challenges and Potential Solutions.” *Nature Reviews Cancer* 24: 718–733. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41568-024-00734-2>.

JÖRN LEONHARD

von Februar bis Juni 2027

Dr. phil., Professor für Neuere und Neueste Geschichte

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg

Geboren 1967 in Birkenfeld/Nahe, Deutschland

M.St., Modern History, und M.A., Modern History, Universität Oxford,

M.A., Mittlere und Neuere Geschichte, Universität Heidelberg, Dr. phil.,

Universität Heidelberg

TEMPO UND FRAKTUR. EINE GESCHICHTE DER WELT 1920–1940

Egal, ob man die Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts als „kurze“ oder „lange“ Epoche anlegt, kommt den beiden Jahrzehnten zwischen dem Ende des Ersten Weltkriegs und der Eskalation des pazifischen, kontinentaleuropäischen und globalen Krieges zwischen 1937 und 1941 eine grundlegende Bedeutung zu. Doch die meisten existierenden Gesamtdarstellungen bleiben noch immer auf die Vereinigten Staaten und West- oder Osteuropa fokussiert, erzählen die Globalgeschichte einzelner Nationalstaaten oder entwickeln global ausgreifende Themengeschichten. Das geplante Buch widmet sich der Analyse jener „mittleren Epoche“ der 1920er- und 1930er-Jahre, ohne sie allein auf eine Vorgeschichte des Zweiten Weltkriegs und des Siegeszugs des Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus zu reduzieren. Die Eingrenzung auf die im Titel genannten Jahreszahlen markiert dabei keine dogmatische Chronologie. Den Themenkomplexen des Buches – von Gewalträumen und Gewaltkulturen nach 1918, Revolutionen und Gegenrevolutionen im Zeichen einer weltweiten Utopienkonkurrenz, über globale Konjunkturen und Krisen von Kapitalismus und Demokratie bis zu kulturellen Mustern und Medien der Weltwahrnehmung – sind jeweils Vorläufe und längerfristige Wirkungszusammenhänge eingeschrieben. So schöpft die Darstellung aus der besonderen Spannung zwischen dem Epochenzusammenhang und der Eigenzeit und Eigenlogik der Themen.

Die geplante Monografie führt meine Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Ersten Weltkrieges und des „Überforderten Friedens“ bis 1923 fort und führt diesen Ansatz konsequent weiter. Besonders akzentuiert werden soll dabei zum einen die Übergangszeit zwischen dem Ende noch europäisch bestimmter Herrschaftsstrukturen und der Ausbildung neuer Ordnungsvorstellungen, die Europa nicht mehr als Handlungssubjekt fokussierten, zum anderen der Übergang von historisch relativ offenen Situationen zu Krisenschwellen und Entscheidungssituationen. Angestrebt ist eine Verknüpfung aus strenger struktureller Analyse und plastischer Erfahrungsgeschichte aus der Perspektive von Menschen in ihrer sich verändernden Gegenwart, zu der gerade in diesen Jahren jene „vergangene Zukunft“ gehörte, die nicht in der retrospektiven Sinnggebung aus dem Blick auf die langfristigen Konsequenzen aufgeht.

Lektüreempfehlung

Leonhard, Jörn. *Die Büchse der Pandora: Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs*.

C.H.Beck, 2014. Englisch: *Pandora's Box: A History of the First World War*.

Übersetzt von Patrick Camiller. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018.

—. *Der überforderte Frieden: Versailles und die Welt 1918–1923*. C.H.Beck, 2018.

Hirschhausen, Ulrike von, und Jörn Leonhard. *Empires: Eine globale Geschichte 1780–1920*. C.H.Beck, 2023.

WOLF LEPENIES

Permanent Fellow (em.) des Wissenschaftskollegs
Rektor des Wissenschaftskollegs (1986–2001)
Dr. Dr. h.c. mult., Professor (em.) der Soziologie
Freie Universität Berlin

Geboren 1941 in Deuthen, heute Polen
Studium der Soziologie, Philosophie und Publizistik
in München, Münster und Berlin

„DIE ZWIETRACHT BEIM FEIND“ – CHARLES DE GAULLES ERSTES BUCH

Der französische Heeresbericht meldete am 7. März 1916 den Tod eines „wegen seiner intellektuellen Fähigkeiten und moralischen Verdienste“ hochgeachteten Kompanieführers vor Verdun. Die Rede war von Charles de Gaulle, den General Philippe Pétain posthum als „Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur“ auszeichnete. Aber Charles de Gaulle war nicht tot. Er hatte im Kampf Mann gegen Mann nach einem Bajonettstich das Bewusstsein verloren und war in deutsche Gefangenschaft geraten. 32 Monate verbrachte de Gaulle in deutschen Lagern, fünf Mal versuchte er, vergeblich, zu fliehen. De Gaulle, der die deutsche Sprache beherrschte und Zeitungen sowie die Reichstagsprotokolle lesen durfte, nutzte die Gefangenschaft, um seinen Kameraden Vorträge über den Fortgang des Krieges und die Entwicklungen der deutschen Politik zu halten. Aus diesen Vorträgen ging sein erstes, 1924 publiziertes Buch hervor, *La Discorde chez l’ennemi*, in dem er in fünf Kapiteln, die Akten eines Dramas ähneln, die Gründe beschreibt, die zur Niederlage Deutschlands im Ersten Weltkrieg geführt hatten. Ich habe zu de Gaulles Buch einen ersten Essay geschrieben, in weiteren wird beispielsweise der Schriftsteller de Gaulle gewürdigt werden, der sich in einer dramatischen Autorenkonkurrenz gegen seinen frühen Mentor Pétain behaupten musste. Diese Essays sollen der Auftakt für eine größere Studie über

Charles de Gaulles erstes Buch sein, ich versuche einen Verlag für eine deutsche Übersetzung zu finden.

In seinen Memoiren schrieb de Gaulle später, ihn habe zeitlebens „une certaine idée de la France“ geleitet. *La Discorde chez l'ennemi* lässt früh ahnen, dass seine politische Laufbahn auch von einer „certaine idée de l'Allemagne“ geprägt sein würde. De Gaulle wollte vom Feind alles wissen – und nutzte dieses Wissen später mutig, damit aus Feindschaft Verständnis, Zusammenarbeit und schließlich Freundschaft wurde.

Lektüreempfehlung

Lepenies, Wolf. *Die Macht am Mittelmeer: Französische Träume von einem anderen Europa*. Hanser, 2016. Französisch: *Le Pouvoir en Méditerranée: Un rêve français pour une autre Europe*. Übersetzt von Svetlana Tamitegama. Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2020.

—. „Germany and France—The Elusiveness of a Joint Hegemony.“ In *Discussing Pax Germanica: The Rise and Limits of German Hegemony in European Integration*, herausgegeben von Emmanuel Comte und Fernando Guirao. Routledge, 2025.

—. „Die Zwietracht beim Feind.“ In *Feindbestimmung*, herausgegeben von Michael Jeismann, Jakob Schultz und Eva Maria Ziege. *Leviathan* Sonderband 44, im Erscheinen.

MANYUAN LONG

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The University of Chicago

Born in Luzhou, Sichuan, China

Ph.D. in Genetics, University of California, Davis

THE ORIGIN OF GENES

How a gene originates is a fundamental problem for understanding life. Newly evolved genes contribute to the diversity of gene functions, playing a foundational role in the diversity of organisms on all levels of complexity and across phenotypes. Over the previous century, revolutionary advancements in the study of biology, especially the rise of molecular biology as a field, have profoundly addressed an old scientific problem: What is a gene? A natural extension of this problem can be defined as: How is a gene created?

Over the past three decades, along with other scientists, I have investigated various scientific questions derived from the grand problem of the origin of genes. These scientific explorations have led to meaningful discoveries in both phenomenology and conceptual frameworks, shaping the study of gene origination and creating a rich and fascinating repository of knowledge. However, there is currently a lack of books that summarize and explain in depth the major discoveries regarding this problem.

While continuing the investigation of mechanisms and evolutionary forces of new gene evolution, I propose to create a book with the working title *The Origin of Genes*. Taking advantage of the fellowship from the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, I plan to increase interactions with global scholars from across disciplines represented by the Fellows, to make my book and scientific research more comprehensive.

The foremost opportunity is to interact with other Fellows of the Wissenschaftskolleg and scientists in Berlin and other European institutes, from whom I expect to learn and develop new ideas.

Recommended Reading

Long, Manyuan, and Charles H. Langley (1993). “Natural Selection and the Origin of *jingwei*, a Chimeric Processed Functional Gene in *Drosophila*.” *Science* 260 (5104): 91–95. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.7682012>.

Xia, Shengqian, Jianhai Chen, Deanna Arsala, J. J. Emerson, and Manyuan Long (2025). “Functional Innovation Through New Genes as a General Evolutionary Process.” *Nature Genetics* 57: 295–309. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41588-024-02059-0>.

Long, Manyuan, Shengqian Xia, Jared Atlas, and Nicholas W. VanKuren (2026). “Dominant Role of Sexually Antagonistic Effects in *Drosophila* Genomic Evolution.” *Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics* 57, ahead of print, June 12. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-ecolsys-102723-064352>.

VALERIA MANZANO

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Universidad de San Martín, Buenos Aires

Investigadora independiente, National Scientific and Technical Research
Council (CONICET)

Born in 1975 in Buenos Aires

PhD in History, Indiana University Bloomington

THE LAST SNAPSHOTS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN REVOLUTION: CULTURE, POLITICS, AND NOSTALGIA, 1979–1991

When, where, and how did the leftwing revolutionary projects and imaginations end? This project aims to answer this question and shed new light on the history of the leftwing political culture, from the victory of the Sandinista Revolution in 1979 to the critical biennium 1989–1991. This biennium included the Sandinistas' electoral defeat as well as the "democratic revolutions" that swept across Eastern Europe and the collapse of the former Soviet Union. As historian Eric Hobsbawm famously said, that biennium entailed the end of the "short" twentieth century. However, by focusing on that finale, the historiography has thus far sidestepped a thorough examination of the Left's resilience in the 1980s. This study will demonstrate that this political culture in Latin America brought together millions of people of different class origins, ethnic groups, and generations. Although with different modalities and intensities, they continued to work for and believe in revolutionary projects. They sought to reconcile longstanding struggles for socioeconomic equality and anti-imperialism with a renewed agenda centered on democracy and equality in gender, sexuality, and race. Widespread support for the Sandinistas in other regions indicated that some of these projects appealed to leftwing militants and sympathizers in North America and Western Europe as well. This study argues that the (would-be) last

snapshots of the Latin American revolution contributed to the persistence and transformation of a global leftwing political culture during the 1980s.

Recommended Reading

Manzano, Valeria. *The Age of Youth in Argentina: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality from Perón to Videla*. University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

—. *Historia de la juventud en la Argentina de los siglos XX y XXI*. Siglo XXI Editores, 2025.

—. *La última ilusión: La crisis de la revolución en América Latina, 1979–1991*. Bielefeld University Press, 2025.

PETER R. MARTING

from February to June 2027

Fellow of the College for Life Sciences

PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow

Auburn University

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THE SOUND ENGINE: A NEW COMPARATIVE TOOL FOR PERCEIVING COMPLEXITY

Modern biology generates data at a breathtaking scale and complexity, from genomics to collective behavior to ecological networks. Yet our ability to collect data has far outpaced our ability to perceive it. Visualizations and statistics can reveal much, but they often flatten the richness of dynamic, multidimensional systems. Meanwhile, human hearing is extraordinarily powerful at analyzing complex information. Any seemingly simple modern song actually contains a dizzying array of layered data across frequencies, rhythms, harmonics. Yet our ears effortlessly parse them into melodies, instruments, and patterns: hundreds of parallel data streams perceived as coherent structure. This natural perceptual power suggests a new opportunity for increasingly complex science: to listen to data.

At the Wissenschaftskolleg, I will develop a flexible, open-source sound engine that allows scientists to map data dimensions onto auditory parameters such as pitch, tone, rhythm, and spatialization (a process called sonification). The tool will enable users to hear their data and identify patterns through auditory experience, facilitating new insights and comparisons across disciplines. This project lies at the intersection of biology, computational modeling, sound design, and art, fields uniquely fostered by the interdisciplinary community of the Wissenschaftskolleg.

The project has three main components:

1. a conceptual study of the theory and history of data sonification,
2. the development of the sound engine itself, and
3. its application to my own ecological data on honey bee nest architecture.

Recommended Reading

Marting, Peter R., Nicole M. Kallman, William T. Wcislo, and Stephen C. Pratt (2018). “Ant-Plant Sociometry in the *Azteca-Cecropia* Mutualism.” *Scientific Reports* 8: 17968. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-018-36399-9>.

Marting, Peter R., William T. Wcislo, and Stephen C. Pratt (2018). “Colony Personality and Plant Health in the *Azteca-Cecropia* Mutualism.” *Behavioral Ecology* 29 (1): 264–271. <https://doi.org/10.1093/beheco/axx165>.

Marting, Peter R., Benjamin Koger, and Michael L. Smith (2023). “Manipulating Nest Architecture Reveals Three-Dimensional Building Strategies and Colony Resilience in Honeybees.” *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 290: 20222565. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2022.2565>.

CHRISTOPH MÖLLERS

Rector of the Wissenschaftskolleg

Dr. iur., LL.M., Professor of Public Law and Legal Philosophy

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Born in 1969 in Bochum, Germany

Studied Law and Comparative Literature in Tübingen, Munich, and Chicago

1. ART—LIBERTY—FREEDOM OF ART

2. DIE JURIDISCHE FUNKTION UND DIE POLITISCHE ORDNUNG DES RECHTS

Ad. 1. In contemporary culture wars, artistic freedom has become one of many controversial goods. Beyond some interesting legal issues, especially with regard to the protection of publicly funded art, fundamental problems of political and aesthetic theory become apparent: Why should the arts be better protected than any other social practice? Does such a protection not presuppose the very distinction of art from non-art that is often denied by contemporary aesthetics' emphasis on the political or intervening character of art? Finally, can any form of freedom that is required to enable artistic production be at all guaranteed by political or legal institutions? Historically, a stable connection between political freedom and successful aesthetic productivity cannot be established, but such a connection seems to be the condition for any justified privileged treatment of artistic freedom. The project will try to explore these questions and thus the intricate connections between political, legal, and aesthetic freedom.

Ad 2. Gerichte sind erstaunliche Gebilde. Sie werden erst tätig, wenn man sie anruft. Sie spitzen Konflikte auf eine entscheidbare Frage zwischen zwei Parteien zu und sie entscheiden einerseits in vollständiger Bindung an politisch gesetztes Recht und andererseits in Unabhängigkeit von politischen Organen. Seit der Frühneuzeit sieht eine dominante Linie der politischen Theorie den

entscheidenden Übergang zu einer verbindlichen Rechtsordnung freilich in der Gründung einer durchsetzungsstarken politischen Gemeinschaft. Die Institution des Gerichts spielt hier keine Rolle. Das vorliegende Projekt unternimmt dagegen den Versuch, das Zusammenspiel der bilateralen Form juristischen Entscheidens mit dem übergreifenden Anspruch einer politischen Rechtsordnung nicht von der Seite der Ordnung, sondern von der der juristischen Entscheidung zu rekonstruieren.

Recommended Reading

Jelavich, Peter. *Kunstfreiheit: Eine deutsche Ideologie*. Klostermann, 2025.

Möllers, Christoph. *Unverbindlicher Eigensinn: Über Freiheiten und Unfreiheiten der Kunst*. C.F. Siemens-Stiftung, 2025.

Fuller, Lon L. "The Forms and Limits of Adjudication." *Harvard Law Review* 92 (1978): 353–409. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1340368>.

Müller-Mall, Sabine. *Verfassende Urteile*. Suhrkamp, 2024.

Ost, François. *Le droit ou l'empire du tiers*. Dalloz, 2021.

MINH T. N. NGUYEN

PhD, Professor of Social Anthropology
Bielefeld University

Born in 1976 in Thai Binh, Vietnam

BA in English Translation Studies, Vietnam National University,
MA in Social Planning and Development, University of Queensland, PhD in
Social Research in International Development, University of East Anglia

FICTITIOUS COMMODITIES REVISITED: ENQUIRIES INTO THE GREAT TRANSFORMATIONS OF MARKET- SOCIALIST ASIA

China, Vietnam, and Laos went through decades of state socialism followed by market reforms under Communist party states, a context I shall refer to as market socialism. Since their reforms at the turn of the 1980s, these countries have been intensifying privatization and restructuring, as market-based values and moralities come to predominate social and economic life. To varying degrees, the deepening commodification of labour and land and the rising power of finance have given rise to what Polanyi (1985) characterises as “market society,” although socialist governing structures and rationalities make a difference for how these processes unfold.

My project at the Wissenschaftskolleg has three main components. The first is an edited book under the same title, to be reviewed by Harvard University’s Asia Publications, that explores the intertwining societal implications of land, labour, and money emerging as “fictitious commodities” (Polanyi 1985) in the specific polity of market socialism where the political power of the Communist party states remains intact and where capitalist transformations are actively deployed to sustain that power. It will illuminate how state agendas interact with local people and societies’ responses to commodification processes and the counter-movements they unleash. Conceptually, the book is an opportunity for me to comparatively explore the entanglement between three kinds of politics under-

pinning these processes: the politics of care (in relation to labour), the politics of rights (in relation to land), and the politics of risk (in relation to financialization). Secondly, I will complete a review article commissioned by the *Annual Review of Anthropology* titled “The Anthropology of Risk and Migration: The Spatial Production of an Universal Category,” which addresses the mutual production of risk and spatial mobility. Thirdly, I will finalise an ethnographic monograph titled *Peripheral Mobility: The Moral Life of Transnational Economies in Rural Central Vietnam*, which deals with the commodification of labour via transnational mobility.

Recommended Reading

Nguyen, Minh T. N. (2018). *Waste and Wealth: An Ethnography of Labor, Value, and Morality in a Vietnamese Recycling Economy*. Oxford University Press.

Nguyen, Minh T. N., Phill Wilcox, and Jake Lin, eds. (2024). “The Good Life in Late-Socialist Asia: Aspirations, Politics, and Possibilities.” Special issue, *positions: asia critique* 32 (1).

Nguyen, Minh T. N., Ngoc Luong, Yueran Tian, and Jake Lin (2025). “The Privilege of Being Exploited? Overtime Work in Global Factories of Market Socialist China and Vietnam.” *Global Political Economy* 4 (2): 120–141.
<https://doi.org/10.1332/26352257Y2024D0000000027>.

JACOB K. OLUPONA

from February to June 2027

PhD, Professor of African and African American Studies

Harvard University

Born in 1951 in Ute, Ondo State, Nigeria

BA in Religious Studies, University of Nigeria, MA and PhD in History of Religions, Boston University

YORÙBÁ THOUGHT AND CULTURE: INSIGHTS FROM IFÁ DIVINATION POETRY

Based on extensive ethnographic research and interviews with Ifá diviners in southwestern Nigeria, my project consists of collating, digitizing, and interpreting the intricacies of Ifá divination poetry. African indigenous knowledge systems contain some of the most highly sophisticated theoretical material related to the environment, arts, medicine, and human social relations. Yet they are often under-researched or poorly theorized due to lack of access to databases of indigenous knowledge systems. My academic scholarship thus far has focused on interpreting Yorùbá religious traditions and festivals from an “indigenous hermeneutics” perspective, and I have a special interest and expertise in Ifá, a Yorùbá knowledge system that uses a ritual process of divination to access a plethora of oral knowledge. This knowledge resides in 256 *odù* (chapters) of “laws” that have never been systematically documented. The 256 *odù* of Ifá are a corpus of sacred wisdom, with each chapter and its verses addressing a divergent array of human situations. I will draw on my previous scholarship on kingship, festivals in Ile-Ife, theorizing Orisa worship as a global tradition, ritual practice, and African medicine and herbal knowledge, alongside close textual analysis of ritual songs, poems, and performances. My fellowship will be spent drafting my book, which analyzes excerpts of Ifá divination poetry, drawing on Yorùbá linguistics, mythology, and spirituality and culture to show how Ifá divination narratives are central for understanding Yorùbá thought and culture.

I center the work on African indigenous hermeneutics and provide a written and digital archive of sacred knowledge.

Recommended Reading

Olupona, Jacob K., and Terry Rey, eds. *Òrìsà Devotion as World Religion: The Globalization of Yorùbá Religious Culture*. University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.

Olupona, Jacob K. *City of 201 Gods: Ilé-Ifè in Time, Space, and the Imagination*. University of California Press, 2011.

Olupona, Jacob K., and Oluwole Akinyosoye. *In the Twilight of Time: Chief Lóògò Bámútùlá; A Biography of an African Medicine Man*. University Press plc, 2024.

LEONARDO OÑA

from September 2026 to January 2027

Fellow of the College for Life Sciences

Dr. rer. nat., Senior Research Fellow

Osnabrück University

Born in 1981 in São Paulo, Brazil

MSc in Biology, University of Córdoba, MSc in Theoretical Physics, Instituto

Balseiro, Dr. rer. nat., Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary

Anthropology/Leipzig University

STABILITY IN MICROBIAL CROSS-FEEDING: INTERACTION PATTERNS AND EVOLVING LIFE CYCLE

Microbial communities depend on metabolic exchange. In soils, oceans, biofilms, and animal hosts, metabolites released by one microbe can become essential resources for another. These interactions support ecosystem function and human health. They also raise a broader question: How can local metabolic exchanges generate community-level continuity across disturbance, dispersal, and reassembly?

This project will develop a stability map for experimentally tractable microbial communities. It will be built around three features: the structure of cross-feeding networks, unequal roles among species, and higher-order effects that appear only when several partners interact.

A central producer, a peripheral consumer, and a species embedded in a feedback loop are unlikely to respond in the same way to partner loss or environmental change. This network context matters because a third species may stabilize an exchange by improving metabolic efficiency or destabilize it by introducing interference, competition, or new dependencies. The project will examine how recovery changes when exchange rates, partner dependencies, and the traits underlying metabolite production and use are allowed to evolve.

Microbial aggregation, budding, dispersal, and related life-cycle processes can help fragile mutualisms persist by keeping complementary partners together. The same processes may lock communities into arrangements that limit future adaptation. The project will identify when loose metabolic exchange begins to behave as an organized ecological unit rather than a temporary set of pairwise interactions.

The outcome will be a map of parameter regions linking simple experimental readouts from triads, perturbation and recovery assays, and short time series to qualitative predictions: robust cross-feeding, fragile but recoverable cross-feeding, or likely collapse.

Recommended Reading

Oña, Leonardo, Samir Giri, Neele Avermann, Maximilian Kreienbaum, Kai M. Thormann, and Christian Kost (2021). “Obligate Cross-Feeding Expands the Metabolic Niche of Bacteria.” *Nature Ecology & Evolution* 5 (9): 1224–1232. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-021-01505-0>.

Oña, Leonardo, and Christian Kost (2022). “Cooperation Increases Robustness to Ecological Disturbance in Microbial Cross-Feeding Networks.” *Ecology Letters* 25 (6): 1410–1420. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ele.14006>.

Oña, Leonardo, Shryli K. Shreekar, and Christian Kost (2025). “Disentangling Microbial Interaction Networks.” *Trends in Microbiology* 33 (6): 619–634. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tim.2025.01.013>.

MARY O’SULLIVAN

Permanent Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg
PhD, Professor of Economic History
University of Geneva

Born in 1968 in Dublin

BComm, University College Dublin, MBA and PhD in Business Economics,
Harvard University

THE FABRIC OF PROFIT: EUROPEAN TEXTILES IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE, 1750–1850

The Fabric of Profit addresses the history of capitalism as its general theme with a focus on the history of European textiles during the revolutionary age from 1750 to 1850. The project is organized around two research “streams” that draw on a variety of primary sources to address distinct but complementary questions about the practices and discourses of profit. First, how were profits understood, pursued, and generated in economic practice? Second, how were profits constructed and contested in economic discourses about political economy? The project’s innovative character stems both from its profit-oriented analytical approach as well as from a methodology organized around global commodity chains. By structuring its macro-analysis around these chains, the project benefits from their well-known methodological advantages to situate the economic and social evolution of European textiles in the context of global history.

Recommended Reading

- O'Sullivan, Mary. "History as Heresy: Unlearning the Lessons of Economic Orthodoxy." *Economic History Review* 75, no. 2 (2022): 297–335.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ehr.13117>.
- . "Machines in the Hands of Capitalists: Power and Profit in Late Eighteenth-Century Cornish Copper Mines." *Past and Present* 260, no. 1 (2023): 71–122.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtac039>.
- . "A Sheepish Account of Ireland's Changing Role in an Imperial Age, 1780–1824." *Irish Economic and Social History* 52, no. 1 (2025): 5–40.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/03324893251385227>.

JULIÁN PADRÓ

from March to June 2027

Fellow of the College for Life Sciences

Dr., Research Scientist

INIBIOMA (CONICET–National University of Comahue), San Carlos de Bariloche

Born in 1982 in Buenos Aires

Dr. of Evolutionary Biology, University of Buenos Aires

GENOMOV: TOWARD A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK LINKING AVIAN MOVEMENT, GENOMICS, AND DISEASE ECOLOGY

The project explores a fundamental but unresolved question: How does animal movement connect evolutionary processes with the spread of infectious diseases?

While population genomics reveals how species adapt and diversify, and movement ecology tracks how individuals navigate landscapes in real time, these fields have largely developed independently. As a result, we still lack a unified understanding of how movement, genetic variation, and pathogen dynamics interact.

Using vultures as model systems, I aim to bridge this gap by integrating genomics, high-resolution tracking data, and wildlife disease ecology into a more unified conceptual framework. Vultures are particularly suited for this purpose: as highly mobile and socially structured species, they span migratory and sedentary strategies, enabling direct comparisons across ecological contexts. Moreover, as scavengers, they may act either as regulators of disease or as vectors of pathogens of global relevance.

In this context, genomic data provide insight into immune variation and local adaptation, revealing how populations respond to disease pressures over evolutionary time. Movement data, in turn, capture dispersal routes and ecological connectivity, shaping real-time opportunities for pathogen transmission and ex-

posure. By combining these perspectives with analyses of host-associated micro-organisms, the project explores how ecological interactions, behavior, and genetic background jointly determine disease risk.

Ultimately, this research seeks to develop new conceptual routes for integrating disparate data streams to advance a deeper understanding of biodiversity dynamics and global pathogen transmission in a rapidly changing world.

Recommended Reading

Padro, Julián, Félix Hernán Vargas, Sergio A. Lambertucci, et al. (2023).

“Demographic Collapse Threatens the Long-Term Persistence of Andean Condors in the Northern Andes.” *Biological Conservation* 285: 110217.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2023.110217>.

De Panis, Diego, François Le Dily, Sergio A. Lambertucci, et al. (2025). “Chromosome-Scale Genome Assembly Provides Insights into Condor Evolution and Conservation.” *Molecular Ecology Resources* 25 (7): e70000.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1755-0998.70000>.

Padró, Julián, Sergio A. Lambertucci, Pablo A. E. Alarcón, et al. (2025).

“Energy Landscape and Life-History Requirements Shape Habitat Use in an Extreme Soaring Specialist.” *Landscape Ecology* 40 (7): 136.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10980-025-02137-6>.

DALIBOR PETROVIĆ

from February to June 2027

Yehudit and Yehuda Elkana Fellow

Dr., Professor of Sociology

University of Belgrade

Born in 1973 in Zadar, Croatia

B.A. in Sociology, M.Phil. in Sociology, and Dr. of Sociology, University of Belgrade

DIGITAL AUTHORITARIANISM AND INFRASTRUCTURAL POWER IN HYBRID REGIMES

This research explores how digital infrastructures reshape the configuration of political power in contemporary hybrid regimes. Building on my previous work on digital authoritarianism, I examine how regimes situated between democracy and autocracy adapt digital technologies to consolidate power without fully abandoning pluralist institutions. While hybrid regimes cannot fully dominate the networked architecture of the Internet, they increasingly shift from direct repression toward subtler forms of digital authoritarianism grounded in infrastructural power. Rather than relying primarily on censorship, these regimes invest in coordinated online influence operations, data-driven monitoring, and the systematic production of informational disorder. Digital infrastructures thus function not merely as communication tools, but as environments that structure access, shape attention, and redistribute political agency. At the same time, digital technologies lower the costs of mobilization and enable new forms of connective action, allowing civic actors to rapidly organize and challenge incumbents. Yet these forms of digitally enabled mobilization often lack the organizational durability required to confront institutionalized coercive power, producing an asymmetrical field of contestation in which regimes and their opponents operate within the same digital architecture under unequal structural conditions.

The project seeks to clarify whether digital authoritarian practices in hybrid regimes ultimately reinforce regime durability through infrastructural asymmetry or generate unstable equilibria in which resistance and control continuously co-evolve. Using Serbia as an empirical reference point within a broader comparative framework, the research aims to contribute to a sociological theory of digital authoritarianism that situates it within the dynamics of contested political power, rather than treating it as a feature of fully consolidated autocracies.

Recommended Reading

- Petrović, Marijana, Nataša Bojković, Ivan Anić, and Dalibor Petrović (2012). “Benchmarking the Digital Divide Using a Multi-Level Outranking Framework: Evidence from EBRD Countries of Operation.” *Government Information Quarterly* 29 (4): 597–607. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2012.05.008>.
- Petrović, Dalibor, and Miloš Bešić (2019). “Political Informing Through Social Media Across Europe—Factors and Effects.” *Sociologija* 61 (4): 565–584. <https://doi.org/10.2298/SOC1904565P>.
- Petrović, Dalibor (forthcoming). “Online Influence Operation: The Case of Serbian Regime’s Cyber Troops.” *Comparative Southeast European Studies* 74.

DANIEL PRIOR

PhD, Professor of History

Miami University, Oxford, O.

Born in 1963 in Pontiac, Mich., USA

BA in Linguistics, Yale University, MA and PhD in Central Eurasian Studies,

Indiana University

STEPPE HORIZONS OF INDO-EUROPEAN MYTH

This is one component of a set of related projects I am currently working on that call into question the ethnolinguistic “branding” of certain cultural motifs heretofore labeled Indo-European or Central Eurasian, as if the former were different from the latter. The first of this project’s two objectives is a re-edition, English translation, and commentary on the earliest text of the Kirghiz oral epic poem “Joloy Khan.” Written down from the oral performance of an anonymous Kirghiz bard and published with a German translation in the nineteenth century, the long epic “Joloy Khan” (5,322 lines) has remained virtually unused by scholars and readers. Grounds for its revival are compelling, however. Besides being an entertaining, sometimes bizarre story, an unusual example of the Central Asian Kirghiz tradition of oral heroic epic poetry—very far from the concerns of the more famous epic of *Manas*—its thematic content harbors numerous motifs that resemble myths and rituals of diverse Indo-European peoples.

The project’s second objective is then to interpret the poem’s Indo-European (IE) echoes. The Turkic language of the Kirghiz is unrelated to IE. The Kirghiz arrived relatively recently in Central Asia, where they likely absorbed resident populations that were much older, including speakers of Iranian languages (descended from Proto-IE) that have since died out in the area. However, the diversity of IE-like motifs and themes in “Joloy Khan” cannot be mapped exclusively onto known antecedent materials in the Iranian branch of IE. The exquisite correspondences among the sources cut across multiple branches of the IE

language family, complicating possible reconstructed scenarios of their retention. The aim here is to rethink the durability of imaginative thought in space and time; common assumptions about ethnolinguistic identity and analytical categories in comparative mythology come under scrutiny.

Recommended Reading

Prior, Daniel, ed. and trans. *The Semetey of Kenje Kara: A Kirghiz Epic Poem on Phonograph*. Harrassowitz, 2006.

—. “Fastening the Buckle: A Strand of Xiongnu-Era Narrative in a Recent Kirghiz Epic Poem.” *The Silk Road* 14 (2016): 186–195.

Saghimbay Orozbaq uulu. *The Memorial Feast for Kökötöy Khan: A Kirghiz Epic Poem in the Manas Tradition*. Translated by Daniel Prior. Penguin, 2022.

RUBINA RAJA

DPhil., Professor of Classical Archaeology and Art
Aarhus University

Born in 1975 in Hørsholm, Denmark

BA in Classical Archaeology, University of Copenhagen, MSt in Classical
Archaeology and DPhil in Classical Archaeology, University of Oxford,
Master of Public Governance, Copenhagen Business School

RELIGION AND URBANITY IN ANCIENT PALMYRA (SYRIA)

The evidence for urban religious practices at Palmyra is broad, ranging from monumental sanctuaries to altars, to religious reliefs and sculpture, to inscriptions. However, the visual representations of Palmyrene priests, distinctly recognisable through their priestly hat—round with a flat top—constitute the largest group of evidence testifying to the local religious life in the Roman period (1st–3rd c. CE). There are plentiful representations of Palmyrene priests in Palmyrene iconography, in particular funerary sculpture and so-called banqueting tesseræ. Close to six hundred of these exist in the corpus of the funerary limestone sculpture and about five hundred in the corpus of the tesseræ. While these representations are repetitive in many ways, in that they show male Palmyrenes dressed in priestly clothes, they also differ in the detail and unique expressions adapted by the individual to express their societal status. This monograph project will address the entire corpus of Palmyrene priestly representations, the epigraphic sources connected to priests in Palmyra, as well as their role in the urban religion of Palmyra across the first three centuries CE, discussing in detail the role of Palmyrene priests and their visual representations within the framework of our knowledge of the religion, religious practices, and the changing urbanity of the oasis city as well as in the context of the wider Roman Near East and beyond. The monograph project builds on a decade of research on the sculptural

habit in Palmyra in connection with the compilation of the largest corpus of portraits from the Roman period, namely the funerary portraits from Palmyra.

Recommended Reading

Raja, Rubina. *Pearl of the Desert: A History of Palmyra*. Oxford University Press, 2022.

—. “Religious life and priestly representations in Palmyra.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Palmyra*, edited by Rubina Raja. Oxford University Press, 2024.

—, ed. *Palmyra, the Mediterranean and Beyond*. Cambridge University Press, 2025.

JAKE SUBRYAN RICHARDS

PhD, Assistant Professor of History

London School of Economics and Political Science

Born in 1992 in London

BA (Hons.) in History, University of Cambridge, MSt in History,

University of Oxford, PhD in History, University of Cambridge

REFUGE IN AFRICA: ABEOKUTA AND THE UNMAKING OF EMPIRE

How did people create a political community that responded to regional disaster, and with what consequences? This project answers these questions through the case study of Abeokuta, whose name in the Yoruba language means “refuge under the rock.” Abeokuta is now a city in present-day Nigeria, but it began as a settlement for people escaping from war and enslavement in the early nineteenth century. Archival records, published sources, and material culture reveal how people developed a culture of constitutional rule and global connection to build a political community that retained its independence for almost one hundred years. After colonial annexation by Britain in 1918, Abeokuta became an important site of anticolonial resistance in the twentieth century.

By 2050, over half the world’s population growth will come from nine countries, five of which are African, including Nigeria. The inputs for green technology, the biggest cities on the planet, and the culture that captures the global imagination will increasingly be African. Yet the dominant scholarly paradigm for African politics is one that emphasizes how states have failed. Debate centres on apportioning responsibility among precolonial institutions, European colonialism, extractive industries, and postcolonial misgovernment. As many scholars have observed, this paradigm is Eurocentric because it ignores the diversity of successful African institutional forms beyond the state. Through a *longue durée* case study, this project provides greater historical depth to the study of governance that transcends the nation-state as the normative ideal.

This project offers a new perspective on alternative institutional paradigms to the nation-state, contributing to this area of research in African Studies, Anthropology, History, Law, and Political Science.

Recommended Reading

Avery, Victoria, and Jake Subryan Richards, eds. *Black Atlantic: Power, People, Resistance*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023.

Richards, Jake Subryan. *The Bonds of Freedom: Liberated Africans and the End of the Slave Trade*. Yale University Press, 2025.

—. “Ecologies in Flight: Black Environmental Knowledge and Human-Bird Interactions between the Caribbean and Britain.” *Environmental History* 31, no. 2 (2026): 249–277. <https://doi.org/10.1086/740165>.

MICHAEL SEEWALD

Permanent Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg

Dr. theol., Professor of Dogmatics and the History of Dogma

University of Münster

Born in 1987 in Saarbrücken, Germany

Diploma in Catholic Theology and M.A. in Philosophy and Politics,

University of Tübingen, Dr. theol., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
(LMU Munich)

WHAT IS “DOGMATIC” ABOUT THE HISTORY OF DOGMA?

As modern historiography began to take shape in the 18th century, Protestant Enlightenment theologians such as J.F.W. Jerusalem developed the concept of a “history of dogma.” Their aim was to look at the formation of Christian doctrine not primarily from the perspective of continuity, as implied by the idea that this doctrine had developed gradually and organically, but in terms of the discontinuities, innovations, or even ruptures that can be found within it. The Catholic Church long rejected such an approach. Thus, a negative attitude towards the history of dogma can even be seen among such Catholic theologians as Georg Hermes, who was condemned by Pope Gregory XVI in 1835 for holding that “positive doubt” was a necessary part of theological methodology and that reason was the only way that the human mind could come to know God. According to one of his students, Hermes argued that “as a Catholic he could not recognise a history of dogma in the ordinary sense of the word, because dogmas have always been what they are.” Most Catholic theologians of the 19th and early 20th century would have agreed. Today, however, the history of dogma is a well-established discipline in faculties of Catholic Theology around the world.

My project deals with the following questions: (1) When, how, and why did the Catholic attitude towards the project of a history of dogma change? (2) Is

there a specifically Catholic approach to the history of dogma that differs from the approaches of other Christian denominations or from how non-theological disciplines, such as the history of ideas, approach the historical development of Christian doctrine? (3) Within Catholic theology, the history of dogma is often seen as an adjunct to dogmatic theology. But what is “dogmatic” about the history of dogma?

The aim of my project is to historicise the history of dogma as a discipline within Catholic theology, to investigate what its denominational biases are, and to suggest a place for the history of dogma in relation to other theological disciplines.

Recommended Reading

Seewald, Michael. *Theories of Doctrinal Development in the Catholic Church*. Translated by David West. Cambridge University Press, 2023.

GREGOR SEMIENIUK

PhD, Associate Professor of Economics and Public Policy
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Born in 1985 in Herdecke, Germany

PhD in Economics, The New School for Social Research

PROFITS IN STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

This research project argues that profit dynamics are a crucial but overlooked driver of systemic economic structural transformation. Despite facing urgent and complex challenges requiring structural transformation—such as decarbonization and supply chain restructuring—current policy approaches fail to adequately consider how profits and profit differentials between sectors influence whether and how change occurs. This project seeks to resurrect a more central role for profits in thinking about structural transformation.

It first examines how economic theory evolved from classical political economy (which emphasized intersectoral profit rate differences as drivers of change) to neoclassical economics (which features static equilibrium with zero profits) and how this has obscured profits in policy debates about structural change. It then develops a new theoretical framework that reintegrates profits into explanations of structural change. It combines imperfect competition models with capital theory to show not only how sectoral profit opportunities drive investment activity, but also how incumbent sectoral interests resist change to avoid “asset stranding”—the premature decommissioning of existing investments. Finally, the project applies the framework to the low-carbon energy transition, in which relative sectoral profits (not just costs) and the defense of incumbent profits drive firm and petrostate decisions, and European Union economic renewal, in which the focus on “competitiveness” misses how potential investors decide based on relative expected profitability.

Recommended Reading

Semieniuk, Gregor, Emanuele Campiglio, Jean-François Mercure, Ulrich Volz, and Neil R. Edwards (2021). “Low-Carbon Transition Risks for Finance.” *WIREs Climate Change* 12 (1): e678. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.678>.

Semieniuk, Gregor, Philip B. Holden, Jean-François Mercure, et al. (2022). “Stranded Fossil-Fuel Assets Translate to Major Losses for Investors in Advanced Economies.” *Nature Climate Change* 12 (6): 532–538. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-022-01356-y>.

Semieniuk, Gregor, Isabella M. Weber, Iain S. Weaver, et al. (2025). “Best of Times, Worst of Times: Record Fossil-Fuel Profits, Inflation and Inequality.” *Energy Research & Social Science* 127: 104221. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2025.104221>.

HAREL SHAPIRA

Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sociology
The University of Texas at Austin

Born in 1979 in Haifa, Israel

B.A. in Sociology, The University of Chicago, Ph.D. in Sociology,
Columbia University

AN ECONOMY OF VIOLENCE: DIVERSITY AND DEATH AT AN AMERICAN GUN STORE

During my time at the Wissenschaftskolleg I will be working on two book manuscripts. The first, *An Economy of Violence*, is an ethnography of a gun store in Texas. I draw on my year working at a gun store in order to analyze how guns are purchased and sold. The second, *The Craft of Ethnography*, is a book on methods that I am writing together with Forrest Stuart (Stanford, Sociology) that collapses the distinction between the collection and the analysis of data, by showing how the very act of collecting ethnographic data can be turned into analysis of that data.

Recommended Reading

Shapira, Harel (2013). *Waiting for José: The Minutemen's Pursuit of America*. Princeton University Press.

Shapira, Harel, and Samantha J. Simon (2018). "Learning to Need a Gun." *Qualitative Sociology* 41 (1): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-018-9374-2>.

Shapira, Harel (2026). *Basic Pistol: Living and Dying by the Gun in America*. Pantheon.

HELMUT WALSER SMITH

Ph.D., Martha Rivers Ingram Professor of History
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn.

Born in 1962 in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany
B.A. in History, Cornell University, Ph.D. in History, Yale University

OUR HOMETOWNS: JEWISH RETURN AND GERMAN MEMORY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

“Our Hometowns: Jewish Return and German Memory after the Holocaust” offers a new account of how Germans came to terms with the Nazi past—not in the familiar arenas of high politics, intellectual debate, or major cities, but among ordinary people in the small towns and villages where most Germans lived after 1945. Focusing on places where Jewish communities once existed, it argues that confronting the past was not solely a German undertaking. From the start, this process unfolded through sustained engagement with Jewish survivors who returned, refugees who wrote back, and emigrants who revisited the communities from which they had been expelled. Seen from this perspective, German memory emerges as a transnational history, linking local communities with Jewish diaspora networks in Haifa, New York, São Paulo, and elsewhere. Jewish return, in this account, was not merely incidental but constitutive of German memory itself.

Drawing on state and local archives on three continents, the book reconstructs post-Holocaust encounters in a handful of towns and villages in southwest Germany. Using letters, local records, unpublished memoirs, and oral testimonies, it traces how ordinary people—Jewish and German—established basic truths about the Holocaust, marked and commemorated these truths, and forged a shared, if contested, local memory of persecution in “our hometowns.” Rather than asking what should have been done, the book examines what people actually did. Its chapters, structured as microhistories, are written to read like short stories for an academic crossover audience. By shifting attention to the

early postwar decades, it shows how memory work unfolded unevenly: in some places encountering indifference or resistance, in others giving rise to forms of collaboration and recognition that reshaped local understandings of the past.

Recommended Reading

Smith, Helmut Walser. *The Butcher's Tale: Murder and Anti-Semitism in a German Town*. W.W. Norton, 2002. German: *Die Geschichte des Schlachters: Mord und Antisemitismus in einer deutschen Kleinstadt*. Translated by Udo Rennert. Wallstein, 2002. Paperback, Fischer, 2004.

—. *The Continuities of German History: Nation, Religion, and Race across the Long Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 2008. German: *Fluchtpunkt 1941: Kontinuitäten der deutschen Geschichte*. Translated by Christian Wiese. Reclam, 2010.

—. *Germany: A Nation in its Time; Before, During, and After Nationalism, 1500–2000*. Liveright, imprint of W.W. Norton, 2020. German: *Deutschland: Geschichte einer Nation; Von 1500 bis zur Gegenwart*. Translated by Andreas Wirthensohn. C.H. Beck, 2021.

BARBARA STOLLBERG-RILINGER

Permanent Fellow des Wissenschaftskollegs

Rektorin des Wissenschaftskollegs (2018–2026)

Dr. phil., Professorin für Geschichte der Frühen Neuzeit

Geboren 1955 in Bergisch Gladbach, Deutschland

Studium der Geschichte, Germanistik und Kunstgeschichte
an der Universität zu Köln

GRAUSAMKEIT, DISZIPLIN UND VERZWEIFLUNG: FRIEDRICH WILHELM I. UND DER PREUSSISCHE MYTHOS

Friedrich Wilhelm I., der legendäre preußische „Soldatenkönig“ (1688–1740), traumatisierte seinen Sohn, den späteren König Friedrich „den Großen“, demütigte seine Töchter, verprügelte seine Diener, misstraute seinen Beamten, verabscheute die Gelehrten, verachtete den Adel, mied die Frauen, war legendär geizig und detailversessen, rauchte, trank, fluchte und tobte, hielt aber peinlich auf Sauberkeit, Drill und strengste Frömmigkeit. Sein bizarres Verhalten desavouierte sämtliche Normen und Werte der zeitgenössischen Eliten. Im Europa seiner Zeit galt er deshalb als lächerlicher Tyrann, dessen Macht früher oder später von selbst zusammenbrechen würde. Das war bekanntlich ein Irrtum. Im preußisch-deutschen Nationalmythos des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts spielte Friedrich Wilhelm I. die Rolle des großen Staats- und Heeresbaumeisters; selbst kritischen Historikern galt er als derjenige, der „das deutsche Volk zum Preußentum erzog“. Daran konnte der Alliierte Kontrollrat nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg anknüpfen, als er Preußen als „Träger des Militarismus und der Reaktion“ von der Landkarte strich. Es ist kein Wunder, dass sich der König derzeit wachsender Beliebtheit bei der Neuen Rechten erfreut.

Mein Arbeitsvorhaben ist ein sehr langfristiges: Ich schreibe an einer Biografie dieses Königs. Was mich an der bizarren Figur interessiert, ist zweierlei. Zum einen lässt sich an dem Umgang des Königs mit seinen Favoriten, Minis-

tern, Beamten und Untertanen die soziale Logik der Autokratie veranschaulichen. Meine These ist, dass dieser König sich verhielt wie ein sozialer Außenseiter statt wie ein Erbmonarch und die Grundlagen seiner eigenen Legitimität untergrub. Zum anderen interessiert mich der radikale Normenwandel, den er einleitete: vom Wandel des Männlichkeitsideals, des körperlichen Habitus und des Kleidungsstils bis hin zum Wandel des Wirtschaftsverhaltens, der Regierungspraxis und der Organisation physischer Gewalt. Die Frage ist: Wie kam es dazu, dass das, was besorgte Zeitgenossen als Folge einer schweren Affektstörung des Königs betrachteten, nachträglich als genialer Plan erscheinen konnte?

Lektüreempfehlung

Stollberg-Rilinger, Barbara. *Maria Theresia: Die Kaiserin in ihrer Zeit. Eine Biographie*. C.H.Beck, 2017. 6. Aufl. 2026. Englisch: *Maria Theresa: The Habsburg Empress in Her Time*. Übersetzt von Robert Savage. Princeton University Press, 2022.

- . „Ars militaris: The Art of War as Aesthetic Practice in the 18th Century.“ In *Different Aesthetics: Principles—Questions—Perspectives*, herausgegeben von Annette Gerok-Reiter, Jörg Robert, Matthias Bauer und Anna Pawlak. De Gruyter, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110768763-005>.
- . „On the Logic of Autocracy and the Plasticity of History: The Case of Frederick William I, King of Prussia.“ *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, Nr. 76 (Fall 2025): 23–42.

REVATHE THILLAIKUMAR

from February to June 2027

Fellow of the College for Life Sciences

Ph.D., Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellow

Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior, Konstanz

Born in 1992 in Madurai, India

B.Tech. in Biotechnology, Anna University, Chennai, Ph.D. in Evolutionary and Organismal Biology, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research

RETHINKING ANIMAL CULTURE USING ELEPHANTS AS THE MODEL ORGANISM

During my stay at the Wissenschaftskolleg, I aim to develop research ideas that address fundamental gaps in our understanding of animal culture, using elephants as the model species.

I will explore the contributions of multiple cultural transmission mechanisms: Humans learn by engaging multiple, if not all, senses at once. For example, children learn the affordances of their environment through multisensory exploration during early development. Despite the importance of multiple senses for learning routine skills, studies of animal culture have long focused on singular modalities (vision or sound) when investigating social transmission of information. Elephants are an excellent model organism to go beyond the commonly studied modalities due to their everyday reliance on advanced olfactory and tactile senses (delivered via the trunk) in addition to vision and sound, for social and subsistence activities. I will develop a framework that can be used to tease apart the contributions of different sensory modalities to social learning of information in elephants, which can subsequently be applied to other species.

I will use human cultural products to understand elephant culture: Because elephants occupy a prominent space in human culture, our observations of them span centuries and appear in sources such as cave art, folklore, and literary texts.

Can this wealth of information about elephants' behaviours, range, and habitat be considered data? I plan to collaborate with literary experts and cultural archaeologists to develop a methodology for the behavioural ecological investigation of the historical records of elephants.

These planned projects aim to reshape our understanding of animal culture by 1. introducing a new model organism, 2. elucidating the role of diverse cultural transmission mechanisms, and 3. leveraging supplementary methodological approaches. I believe these topics will interest other Fellows, and I look forward to engaging in fruitful discussions and collaborations with them and with institutions in Berlin.

Recommended Reading

Thillaikumar, Revathe, Roger Mundry, Sri Suci Utami-Atmoko, et al. (2025).

“Sumatran Orangutan Mothers Differ in the Extent and Trajectory of their Expression of Maternal Behaviour.” *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 292 (2046): 20250443. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2025.0443>.

Thillaikumar, Revathe, and T.N.C. Vidya (2026). “Young Asian Elephant Calves Show Differentiated Social Relationships with Conspecifics.” *Ethology* 132 (4): 248–262. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eth.70048>.

Thillaikumar, Revathe, Marie-Theres Weidling, Sri Suci Utami-Atmoko, et al. (2026). “Eight Years of Social and Individual Learning Jointly Drive Ecological Competence in Orangutans.” Preprint, bioRxiv, April 27. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.08.27.672553>.

JULIANE VOGEL

Permanent Fellow des Wissenschaftskollegs

Dr. phil., Professorin für Neuere Deutsche Literatur und Allgemeine

Literaturwissenschaft

Universität Konstanz

Geboren 1959 in Mainz, Deutschland

Dr. phil., Universität Wien

1. TRAVELING FORMS. A GLOSSARY

2. GRAMMATIK UND GESCHICHTE

Ad. 1. Im kommenden Forschungsjahr werde ich eine Buchpublikation vorbereiten, die zentrale Begriffe des von mir an der Universität Konstanz geleiteten und von der NOMIS Foundation finanzierten Forschungsprojekts „Traveling Forms“ vorstellen wird. Erstellt werden soll ein Glossarium von Begriffen, mit dessen Hilfe die Migration ästhetischer und sozialer Formen beschrieben werden kann. Dabei untersuche ich gemeinsam mit Konstanzer Kollegen sowohl aus literaturwissenschaftlicher wie anthropologischer Perspektive den Zusammenhang von Formwandel und Ortswechsel. Grundlegend ist dabei die Annahme, dass sich Formen wandeln, wenn sie kulturelle, politische, soziale oder nationale Grenzen überschreiten, dass sie sich aber auch umgekehrt nur dann erhalten und stabilisieren können, wenn sie immer wieder aufs Neue relokaliert und adaptiert werden. Als Literaturwissenschaftlerin werde ich mich vor allem auf Stichworte konzentrieren, die das Travelling und die Reisewege literarischer Gattungen betreffen. Dabei geht es neben den Prozessen der Relokalisierung auch um die Herstellung von Reiseformen. Welche formalen Operationen steigern die Übertragbarkeit und Portabilität einer Form? Welche Rolle spielen Fragmentierung, Miniaturisierung oder die Lockerung formaler Zusammenhänge? Aber auch: Welche politischen und kulturellen Kontexte fördern bzw. verhindern das Reisen einer Form?

Ad 2. Außerdem bereite ich gemeinsam mit Carlos Spoerhase ein Forschungsvorhaben zum Thema „Grammatik und Geschichte“ vor, das am Wissenschaftskolleg angesiedelt werden soll. Wir wollen das sprachliche Formenrepertoire der Literatur auf der Ebene präzise bestimmbarer grammatischer Phänomene untersuchen und sowohl historisch und systematisch die historischen Gestaltungspotenziale, Darstellungs- und Affektlogiken aufdecken, die mit grammatischer Formgebung verbunden sind. Auf diese Weise möchten wir die tief liegende Geschichtlichkeit der formbildenden Kraft der Grammatik sichtbar machen. In diesem Zusammenhang ist ein Vorhaben angesiedelt, das sich unter dem Titel „Navigating by sentences“ mit der Performanz von Sätzen befasst. Es untersucht anhand von literarischen wie historiografischen Texten, wie herausfordernde Situationen und existenzielle Ungewissheiten mithilfe von prägnanten Sätzen bewältigt werden. Mit ihrer Hilfe können unbekannte Territorien und unbekannte Zukünfte vorstrukturiert und in Momenten der Regellosigkeit Regeln abgerufen werden, die den Übertritt wie das Überleben im Neuland ermöglichen.

Lektüreempfehlung

Menke, Bettine, und Juliane Vogel, Hg. *Flucht und Szene: Perspektiven und Formen eines Theaters der Fliehenden*. Theater der Zeit, 2018.

Vogel, Juliane. *Aus dem Grund: Auftrittsprotokolle zwischen Racine und Nietzsche*. Fink, 2018.

—. *Nimmt Scheren: Ansichten eines Werkzeugs im Zeitalter der Collage*. Konstanz University Press, 2026.

ELIZABETH VON-KITI

from March to May 2027

Iso Lomso Fellow

PhD, Research Scientist

CSIR–Institute of Industrial Research, Accra

Born in 1984 in Accra

Diploma in Software Engineering, IPMC Ghana, MSc and PhD in Materials

Science, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

ESTABLISHING CRITERIA AND ORGANIZING GUIDELINES FOR ADVANCING STANDARDS IN BIOCHAR PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION USING RENEWABLE AND INNOVATIVE CLEAN ALTERNATIVES

Biomass is the primary energy source for cooking and heating in many developing countries, including Ghana, where nearly 70% of the population rely on fuelwood, charcoal, animal droppings, and agricultural waste. While biomass is a renewable energy option, the development of sustainable alternatives, particularly when it is from waste, is crucial because of significant environmental and health benefits, as overdependence on fuelwood has implications such as deforestation, exposure to harmful gases, and fine particulate matter. Biochar, a carbon-rich byproduct of pyrolysis, is gaining recognition as a sustainable and promising solution for waste management and climate action, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. With growing demand, biochar production is expected to rise, necessitating the adoption of safer and more efficient production technologies.

The calorific value of biomass fuels is a critical indicator of their energy efficiency and usability, as it directly influences fuel performance, consumption rates, and emissions. This energy content is largely driven by compositional factors such as fixed carbon, volatile matter, moisture, and ash content, which

can vary widely depending on feedstock and production conditions, underscoring the need for standardized quality benchmarks. The lack of standardized product certifications for solid fuels in Africa poses a challenge in ensuring the quality of biochar and its compliance with regulations, hindering its widespread acceptance as a viable energy feedstock.

This project proposes the need for an established criteria for the development of uniform guidelines to serve as a framework to advance the development of biochar standards. This will facilitate sustainable production and use, comprehensively addressing environmental and health issues associated with traditional biomass use. Standardization is essential for product quality, regulatory compliance, and the long-term growth of the biochar market in the region.

Recommended Reading

Von-Kiti, Elizabeth, William Owusu Oduro, Maame Adwoa Animpong, et al. (2023). “Evidence of Electronic Influence in the Adsorption of Cationic and Zwitterionic Dyes on Zeolites.” *Heliyon* 9 (9): e20049. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e20049>.

Oduro, William Owusu, Elizabeth Von-Kiti, Maame Adwoa Bentumah Aminpong, et al. (2024). “Production of Sustainable Fuel Briquettes from the Co-Carbonization of Sewage Sludge Derived from Wastewater Treatment and Wood Shavings as a Sustainable Solid Fuel for Heating Energy.” *South African Journal of Chemical Engineering* 50: 437–444. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sajce.2024.09.011>.

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YIMAN WANG

Ph.D., Professor of Film and Digital Media
University of California, Santa Cruz

Born in 1972 in Guangdong, China

B.A. in Anglo-American Literature and Comparative Literature,
Nanjing University, M.A. in Comparative Literature, Peking University,
Ph.D. in Critical Theory and Film Studies, Duke University

APOCALYPTIC EDUCATION AND ITS ENVIRONMENTAL UNCONSCIOUS: TRANS-SOCIALIST SCIENCE EDUCATION FILMS AND CAMPAIGN MEDIA

My new book project, *Apocalyptic Education and Its Environmental Unconscious*, studies a so-far understudied yet hegemonic media phenomenon, namely, the socialist state-sponsored science education film and what I call the broader “campaign media” landscape. By unpacking the interactions between Mao’s (post)apocalyptic imaginary and the quotidian educational “campaign media,” this book traces how narratives of the making and unmaking of a life-world combined to produce socialist biopolitics and environmentalism. Such destruction-creation entanglement holds important lessons for our reckoning with today’s global war ravages and the Anthropocene crisis. Mobilizing science and technology studies, environmental humanities, and film and media studies, this book makes three major contributions. It reengages with Cold War cultural politics to anchor the rapidly growing environmental media studies in history, biopolitics, and geopolitics; it offers a trans-socialist and trans-disciplinary method; and it reframes the Anthropocene debate by refocusing on socialist developmentalism.

During my fellowship residency in Berlin, I will undertake two tasks. The first is to carry out a trans-socialist comparative study by researching science education films produced in the DDR, now held in the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv (Berlin) and the Filmmuseum Potsdam. While conducting research and

writing, I eagerly look forward to year-long exchange with other Fellows with different disciplinary expertise. Such interdisciplinary cross-pollination is precisely what I need to strengthen my book; I am confident that my research expertise will also contribute to other Fellows' work. My second task during the residency is to draft three papers based on archival research, which will be presented at conferences on media studies, environmental studies, and Asian studies. The feedback will enable me to revise the papers for publication and to further develop them into the backbone of my book.

Recommended Reading

Wang, Yiman. *Remaking Chinese Cinema: Through the Prism of Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Hollywood*. University of Hawaii Press, 2013.

—. *To Be an Actress: Labor and Performance in Anna May Wong's Cross-Media World*. University of California Press, 2024.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.189>.

—. "People vs. 'God of Plague': Socialist China's Anti-Zoonotic Campaign Media as Environmental Media." In "Cinezoosis", ed. Benjamín Schultz-Figueroa, Jaimie Baron, and Priya Jaikumar. Special issue, *Journal of Environmental Media* 4 (2023): 147–166. https://doi.org/10.1386/jem_00107_1.

ISABELLA M. WEBER

Ph.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Born in 1987 in Nuremberg, Germany

B.A. in Political Science, Freie Universität Berlin, Ph.D. in Economics,

The New School for Social Research, Ph.D. in Development Studies, University of Cambridge

ESSENTIAL: AN ECONOMICS OF WHAT WE CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT

What is the difference between a ventilator and chewing gum, between food and fashion, between energy and entertainment? From the perspective of universal market laws they appear as fundamentally the same: reducible to their price or exchange values. Yet our age of overlapping emergencies where climate disasters, pandemics, trade wars, and geopolitical conflicts coincide shatters this “jelly-like sameness of things.” This project revisits the question of essentials for livelihoods and production in the history of economic thought and asks what an economics centered on guaranteeing essentials could look like, how stabilizing their provisioning can be linked to a transformation of our economies towards ecological sustainability and democracy.

Recommended Reading

- Weber, Isabella M. (2021). *How China Escaped Shock Therapy: The Market Reform Debate*. Routledge. German: (2023). *Das Gespenst der Inflation: Wie China der Schocktherapie entkam*. Translated by Stephan Gebauer. Suhrkamp.
- Weber, Isabella M., Jesus Lara Jauregui, Lucas Teixeira, and Luiza Nassif Pires (2024). “Inflation in Times of Overlapping Emergencies: Systemically Significant Prices from an Input–Output Perspective.” *Industrial and Corporate Change* 33 (2): 297–341. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icc/dtad080>.
- Weber, Isabella M. (2026). *Antifascist Economics: In Defense of Affordability, Dignity, and Democracy*. Random House; Allen Lane. German: (2026). *Anti-faschistische Wirtschaftspolitik*. Suhrkamp.

JUTTA WIMMLER

von September 2026 bis Januar 2027

Stipendium der Stiftung Preußische Seehandlung

Dr. phil., Geschichte

Bonn

Geboren 1985 in Heiligenkreuz am Waasen, Österreich

M.A., Religionswissenschaft, Mag. phil., Geschichte, Dr. phil.,

Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz

DAS KÖNIGLICHE LAGERHAUS BERLIN 1713–1815: EIN TEXTILUNTERNEHMEN UND SEINE ANGESTELLTEN IN EINER SICH GLOBALISIERENDEN WELT

Das königliche Lagerhaus Berlin war im achtzehnten Jahrhundert Preußens größte Textilmanufaktur. Als solche ist dieser Betrieb der Geschichtswissenschaft durchaus bekannt, nicht zuletzt, da dort Uniformen für die preußische Armee hergestellt wurden. Doch wenngleich das königliche Lagerhaus sowohl in Überblicksdarstellungen zur preußischen Geschichte als auch in spezialisierten Studien immer wieder erwähnt wird, existieren bis heute kaum quellengestützte Analysen dieser Wollmanufaktur. Insbesondere die Periode zwischen 1724 und 1764 – eine Zeit, in der diese Unternehmung quasi in „staatlichem“ Besitz war – muss nach wie vor als eine Art Blackbox bezeichnet werden, und das, obwohl das Geheime Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin-Dahlem eine große Menge an Quellen für diese Zeit bereithält.

Die Bestände des Königlichen Lagerhauses Berlin ermöglichen eine genaue Untersuchung nicht nur von (sich wandelnden) Warenströmen und Praktiken des Vertriebs, sondern auch von Techniktransfers und -adaptionen, administrativen Praktiken, Gerichtsbarkeiten, Familien als Arbeitseinheiten, Soldatenleben und vielem mehr. Eine Analyse dieser Bestände macht es daher möglich, die Geschichte Preußens im achtzehnten Jahrhundert neu zu denken. Unter anderem erlauben sie uns, die Geschichte Berlins gleichzeitig aus globalhistori-

scher und aus alltagsgeschichtlicher Perspektive zu fassen und dadurch klassische Stereotype über Preußen zu brechen. Dieses Projekt schließt daher einerseits eine eklatante Forschungslücke durch fundierte Quellenarbeit – andererseits macht es sich zum Ziel, zu einer Neuausrichtung der Geschichtsschreibung über Preußen sowohl in der Forschung als auch in der Öffentlichkeit beizutragen.

Lektüreempfehlung

Wimmler, Jutta. „From Senegal to Augsburg: Gum Arabic and the Central European Textile Industry in the Eighteenth Century.“ *Textile History* 50, Nr. 1 (2019): 4–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00404969.2019.1582580>.

—. „Troublemakers in a State-Run Enterprise: Conflict Management and the Limits of Social Disciplining in the Königliches Lagerhaus Berlin, c. 1720–1760.“ In *Formative Modernities in the Early Modern Atlantic and Beyond: Identities, Politics and Glocal Economies*, herausgegeben von Veronika Hyden-Hanscho und Werner Stangl. Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.

—. „Von Yucatán nach Berlin: Amerikanische Farbstoffe in Preußen, c. 1720–1764.“ In *Berlins Weg in die Moderne: Koloniale Warenströme und Sehnsüchte, 1713–1918*, herausgegeben von Samuel Eleazar Wendt, Felix Töppel, Lilja-Ruben Vowe und Klaus Weber. transcript, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839475102>.

FABIAN WITTMERS

from November 2026 to January 2027

Fellow of the College for Life Sciences

Dr. rer. nat., Postdoctoral Scholar

Oregon State University, Corvallis

Born in 1996 in Wickede (Ruhr), Germany

B.Sc. in Biology, RWTH Aachen University, M.Sc. in Biological Oceanography

and Dr. rer. nat., Kiel University (CAU)/

GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel

IMPACT OF DELAYED RESEARCH-ETHICS INVESTIGATIONS AND OF RETRACTIONS ON MANIFESTATION OF ERRONEOUS FINDINGS IN THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

The number of scientific articles published annually has risen near-exponentially since 2000. A successful career as a scientist is increasingly tied to the number of articles a researcher publishes (“publish or perish”). This incentivizes various problematic behaviors, ranging from less diligence to speed up publications to outright data manipulation and research misconduct. When concerns are brought to a publisher by a third party regarding the integrity of an article, journals assess these concerns. Given the increasing volume of research integrity cases, partially caused by a boom in AI generated articles, research-integrity teams face tremendous backlogs. While the number of published articles increased rapidly in recent years, these teams are small and publishing companies lag behind in allocating resources to these efforts. Publishers and journals are not required to address concerns about articles in any set timeframe and face no consequences for delays in this process. Little data exists on how long these investigations take from the moment of notification by a third party. Journals do not disclose when they were informed of the concerns when correcting or retracting an article. Critically, during the period between when a complaint is

filed and a study is addressed/withdrawn, its (erroneous) conclusions proliferate throughout the scientific literature. Today's scientific progress stands on prior findings and relies on their accuracy. My project focuses on assessing the impact this delay has on the proliferation of the erroneous findings.

Recommended Reading

Henderson, Lillian C., Fabian Wittmers, Craig A. Carlson, Alexandra Z. Worden, and Hilary G. Close (2024). "Variable Carbon Isotope Fractionation of Photosynthetic Communities over Depth in an Open-Ocean Euphotic Zone." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 121 (10): e2304613121. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2304613121>.

Wittmers, Fabian, Jacqueline Comstock, Camille Poirier, et al. (2024). "Non-Photosynthetic Lineages Sibling to Cyanobacteria Associate with Eukaryotes in the Open Ocean." *Current Biology* 34 (22): R1133–R1134. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2024.09.009>.

Wittmers, Fabian, Camille Poirier, Charles Bachy, et al. (2025). "Symbionts of Predatory Protists are Widespread in the Oceans and Related to Animal Pathogens." *Cell Host & Microbe* 33 (2): 182–199.e7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chom.2025.01.009>.

LEA YPI

Permanent Fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg

PhD, Professor in Political Theory

London School of Economics and Political Science

Honorary Professor in Philosophy, Australian National University, Canberra

Born in 1979 in Tirana

Laurea in Philosophy and Laurea Specialistica in Literature, University of

Rome La Sapienza, Master of Research in Political Science and PhD in Political

Theory, European University Institute

THE IDEA OF MORAL SOCIALISM

Lea Ypi offers a critique of capitalism and a defence of socialism that focuses on the Enlightenment idea of freedom as moral agency. She makes an ethical case for socialism by exploring the political implications of the traditional definition of the Enlightenment as “the emergence of human beings from their self-incurred immaturity.” The project focuses on three main themes: the critique of reason as the foundation of a new (post-capitalist) vision of society, the political implications of an analysis of freedom focused on the idea of human beings as ends in themselves, and the importance of a critical philosophy of history for resurrecting hope. Ypi explores these topics from both a historical and an analytical perspective, which draws on the history of philosophy, contemporary critical theory, and liberal theories of justice, while also re-examining traditional Marxist interpretations of political and economic institutions.

Recommended Reading

White, Jonathan, and Lea Ypi. *The Meaning of Partisanship*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Ypi, Lea. *The Architectonic of Reason: Purposiveness and Systematic Unity in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. Oxford University Press, 2021. German: *Die Architektonik der Vernunft: Zweckmäßigkeit und systematische Einheit in Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Translated by Antonia Grunert. Suhrkamp, 2024.

—. *Indignity: A Life Reimagined*. Allen Lane, 2025. German: *Aufrecht: Überleben im Zeitalter der Extreme*. Translated by Eva Bonné. Suhrkamp, 2025.

COLLEGE FOR LIFE SCIENCES

Mit dem *College for Life Sciences* will das Wissenschaftskolleg Forscherinnen und Forschern aus den Lebenswissenschaften am Beginn ihrer Karriere Gelegenheit geben, in der anregenden Atmosphäre eines internationalen und multidisziplinären Institute for Advanced Study zu arbeiten. Je nach persönlicher Situation soll der Aufenthalt den ausgewählten Junior Fellows dazu dienen, frühere Arbeiten oder empirische Daten zu analysieren oder zu überdenken, Ideen zu entwickeln, Forschungspläne zu entwerfen, sich neu zu orientieren – jedenfalls für eine beschränkte Zeit aus der Routine der täglichen Arbeit auszuweichen und dabei mit Wissenschaftlerinnen, Künstlern und Intellektuellen verschiedenster Fachgebiete und Traditionen zu interagieren.

Die Fellows des *College for Life Sciences*, die nach Begutachtung durch ein Scientific Committee für eine Dauer von drei bis fünf Monaten eingeladen werden, sind den Fellows des Wissenschaftskollegs gleichgestellt. Das Wissenschaftskolleg stellt Stipendium, Unterkunft und Dienstleistungen zur Verfügung.

With the *College for Life Sciences*, the Wissenschaftskolleg wants to provide early-career researchers in the life sciences with the opportunity to work in the stimulating atmosphere of an international and multidisciplinary Institute for Advanced Study. Depending on the personal situations of the selected Junior Fellows, the residency should serve them to analyze or rethink earlier work or empirical data, develop ideas and research plans, gain new orientation—at any rate, to drop out of the routine of their daily work and to interact with scientists, artists, and intellectuals from the widest possible spectrum of fields and traditions.

Selected by a Scientific Committee, the Fellows of the *College for Life Sciences* are invited to come for three to five months. They are on equal terms with the Fellows of the Wissenschaftskolleg. The Wissenschaftskolleg provides the stipend, accommodation, and services.

Fellows des College for Life Sciences

Mirna Elizabeta Kramar (Institut Curie, Paris), Biophysics

Peter R. Marting (Auburn University), Behavioral Ecology

Leonardo Oña (Osnabrück University), Theoretical Biology

Julián Padró (INIBIOMA (CONICET–National University of Comahue),

San Carlos de Bariloche), Conservation Biology

Revathe Thillaikumar (Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior, Konstanz),

Behavioral Ecology

Fabian Wittmers (Oregon State University, Corvallis), Biological Oceanography

ISO LOMSO FELLOWSHIP

Iso Lomso bedeutet in isiXhosa „das Auge von morgen“: in die Zukunft blicken, den Grundstein für das Morgen legen. Mit dem *Iso Lomso Fellowship Programme* hat das Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) im Jahr 2017 eine Förderlinie speziell für afrikanische Nachwuchswissenschaftlerinnen und -wissenschaftler aus allen Disziplinen etabliert. Die Fellowships in diesem Programm erstrecken sich über drei Jahre, von denen zehn Residenzmonate – in drei Etappen – am STIAS absolviert werden. Einige dieser Residenzmonate können alternativ an einem internationalen Partnerinstitut verbracht werden. Das Wissenschaftskolleg ist ein solches Partnerinstitut und lädt in jedem akademischen Jahr in der Regel zwei Fellows aus dem *Iso Lomso Programme* ein, für drei Monate ans Kolleg zu kommen.

Iso Lomso means “the eye of tomorrow” in isiXhosa: seeing towards the future, laying the foundations for tomorrow. In 2017, the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) established with the Iso Lomso Fellowship Programme a support programme especially for young African academics from all disciplines. The fellowships in this programme last for three years, of which ten months consist of residence in three stages at the STIAS. Alternatively, some of these residence months can be spent at an international partner institute. The Wissenschaftskolleg is such a partner institute and, as a rule, each year invites two Fellows from the Iso Lomso Programme to come to the Kolleg for three months.

Iso Lomso Fellow

Elizabeth Von-Kiti (CSIR–Institute of Industrial Research, Accra),
Materials Science, Engineering

VUIAS FELLOWSHIP

Zusammen mit ukrainischen und internationalen Partnern bemüht sich das Wissenschaftskolleg seit Herbst 2023 um den Aufbau eines Ukraine Institute for Advanced Study (UIAS) in Kyjiw. Für die ersten drei Jahre der Gründungsphase wurde zunächst eine virtuelle Struktur, das VUIAS, geschaffen.

Im akademischen Jahr 2026/2027 werden voraussichtlich etwa 30 VUIAS-Fellowships an ukrainische Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler unterschiedlicher Disziplinen vergeben. Ein Teil davon sind *VUIAS Fellowships abroad*, die von verschiedenen Institutes for Advanced Study in Europa und den USA ausgeschrieben und finanziert werden. *VUIAS Fellowships in Ukraine* werden an Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler vergeben, die ihre Arbeit an Universitäten und Forschungseinrichtungen in der Ukraine weiterführen.

As of the fall 2023 and in close cooperation with Ukrainian as well as international partner institutes, the Wissenschaftskolleg is helping launch a Ukraine Institute for Advanced Study (UIAS) in Kyiv. A preliminary virtual institute, VUIAS, began operation in the academic year 2023/2024.

Planned for the academic year 2026/2027 is to award about 30 VUIAS Fellowships to Ukrainian scholars from various disciplines. Some of these are *VUIAS Fellowships abroad*, funded and hosted by some of the world's leading Institutes for Advanced Study in Europe and the USA. *VUIAS Fellowships in Ukraine* are granted to scholars continuing their work in universities and research institutions in Ukraine.

VUIAS Fellow abroad am Wissenschaftskolleg

Kateryna Dysa (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy), History

STIPENDIUM DER STIFTUNG PREUSSISCHE SEEHANDLUNG

Die Stiftung Preußische Seehandlung möchte im Rahmen einer langfristigen Forschungsinitiative die historische Bedeutung der 1772 gegründeten Preußischen Seehandlungs-Societät in ihrer wirtschaftlichen, politischen und kulturellen Dimension neu erschließen und einer breiteren Öffentlichkeit zugänglich machen. Als Teil dieser Initiative fördert die Stiftung ein eigenständiges Forschungsprojekt zur Geschichte Preußens mit einer fünfmonatigen Short-Term Fellowship am Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin.

Stipendiatin der Stiftung Preußische Seehandlung im akademischen Jahr 2026/2027 ist die Historikerin Jutta Wimmeler.

In the context of a long-term research initiative, the Stiftung Preußische Seehandlung (Prussian Maritime Trade Foundation) seeks to investigate anew the historical significance of the Preußische Seehandlungs-Societät (Prussian Maritime Trading Company) founded in 1772 in its economic, political, and cultural dimensions and to make it accessible to a broad public. As part of this initiative, the Foundation supports an independent research project on the history of Prussia with a five-month short-term fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg.

The Fellow sponsored by the Stiftung Preußische Seehandlung in the academic year 2026/2027 is the historian Jutta Wimmeler.