

University of Konstanz

**Europa nach dem Eurozentrismus:
Narrative einer Weltprovinz im Umbruch**

**Post-Eurocentric Europe:
Narratives of a World Province in Transformation**

October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2029

Participating University Faculty

Prof. Albrecht Koschorke (German Studies), Speaker
Prof. Kirsten Mahlke (Romance/Latin American Studies), Deputy Speaker
Prof. Judith Beyer (Ethnology)
Prof. Manuel Borutta (Modern and Contemporary History)
Prof. Pavel Kolář (Eastern European History)
Prof. Daniel König (History of Religions)
Prof. Sven Reichardt (Contemporary History)
Prof. Daniel Thym (Law)
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Prof. Juliane Vogel (German Studies)
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1 Profile of the graduate program

The proposed graduate program developed out of the MA program in global European studies in Konstanz. Now in its thirteenth year of successful operation, this program is based on the core idea of rethinking Europe from the perspective of its borders and requires its students to spend a semester abroad at a cooperating university outside Europe (provided travel is possible). The graduate program is likewise based on this core idea, while pursuing a research agenda that defines “borders” in three ways. First, as a historical border in the sense of a European hegemony that has come to an end. Second, through the external perspective of a Europe that has shifted into an eccentric position outside a lost center. And third, in terms of the internal asymmetries, fault lines, and peripheries that have always run through the European continent, and that still do today. All three aspects of this definition come together in our intention to dissolve the separation of a European cultural space from its (post)colonial exterior—as a dichotomy that we still find in so much research being conducted today—while also reexamining the “province” of Europe itself from a postcolonial perspective. It is from this vantage point that we will critically revise the grand historical narratives that have long shaped Europe’s image of itself, and that continue to exert global influence as Western ideals. Consequently, the aim must also be to reestablish the (hi)stories of marginalized groups, both within and beyond Europe, as resources for knowledge and action. At the same time, new forms of geopolitical hegemony motivate us to investigate the historical conditions for critiques of Eurocentrism itself. Europe’s current location—both in its own eyes, and in those of others—is part of a charged process of negotiation whose political-cultural framework is rapidly changing compared to the contours of European cultural studies as they took shape in the 1990s and 2000s. This makes it necessary to more precisely articulate critiques of Eurocentrism that have been developed in postcolonial and decolonial theory by reconsidering their ideas in light of recent shifts in geopolitics and European politics.

In our view, our endeavor is unique and innovating in connecting two dimensions of inquiry: first, clearly defined research projects based on the analysis of concrete topics with a feasible scope for dissertations; and second: the intellectual claim to expand fundamental questions in cultural theory and European studies in order to rethink essential paradigms in the historiography of modernity along with European constructions of identity and demarcations of borders.

The designated speaker for the first funding period, Albrecht Koschorke (recipient of a 2003 Leibniz Prize), has many years of experience in directing graduate programs. He has established an international profile as a literary scholar known for his foundational theoretical work, which is directly relevant to the methodology we will apply to the question of Europe. The deputy speaker will be Kirsten Mahlke, a scholar in Romance and Latin American studies whose focus is on early modern studies and decolonial theory. She will take over the direction of the graduate program beginning in 2025. Christina Wald will augment the group’s foundation in literary studies with a research focus on transcultural Anglophone intertextuality from the early modern period to the global present, while Juliane Vogel (Leibniz Prize, 2020) will add expertise in the relationships between European issues and the Habsburg multiethnic empire. The discipline of history will also be represented by four members of the faculty. Here, the arc spans from the Middle Ages (Daniel König, with a focus on the contact zone between Christianity and Islam) to research on the Mediterranean region in modern history (Manuel Borutta) or on Eastern Europe (Pavel Kolář), as well as global entanglements of Europe in the twentieth century (Sven Reichardt). Christina Zuber will bring expertise in political science with her research on the Balkan region, while Judith Beyer will complement this dimension of the group with research from the perspective of political and legal anthropology, together with the work she has done on relations between Europe and Asia. Finally, Daniel Thym, an expert in European law, will build a bridge linking the group’s basic approach in cultural studies with institutional and legal issues, especially with regard to the complex of questions posed by migration. In addition, postdoctoral scholars employed or associated with the group will be encouraged to contribute both substantively and conceptually to our joint research agenda. This group will be supplemented by a wider community of Konstanz-based scholars with a proven record of research in the disciplines it brings together, who will be available to step into positions that might become vacant.

All members bring international working relationships to the group. In addition to the partnerships already established by the MA program with non-European partners (e.g., Pretoria, Santiago de Chile, Buenos Aires, Berkeley) and other collaborations (e.g., St. Petersburg, Sarajevo, Columbia University in New York), the locations relevant to the question of Europe's "near borders" and inner peripheries should be mentioned here (including the Orient Institute in Beirut, EURAC Bolzano, CEU Budapest/Vienna, EUI Florence, CEJM Aix-Marseille, and the Odysseus Network for Legal Studies on Immigration and Asylum in Europe).

This focus on the external and internal borders of Europe will also be reflected in the program of study. In addition to possible guest lectures, international seminars, workshops, and summer schools, we want to offer doctoral students financial and infrastructural support enabling them to spend longer periods of time at selected partner institutions, to the extent this meaningfully aligns with their project. We also plan to set up a mentoring program, especially with non-European partners. This aim will be additionally supported by the Mercator Fellowships that are being requested concurrently with this application. These fellowships enable guests to stay at the University of Konstanz for longer periods of time, ensuring that critical perspectives from outside the group will be a constant aspect of our reflection on Europe.

2 Research Program

2.1 Goals and Research Program

2.1.1 Outline of the Research Questions

Nine kilometers off the mainland of Asia Minor lies the island of Lesbos, which was conquered by Greek troops during the Balkan Wars in 1912 and has officially belonged to Greece since the territorial reorganization of Europe following the First World War. The island gained lasting fame in antiquity through the cultural flowering it experienced in the sixth century BCE and through Sappho's poetry. Today, it is mainly known for far less noble reasons: as the home of the refugee camp in Moria, where so many people have been crammed into inadequate housing under inhumane conditions. By now, tens of thousands of refugees have been interned in Moria, waiting for permission to enter Europe in order to escape the horrors of war, persecution, and poverty in their home regions. Since the fire at the camp in September 2020, they have been housed in a temporary facility where conditions are no better than the places they have fled. Regardless of whether such treatment was planned as such or has emerged as an accepted consequence of unclear responsibilities and a lack of political will, it is designed for maximum deterrence. The European Union is thus de facto moving away from the spirit of the Geneva Refugee Convention and of human rights, both of which are emphasized in its founding treaties. The refugees who have made it to Lesbos despite all the measures meant to keep them away find themselves thrown into a liminal space beyond the protection of law. The result is a kind of role reversal: the ideals of human dignity and the rule of law that Europe claims as its own heritage are being asserted by those who are denied entry to the continent, while European institutions fail to live up to their own aspirations. In Moria and the other Greek camps, the "cradle of Europe," as this area is often called, has become a site of "Europe's shame" (Ziegler 2020).

In the ancient world, "Europe" was originally described as the Peloponnese, and then in Herodotus as the land mass north of Hellas. "Europe" thus began in the region that is now called the "Balkans," though this designation is disputed and hardly accepted by any of the peoples of the region, with the sole exception of the Bulgarians (Previšić 2014: 20). For many, the name "Balkans" carries a stigma, inasmuch as it is associated with doubts about belonging to "Europe." It is rejected, in particular, by Greeks as a description of their location. On the map of European imaginaries, "Balkanism" is already halfway to "Orientalism" (Todorova 2009). One encounters here "the paradox that the region which is today nearly synonymous for the European periphery was once the birthplace of the very culture to which Europe continues to trace its own origins." The result is that the "European center and the European periphery become intertwined" (Baleva and Previšić 2016: 11).

“Where is Europe?” we might be tempted to ask. “And is it even one place?” Is it to be found in the minds and hearts of those for whom it is a place of longing, even as it denies them entry or sets up hurdles in their way? Is it embodied in institutions like Frontex, or perhaps in the NGOs that struggle to provide for these refugees’ most basic needs in the camps? Do the residents of Mytilene represent Europe? This is the small city neighboring the former camp in Moria, whose inhabitants have so often shown how willing they are to help. Or is Europe defined by the governments of those states that refuse to accept refugees despite the promises they have made? Does an internal or external European border run through the Aegean Sea? These questions illustrate why the former refugee camp Moria has become a focal point of explosive debates about the essence of Europe and its highly contested periphery. Such clashes have been waged with both rhetoric and facts.

Yet they have been playing out on such highly charged emotional terrain since long before the refugee crisis in 2015. They give an urgent, present-day impetus to a question that has always been posed by European history, for as long as it has been possible to speak of such a thing at all. Whether as a continent or an imagination, “Europe” has always been characterized by changing contours and attempts to claim a center, together with the demarcations—both internal and external—this has entailed. Hence it is less a unified block to be set apart from the rest of the world, however that might be defined, than a point of reference to be embedded within a structure characterized by multipolarities, tensions, and power asymmetries that is tightly entangled with events within and beyond its borders. On closer inspection, this understanding applies even to the era of colonialism, in which the centering of political power on Europe, despite its internal rivalries and notorious disunity, was further reflected in a cultural Eurocentrism that fostered a simplistic dichotomy between “Europeans” and “Others.” Seen from a contemporary vantage point, however, the limited world-historical significance of Europe as a continent is retrospectively becoming evident, revealing how Europe has existed throughout its history as a polycentric construct in a multipolar world.

This perspective also sketches the epistemic premises with which we begin our investigation. The starting point for our program is the belief that all attempts to think Europe today must consider the continent’s diminished political influence on world affairs. However obvious this fact may appear, its full epistemological consequences have not yet been accepted. Critiques of Eurocentrism has been voiced for decades, and for some time now these views have been increasingly accompanied by calls for a “provincialization of Europe” (Chakrabarty 2007). As a cultural project, however, the decentering of Europe has largely remained incomplete, not least because widespread narratives that have been employed to reflexively constitute modernity continue to be shaped—even outside Europe—by European assumptions. These narratives thus prove to have an ambivalent effect on their place of the origin. At the same time, cultural studies faces the challenge of historically unpacking current debates about Europe’s problematic identity and identities, while also finding concepts to describe forms of postnational belonging and integration under the conditions of the globalized twenty-first century. This multifaceted inquiry will guide the work of our graduate program in three primary ways.

1) As a consequence of Europe’s diminished political standing in the world, there is a need to relativize a **large number of presuppositions that are based, openly or latently, on the dominance of European traditions.** This requires a perspective beyond intra-European traditions of thought: a broader recognition of sources and ideas that have a non- or pre-European origin. Inevitably, such ideas raise the question of the relationship between the western European scientific paradigm and the autonomy of local knowledge marginalized by European hegemony. This work on the epistemological foundations of a new understanding of Europe in the world is far more arduous, and more likely to take much longer, than a “repricing” of Europe in global realpolitik. It fundamentally touches upon the legacy of the European modern era and the role it has played in relation to excluded traditions. Still, the world beyond European dominance is anything but a space free of domination. The geopolitical loss of power that countries on the continent have experienced does not by itself entail the emancipation of populations and cultures marginalized by colonialism. Rather, they find themselves situated in new power relations characterized by asymmetry and dependence, decreasing the relevance of arguments about Europe’s role.

2) The deconstruction of the European universalist narrative in the present day makes it necessary to assert this changed perspective retrospectively and to assert the eccentricity of Europe, its moving out of the supposed center of world events, in the representation of past epochs, as well. Contemporary reflection and historiography are mutually dependent: while any representation of the past also serves to justify and make intelligible the conditions of its own present moment, contemporary consciousness conversely functions historiographically as an a priori condition for the reconstruction of its own prehistory. This framework must be applied to our understanding of efforts that began in the wake of postcolonialism to **rewrite the history or histories of Europe, even in earlier stages, as global histories of entanglement**—that is to say: to give due consideration to the agency of actors previously treated as peripheral and subaltern, to properly recognize mutual influences in the spheres of politics, economics, religion, and culture, and in general to **acknowledge Europe’s long-lasting marginalization in world history**. “Europe after Eurocentrism” is thus not a program meant to be applied only to the present day. It can serve as a starting point to fundamentally revise the self-historiography of the empires and hegemonic powers that shaped the continent’s fortunes, working retrospectively to their beginnings in Mediterranean ancient world.

3) Increased attention to non-European traditions or those marginalized in Europe’s dominant self-narrative not only guides a redefinition of Europe’s position in world affairs; it **also requires us to diversify notions of Europe from within**. This does not mean, however, diminishing the historical significance of the reference to a concept of Europe that has always remained available even as it was continually redefined (Schneidmüller 1997). Rather, the work of our graduate program aims to contribute to the historical and contemporary demonopolization of the concept of Europe in local contexts, which has been tightly restricted to dominant traditions in the West-Central European area. Research in the group will thus follow the call of many prominent thinkers in developing a richer understanding of the diversity of cultural resources that contribute to internal structures of solidarity, beyond the question of a unified European identity, and that are capable of promoting the **integration of the continent “after Europe”** (Krastev 2017) despite so many present developments marked by crisis.

2.1.2 Methodology and Cross-Fertilization between the Disciplines Involved

Like its predecessor, the DFG graduate program “The Real in the Culture of Modernity” (2010–2019), our new program will bring together expertise in cultural studies, social sciences, and law, following the distinctive approach characterizing the research networks that have been built up in Konstanz. These collaborations unite intellectual resources in a way that offers ideal conditions for writing entangled histories and shifting the perspectives of historical narratives. A link with research in European cultural studies already exists through the Eberle Center. Moreover, important preliminary insight in cultural theory was developed in the Center of Excellence “Cultural Foundations of Integration” (2005–2019), which has now been given a long-term and sustainable institutional form as the Konstanz Centre for Cultural Inquiry (ZKF).

Literary studies and cultural studies form core areas of our research agenda for several reasons. On the one hand, essential concepts employed by movements critical of Eurocentrism were developed by francophone (including from Algeria and Bulgaria), Indian-British, and Palestinian-American literary scholars. **Issues of multilingualism, translation, and competing interpretations**, which are also essential for a post-Eurocentrism Europe, play an important role here. On the other hand, especially in the twenty-first century, we can see how writers and intellectuals are attempting to respond to a perceived deficit of cultural identity in Europe by participating in an **aesthetic-rhetorical remapping** of the continent. Recent examples include Robert Menasse’s novel *Die Hauptstadt* (The capital, 2017), Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer’s *Grand Hotel Europa* (2018), and David Schalko’s *Bad Regina* (2021). These authors continue a literary tradition that goes back at least to the sixteenth century and branches out into all European languages, but which has hardly ever been studied from a comparative and diachronic perspective.

Third, the disciplinary focus of our graduate program arises from the conviction that neither the past nor the future of Europe can be (re)constructed in political or institutional terms without

paying adequate attention to the factor of an *histoire imaginaire* and the central importance of aesthetic, poetic, and symbolic practices. The concentration on an economic-historical concept of globalization and the aggressive role that Europe has played in its history has entailed a failure to systematically assess the **constructive effects of reflexive processes in which societies come to a common understanding of themselves**. Such processes are articulated most pointedly in literary texts or expressions of subjectivity in other media, whose broad diversity give imagination the greatest possible scope to develop. More broadly, these processes are reflected in **collective narratives and in the narrative self-positionings they entail**. Comparative literary studies as practiced in Konstanz provide the terminological framework for this endeavor, which will have to be further developed in dialogue with approaches from contemporary history and cultural analysis.

Methodologically speaking, then, the focus will be on the question of how dynamics that operate in the realm of imaginative cultural production affect historical and social conditions—and, conversely, how these historical and social conditions guide these dynamics along certain paths. Our analysis here is focused, in short, on **the interplay between narratives and institutions**—the latter understood in a broad sense as lasting patterns in the formation of social structures—**together with the practices that accompany both of these dimensions of social reality**. The ground for this research program has been laid by the fact that the concept of narrative has long since left the field of literature and found its way into historiography, as well as the social sciences and law. Today, there is a widespread agreement across disciplinary boundaries that **narratives—understood as the tentatively causal sequencing of events with the effect of collective orientation and affect regulation** (Koschorke 2012)—are one powerful factor in the organization of social reality (Ross 2009). The ways in which they unfold their effects are as diverse as social conditions themselves. Narratives can organize consent, belonging, trust, and collective identity across all possible scales of social relations, yet they can also bring about exclusion and social polarization or justify the use of violence. Even if they circulate as a resource freely available to all and thus escape any attempts at complete control, they are a dangerous weapon in the hands of those who have the right means of communication. Since there is never just one narrative, their plurality leads to a competition for legitimacy, which lends them a high degree of cultural flexibility. In this regard, Europe—which represents an aggregate of conflicting narrative traditions with many different spheres of reference, ranging from the local to the national to the cosmopolitan—offers a paradigmatic case.

It is moreover from this perspective that a core question of European studies emerges, namely **how and to what extent “soft” cultural factors in the form of collective narratives and imaginations might solidify into “hard” institutional realities**, which in turn have a reflexive effect on the availability of narrative resources. The history of Europe nevertheless shows with particular clarity that such a process has never been capable of being completed or of founding any stable grand narrative (Koschorke 2015). Instead, we are dealing with a variety of scenarios of instability at different scales, each requiring a specific approach.

2.1.3 Thematic Horizon

Our intention is to approach these general questions along five conceptual axes that organize our interdisciplinary teaching and research program. These axes are intended to serve as a matrix structuring the group’s research by focusing on what we consider to be the most important considerations. They will provide a guide for our interdisciplinary cooperation and make it possible to build connections across disciplinary boundaries and different linguistic areas or regions at a theoretical level appropriate in each case to the research object. Group-wide events will accordingly be organized to focus on selected aspects of this matrix.

The specific areas and methods of expertise possessed by the participating faculty members who individually anchor the group’s joint project within the disciplines it mobilizes, are situated within this general horizon of inquiry. Beyond the narrower focus of the research interests pursued by each of the applicants in their individual work, which will contribute impulses to group within its teaching program, the thematic-conceptual outline presented here further

indicates the expertise the faculty can offer in advising research projects. As with doctoral theses, postdoctoral projects or second theses (*Habilitationen*) pursued within the group are expected to be thematically related to its five conceptual focus areas. Communicating these thematic areas is intended to give future applicants for doctoral positions an impression of the way in which the group's shared research agenda grows out of the research individually conducted by potential advisors. The fields in which the participating faculty have expertise for research advising nevertheless extend beyond these specific research questions, especially since expertise that might be lacking within the group can be gained by inviting external second advisors. The aim is to encourage students who are interested in the program to apply with independent projects that are a good fit for the group.

The interplay of the disciplines within the group can be roughly sketched as follows. In the sense of the methodology outlined in 3.1.2, the contribution of **literary studies** is meant to lie in the aesthetic, rhetorical, and narratological dimensions of texts that are formative for the conceptual complex of "Europe." In this way, literary studies provides methods of analysis that can be applied beyond the field of literary texts to a broad corpus of historical documents. **Historiography** examines such formative narratives in terms of the countercurrents that emerge as forms of political power concretely solidify and dissolve into a wide range of changing configurations. That said, the main focus here lies on the geopolitical decentering of Europe. Finally, from the perspectives of **political science, political anthropology, and law**, practices for the institutionalized exercise of power can be understood as manifestations of narratively generated meaning. The question of narratives and their real institutional and practical effects thus forms the common foundation from which we will reconstruct the changing definitions of Europe as a place and location, from the early modern period to the present day. Geographically, with the exception of the (European) North, all areas of the world are represented in the group along with expertise in the major associated language and regions.

Our perspective on Europe goes beyond a dichotomy of classical distinctions between self-description and description by others. Some of the participating faculty are well-known for their research in and on other continents (Mahlke: Latin America; Forest: North American and the African Anglophone sphere; Beyer: Asia) or for their work on regions located on the EU's external borders (Borutta: Mediterranean islands and North Africa; König: Maghreb and the Arab sphere; Zuber: the Balkans; Kolář: Eastern Europe). In addition to the question of how narratives about Europe are created and handed down on other continents, experience to be gained from both short and long-term research visits outside Europe will make it possible to develop eccentric perspectives on European narratives. In this context, cultural and social transformations have relevance for us not only when they are explicitly reflected in European narratives, but also when they do not or no longer do so in a significant way.

2.1.3.1 Postcolonialism, Decolonization, Transmodernism: Theoretically Relocating Europe

The decline of European cultural hegemony and, more generally, the critique of Western dominance are reflected in a wide range of theories that aim to diminish the significance of overarching normative-universalist categories, to reframe viewpoints from identity to difference and alterity, to pluralize possibilities of development (multiple modernities, transmodernity), and, consequently, to delegitimize the grand narratives of European modernity. These theories, which can be considered postmodern in the broadest sense, afford greater significance to previously minoritized positions. More or less programmatically, their aim has been to enable a thinking of societies as no longer characterized by a unified order of being, hierarchy of values, or universally applicable laws of development, but by heterogeneity and polyphony. In France, as in Great Britain and the United States, the fight for liberation advanced by intellectuals from the colonies is bound up with emancipatory theoretical traditions within the colonial powers themselves. Since the 1990s, first in the context of Indian subaltern studies and in the academic field of South Africa after the end of apartheid, we can observe efforts made by social and cultural studies to **counter the monopoly claim of Western modernity and European rationality** with ***Southern modernities*** as simultaneous and equivalent models. The approaches of decoloniality studies initiated by Latin American cultural theorists since

the 1990s, centered on the Modernity/Coloniality group, even go beyond these demands for recognizing the voices of marginalized people and modern parallel developments in the global South. The call for “epistemic disobedience” (Mignolo 2012) and resistance to “epistemicide” (Sousa Santos 2014, Grosfoguel 2013, Rivera Cusicanqui 2018) found in these approaches aims to expose the Eurocentrism of Marxist and feminist theories that shape both subaltern and postcolonial studies, replacing it with epistemologies hailed as “Southern.”

Latin America plays an especially prominent role in the restitution of non-Eurocentric traditions of imagination and knowledge, if only because the confrontation with European colonial power spans the four hundred years from the early modern period in the fifteenth century to decolonization in the nineteenth century. The independence of Latin American countries, however, was achieved by Europeanized Creole elites, while indigenous and dispossessed populations suffered the fate of recolonization. This experience of double colonization suffered by indigenous peoples, enslaved peoples, and indigents or refugees coming from Europe has given rise to polyphonic transcultural narratives (Ortiz 1995) that counter this Eurocentrism transplanted to South America with alternative imaginations (→ thematic area Mahlke).

Even if an author such as Achille Mbembe only several years ago described the loss of Europe’s central position as “the basic experience of our age” (Mbembe 2014: 11), engagement with colonialism has long since moved beyond a challenge issued by the global South to the global North. Increasingly, it is now focused on the **formation of neocolonial structures in and between formerly colonized territories**. Europe no longer occupies a central position here—or if it does, then at best as a past that continues to impact the present. It nevertheless continues to function as a significant institutional or theoretical space of reference for postcolonial critique. To a certain extent, such references have produced a “negatively” coded overestimation of Europe (for example, in the definition of modernity as a triad of capitalism, enlightenment, and imperialism). A more differentiated picture must take into account the system of coproductions that not only laid the foundation for colonialism but also formulated positions of opposition empowering the agency of non-European elites. Here, “relations” (Glissant), transculturations, and hybrid forms (Créolité, Mestizaje) come into view that cannot be exclusively reduced to their (European) origin, their state of preservation (deficient, syncretic), or their effect (violence, resistance).

A. De-Europeanization of Modernity. The **modernization theories of the Cold War** era, in which East and West tried to distinguish themselves via mutual competition in social progress, were still marked by the legacy of European philosophies of history since the Enlightenment. These traditions sought to spread their own principles of freedom and reason throughout the world and glorified their own continent as the “fatherland of the arts and sciences” (Wieland 1984). This “fatherland” held no place for either the overseas world or for what its discourse identified as “barbaric” countries, such as Russia and Turkey (→ thematic areas Kolář, König). At the same time, however, processes of Occidentalization were initiated in Peter the Great’s Russia and Mustafa Kemal’s Turkey. The idea of Europe has thus always been simultaneously larger and smaller than the geographical contours of the continent.

This normative orientation, with its enormous political consequences, has been countered in the twentieth century by pluralizing concepts such as that of multiple modernities (Eisenstadt 2000). The assumption of a plurality of culturally specific developmental paths is aimed against diffusionist models presuming an age of imperialism centered first on Europe, and then on the West as a whole under US domination. It reflects the growing self-confidence and the changed economic-political position of other regions of the world. In the meantime, countless studies have appeared along these lines that dispute the West’s authorship or even sole ownership of the cultural achievements that prepare the ground for modernity: the list includes scientific rationality, the autonomy of secular thought and social forms, human rights, the right of national self-determination, nation-statehood, democracy, and so on.

The controversy over whether the innovations in the modern era that proved decisive for modernity owe their existence to cultural interactions that extend beyond the European continent, or whether they result from a specific development in the sense of Max Weber, persists with no resolution on the foreseeable horizon. On the one hand, some approaches focus in a decolonial vein on transcultural coproductions and alternative modernities

(Kumar 2019), or they advocate for the model of an alternating predominance of eastern and western Eurasian civilizations (Goody 2010). These views are countered, on the other hand, by arguments that attribute the rise of modernity to specific developments from the European Middle Ages (Mitterauer 2003), polycentric statehood (Daly 2020), a specific kind of cultural extroversion (Brague 1993, 2017), and/or the constitution of the pan-European *respublica literaria* as an incubator of innovation (Mokyr 2016). Without taking sides here, it can be stated that it is currently hard to imagine a world historiography of the late modern period that dispenses with the question of the special conditions for the rise of Europe. **Hence it must remain an open question as to what extent the de-Europeanization of global modernity that has been progressing since the middle of the twentieth century can be extended retrospectively into the past.** As for the current situation, one must consider the thesis that specific European cultural traditions have been “appropriated and developed throughout the world” and have thus become something like a “world cultural heritage” (Hoffmann 1998: 17f) (→ thematic area Wald). As a repertoire of ideas and lifestyles, they are to be localized sociographically, rather than geographically. Questions such as how the corresponding processes of appropriation proceeded in the course of global Westernization, which forms of assemblage (Sassen 2006) were intermeshed with the expansion of Western technologies, the extent to which the technology that emerged from initially European scientific developments continues to be defined by or has cast off the cultural conditions of its origins, or which strategies have been used by conquered societies since the sixteenth century to immunize themselves against Western ways of thinking and living are all rich empirical and historical fields of research in cultural studies. Similar questions arise for the legal and social sciences with regard to the export and non-European scope of European institutions (→ thematic area Thym), which have often been implanted in other societies through hybridization and creative appropriation. One paradox characterizing the resulting effects has been that nineteenth-century state-imposed and controlled modernization programs modeled on Europe (Ottoman Tanzimat reform, Chinese self-strengthening movement, Meiji Restoration), which continued into the twentieth century, served the purpose of achieving parity with Western nations through processes of adoption and partial assimilation, while precisely aiming to thereby preserve their own autonomy. Such a paradox extends, moreover, to accompanying processes of nation-building and identity politics for which literature has been an important medium of reflection. **It is evident that many of the cultural techniques and social models developed in the European context have proven to be transculturally adaptable**—and not infrequently with the paradoxical consequence that they are turned and used against their creators after being severed from their origins. One can speak in this respect of a globalization of “European culture” that is not synonymous in any sense with Eurocentrism but instead contributes to the marginalization of the continent called Europe.

B. The Historicity of Critiques of Eurocentrism. If we consider the theoretical necessity of thus relocating Europe, we can discern trends in its modes of critique. There are many indications that currents of thought we might associate with constructivist or deconstructivist approaches are themselves beginning to become historical—despite, or even because, they have been able to anchor themselves institutionally in the curricula of an educational system that has been shaped by the West yet enjoys a global reach. This is true, at least, to the extent that these currents built on the global success of French theory in the 1960s and 70s to confront European traditions of thought within the framework of European academic institutions and were thus motivated in part by what might be called a self-reflexive dialogue of Europe, or of the West. Yet to the same degree, we can also observe the paradox that even in its “retreat,” Europe has been able to produce an epistemology with a global scope, however much this critique may be aimed negatively at Europe itself. It is precisely through efforts to formulate concepts of centerless, fragile orders whose semantic heritage has lost its certainty that it became possible to globally translate this epistemology. These developments highlight challenges of postcolonial (self-)critique that have yet to be addressed. **Cultural studies must ask itself whether its pluralistic models, with their intention of valuing diversity, sufficiently consider existing global imbalances of economic and political power.** Moreover, the milieu in which these models were able to spread is under siege by illiberal tendencies. In the Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in the most recent round of enlargement, many premises of postcolonial discourse are not shared or are frequently wielded against the discourse itself

(Terian 2012, Kołodziejczyk 2014). And many in these countries see their own nations as themselves still suffering from a colonial past. Desires for self-determination are being articulated mostly in ethnonationalist categories, while imperatives of Western postcolonialism are often cast as new form of ideological hegemony (→ thematic area Kolář). In general, the fact that nationalism was one of the main driving forces of anticolonialist movements cannot be integrated seamlessly into the theoretical setting of postcolonialism, which is strongly influenced by deconstruction and French philosophy of difference (Sivanandan 2004, Doran 2019, Lazarus 1999). To the same extent that distinct developmental paths are become increasingly apparent in Europe, as elsewhere, the diversity of postcolonial self-determinations is gaining theoretical relevance. All of this suggests that the changed geopolitical situation of the present compared to the historical context of postcolonial theory's emergence in the 1960s/70s further necessitates a **self-examination and repositioning of the critique of Eurocentrism**.

Hypothetical examples of dissertation topics and postdoctoral projects:

Literary studies: *Buen Vivir and Eudaimonia: Andean and Greek Designs of the Good Life; Aesthetics of Governance in Seventeenth-Century European and Latin American Texts; The European Cultural History of Stolen Writing: Maya, Aztec, Inca; Conceptions of Abya Yala from the Seventeenth to Twentieth Centuries; Unsettled Accounts: European-Latin American Cultural History of Restitution Claims; Europe's Undead: Spectral Conceptions of Europe in Postcolonial Theory and Literature*

History: *Healing through the Other: The History of a Motif in European Cultural Critique; "Nous savons maintenant que nous sommes mortelles": The Critical Discourse on Europe after the First World War; The Contribution of the (Arab) Islamic World to the Rise of Europe; The Feminism of Difference and Decolonization: Interferences in the History of Knowledge during the Decade of Student Protests; How Eurocentric Is the Critique of Eurocentrism? Current and Historical Perspectives; Algeria as a Laboratory of French (Post)Structuralism*

Political Science, anthropology, law: *Restitution and Reparation: A Comparative Study of Reparations in Colonial and National History; "Nowhere People"? A Contribution to an Anthropology of Statelessness using the Example of Europe; The Export of European Law: On the Codification and Enforcement of Human Rights Obligations in Migration Agreements with Countries of Origin and Transit*

2.1.3.2 Decanonization and Glocalization

As the Eurocentric narrative of progress has become less significant, conflicts have erupted over the relative value of cultural achievements. One central site for these conflicts has been canon formation. After the Second World War, the epicenter of the global education system shifted from Europe to the United States. But until the 1970s, this had little effect on the predominance of traditions shaped by a European heritage in the fields of literary studies and the humanities—that is to say, as both a canon of artistic production and as cultural bodies of knowledge. Since then, however, the very notion of a “Western canon” has come under direct attack, finding itself faced with a number of alternative canons that can no longer be absorbed or marginalized as they were in times of European hegemony.

For the representatives of European philologies participating in our collective endeavor, this poses the question as to what consequences this political-cultural “glocalization” has for each respective literary canon. The foundation of their fields in national literatures or cultures **has marginalized regional traditions as well as phenomena that transcend a national or imperial framework** (→ thematic areas Mahlke, Wald, Zuber). At the same time, there have been many resistant forms of local cultural heritage since the eighteenth century, often in the form of an invention of tradition, that have become comparatively more significant. They have served to establish cultural identities and support cultural and political empowerment, especially in regions that had been culturally marginalized under systems dominated by empires or nation-states (→ thematic area Koschorke). In this context, regional literary cultures not only offer rich material for a history of language politics that is based on poetic forms; they also provide the

cultural substructure for efforts to achieve autonomy, oriented in part toward Europe and against the respective state (→ thematic area Beyer). On the other hand, national canons have tended to obscure processes of exchange, both across literary language boundaries and in relations between empires and colonies. Constructions of alternative canons are thus often supported by attempts that accordingly rewrite literary histories as entangled histories in a global horizon.

A. Trans-European Intertextualities. **Models of intertextuality** play an important role for describing such processes, especially in literary studies in the English-speaking world. Such models variously employ narrow or broad concepts of intertextuality, “arboreal” and “rhizomatic” theories of adaptation, actor-network theories, and (post)postcolonial procedures of “writing back” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2002), canonical counterdiscourse, metafictional African “writing to each other” (Mwangi 2009), and transcultural writing in a multipolar, globalized system of literary communication.

English-language literary studies (→ thematic area Wald) offers a powerfully salient example here: namely, the success with which ancient Greek and Roman works have come to be seen as quintessential European “foundational texts,” along with the more recent addition of Shakespeare’s dramas as themselves intertextual adaptations of these ancient works. Like no other body of literature, this canon has become a (distorted) reflection of national, European, and postcolonial discourses with which Europe questions itself and is perceived from outside perspectives. The rich intertextual history of the ways in which these texts have been reworked shows how cultural familiarity beyond national framing has been and continues to be achieved through literary adaptations and the movement of forms. At the same time, this history also makes clear that **intertextual references not only were and are evidence of cultural rapprochement, but that they have been and continue to provide a forum for negotiating frictions, conflicts, critiques, and difference.** An example is how ancient and early modern templates provide a foil for today’s urgent question of how to reconceptualize Europe after the vote for Brexit, and in the wake of migration toward Europe. Dissertations that investigate such intertextual and transcultural entanglements can furthermore contribute to the still somewhat rudimentary dialogue between postcolonial studies and critical discourses on Europe. They can do so by helping us more precisely redefine the concept of Europe as representative of the “West,” which is a term that has remained ambiguous in postcolonial studies and frequently reflects the influence of academic discourse in the United States (Schulze-Engler 2013).

Discussions in postcolonial literary studies have by now asked whether attempts to hear the poetic voice of the subaltern has not overlooked the Eurocentric character of the basic literary categories themselves that have always been employed by postcolonial novels or postcolonial fiction (Crowley and Hiddleston 2012). Without immediately calling for a universal grammar of literature, one of the tasks of post-Eurocentric literary studies should be to reformulate Western poetics in a way that increasingly enables a dialogue with aesthetic practices outside the European tradition. **The one-sided emphasis on cultural difference may have obscured the equally significant view of transcultural similarities, isomorphic forms, functional equivalences, and structural correspondences.** Here, the faculty submitting this proposal can build on preliminary work in the context of an Indian-German research collaboration on the concept of similarity (Bhatti and Kimmich 2015) as a “post-postcolonial concept” (Koschorke: *ibid.*).

B. Clashes over the Canon. Generally speaking, what we might call “**clashes over the canon,**” including the creatively subversive appropriation of works to form canons of high culture in the context of “**glocalization,**” are extremely productive objects of analysis for cultural studies. The arts often attract particularly heated debate in these clashes because they serve as symbolic venues for a deeper conflict over participation and public perception. An especially current field of ongoing clashes over the canon is the digital humanities, where the concentration of the means of production and the institutional organizational structures in the Global North have motivated representatives of postcolonial and decolonial studies to demand that non-European traditions and cultural production be appropriately represented in the “digital cultural record” (Risam 2019). If we look at European cultural heritage, we see such disputes being fought out not only in areas of the world in which European traditions have long been dominant—in former British colonies, in the Caribbean, in Latin America, and parts of Africa—

but also in Europe itself. In all of these debates, the unresolved question remains of which institutional forms or anchors will now underlie norms of literature, art, and knowledge that have been expanded by critiques of hegemony and by pluralization. The success of such decentering requires that it also be reflected in the core academic fields of the humanities and social sciences. Our graduate program is situated in an environment in which not least the history, critique, and self-understanding of our institution, the university, is open for discussion (Cupples and Grosfuguel 2019).

Questions of canon formation, however, cannot be reduced solely to questions of codetermination and thus ultimately of how power is distributed. They also challenge normative decisions regarding the quality of artistic and, in a broader sense, intellectual products that are difficult to justify, especially in the context of intercultural competition. The decline of Western hegemony poses the fundamental question of whether and how aesthetic or epistemological judgments of esteem can be upheld that are based on categories such as superiority or universal validity, and of which other forms of evaluation might take their place.

Analogous problems arise with possibly even greater implications if one extends the concept of the canon beyond cultural phenomena in the narrower sense to the realm of institutions, rights, and associated concepts of value (→ thematic areas Thym, Zuber). A critique of the hegemonic character of universalist claims to validity, no matter how justified it may be in itself, has fatal political consequences when it refers to the rule of law, to fundamental democratic rights, and to human rights as core elements of so-called “European canon of values” that is to be deconstructed and politically instrumentalized as such. The transdisciplinary dialogue between cultural studies, social sciences, and law promises to be particularly insightful here, insofar as one is dealing with processes that are aimed in similar directions and partially overlap. In the current situation, it is completely open as to whether and how the guiding principle of a normatively charged notion of representativeness, which is inherent in the concept of the canon, can be maintained against all culturalist relativizations in a pluralistic global society. Likewise, the question remains as to what it would mean to fundamentally suspend such a guiding principle.

Hypothetical examples of dissertation topics and postdoctoral projects:

Literary studies: *Literary Histories of Resistance: Basques and Mapuche in Colonial Spain; Post-Eurocentric Stages: Upstaging European Classics in Postcolonial Drama; “Hodgepodge & Foreign Fashions”: Models of Intertextuality and Transculturality in the Early Modern Period; Pastoral at the Court of Princes: European and Non-European Traditions; Cosmopolitans among Themselves: Europeanist Implications of the Concept of World Literature; Comeback from the Periphery: New Adaptations of Ovid; Greek Myths in the Post-European Twenty-First Century*

History: *“Orientalism” in the Left-Wing and Right-Wing Reception of Anticolonial Movements in 1960s/70s Europe; The Internationale of Social Engineering: On the Entangled History of Modernist Social Planning; Fascist Networks between Europe and Latin America in the 1920s and 1930s; Globalization of Protest: Europe’s New Left and Student Movements in Asia and Latin America*

Political science, ethnology, law: *“Western” Separation of Powers? The Clash over the European Constitutional Canon; The Geneva Refugee Convention, Its Historical-Teleological Foundation, and Its Crisis in the Multipolar World Order, “Illiberal,” “National,” “Sovereign”: Populist Narratives and the Erosion of Liberal-Democratic Institutions in Europe; The Family in Anti-Western Political Discourse in Eastern Europe: One Aspect of the European Conflict of Values; Overcoming Authoritarianism: A European Legacy? A Comparison of Narratives of Democratization and Trust in Democracy in Postfascist and Postcommunist Societies*

2.1.3.3 Centers and Peripheries

As with Europe’s external borders, notions of where its center lies are subject to frequent change. The three cultural origins to which it traces itself are wholly or partly outside the borders

of the continent that are generally accepted today: the Near East as the place where Judaism and Christianity arose; Greek Hellenistic culture, which extended across the Aegean to the coast of Asia Minor and beyond; and finally, the Roman Empire, which encompassed North Africa and West Asia, but advanced to rule only a third, at most half, of the land mass later called Europe. Christian Byzantium and, later, Islam are also part of Europe's history even as they transcend its geographical boundaries. As a contact zone of Africa, Asia, and Europe, the Mediterranean region was closely interconnected even before the globalizations of the modern period. It has been the scene of various forms of protocolonialism and conquest (the Crusades, the Reconquista, the Mediterranean trading powers Pisa, Venice, Genoa), which began as early as the eleventh century and then intensified until the nineteenth century (→ thematic area König). In the modern era, Europe's contours have repeatedly shifted (→ thematic area Borutta). On the one hand, various forms of regional and transregional networking have overlapped, and on the other, processes of colonization and decolonization have led to expansions and contractions of Europe. A look at the southern edges of the continent, or at the intermediate position of the Mediterranean islands, paradigmatically reveals the extent to which the continent has always been internally fragmented, entangled with other world regions, and historically fluid in its contours. Borders in this sense are drawn not only spatially but also culturally, and especially in the context of cross-border mobility. Here, too, countervailing dynamics can be observed. Colonized Algeria, which was considered an integral part of French territory from 1848 to 1962 and formed a transitional zone between Europe and Africa, was marked by great inequality between "Europeans" and "indigenous" individuals. Yet one can also observe tendencies here toward cultural assimilation, integration, or even conversion that reduced such inequalities. A political disentanglement of the two spaces followed decolonization, but immigration from Algeria to France preserved this link and even increased the intensity with which both sides were aware of each other. Within mainland France, former settlers from North Africa (*pièdes-noirs*) often appeared to locals as strangely Mediterranean, despite also having "white" skin and largely practicing the Catholic faith, in addition to being French citizens. The *harkis*, by contrast, who had identified with France and fought against the FLN during the Algerian War, were not treated and recognized as fully French because they spoke Arabic or Berber and practiced Islam. To this day, immigrants from North Africa in France are villainized by the political right as "Others" that threaten the West. After decolonization, in other words, Europe's borders were drawn all the more tightly, and it was immigrants fighting for recognition who widened them once again.

A. Transcontinental Concepts and Narratives of Space. **Transcontinental concepts of space** are another determining factor in negotiating the boundaries of Europe in dimensions of power politics and institutions, as well as culture. One could name here the pan-Latinism of the nineteenth century, the pan-European movement of the interwar period, or the various Eurasian projects before and after the Second World War. Algeria's association agreement with the EEC and the idea of *Eurafrique* held by its founding fathers inscribed this strand of European colonial history into the process of European institutionalization (Haleh Davis and Serres 2018; Schäfer 2012). It lives on in the idea of an *Empire latin* recalling the Roman Empire (Kojève 1945, Agamben 2013), or in the master narrative of a cultural supremacy of southwestern Europe as we still often find applied, for instance, to Italy. This narrative postulates a Latin heritage continuing through the Renaissance and Baroque, intended to contest the dominance of northwestern Europe in narratives of Enlightenment and modernity. This struggle for cultural hegemony within Europe that has been fought by narrativizing cardinal directions, confessions, and linguistic worlds ("Romania" vs. "Anglo-Germania") is of interest to entangled histories in yet another way: the revival of the idea of Latin Europe as analogous to Latin America prompts transatlantic parallels with additional symbolic significance in the context of resistance to austerity policies imposed by the North (→ thematic area Mahlke).

In all of these developments, we repeatedly find a close connection between the two main interests of our program: on the one hand, the question of Europe's positioning in the world, and on the other, the analysis of dynamics at its near and inner peripheries. It is primarily imperial legacies that provide this context and draw attention to the long-term impact of pasts that have often long faded from the collective consciousness. Strong effects of such a *longue durée* emanate from the European colonial empires, some of whose overseas territories are politically

still part of Europe today. These effects temporarily resulted in the continent's global supremacy, yet they have also led in other ways to its decentering, by producing—as in the case of Great Britain—alliances outside the European context that continue to have an impact today. In the meantime, the historiography of Europe, which had long been focused on national historiographies (Ther 2004), is increasingly expanding its investigations to include its continental empires, as well, with their asymmetries between centers and peripheries. Key questions in this research have been precisely the overlaps between the spheres of power and influence of various empires (Dickinson 2008), with recent work on “interimperiality” (Doyle 2020) offering a framework that must be considered.

B. Peripheralizations, Internal Colonialisms. While it has long been customary to regard “Europe” and “modernity” as more or less synonymous, only recently has there been a systematic examination of the fact that the European continent was and is permeated by political-cultural demarcations and asynchronicities, even within its own borders. **This recurrent recentering has been accompanied by the emergence of multiple new peripheries, which have often been interpreted in the context of post-mid-twentieth decolonization as forms of internal colonialism** (Borutta 2014). Such a perspective attempts to counter older grand narratives of Europe that are bound teleologically to a (Western) European norm with a model that focuses on the multifaceted dynamics between centers. It aims, in other words, to study “islands” of European modernity along with the peripheries that are assigned to these centers and regarded as backward in their development (Dejung and Lengwiler 2016). This view dissolves the uniformity often attributed to Europe, especially in the context of postcolonialism, revealing instead a construct riddled with asymmetries at all scales. On a large scale, we see this since the eighteenth century in the perceived cultural divide between the hegemonic northwest and the east (Wolff 1994), southeast, and south; on a smaller scale, it has been asserted of the civilizing missions claimed by central state actors in their near provinces (→ thematic area Koschorke). Topics of a potentially colonialist Othering come into play, for instance, when highly educated inhabitants of Western European metropolises travel no farther than the agrarian hinterland of the cities where they live or to their lower-class neighborhoods (“urban jungle”) (Schaller and Stuck 2016). This offers reason to even more intensively examine the interplay between internal colonizations on European soil and non-European colonial history. What is striking is how flexibly the corresponding topics can be adapted to their respective target areas, in all their ambivalence: through the depiction of supposedly backward regions, peoples, and social milieus as “barbaric” on the one hand, and their romanticization as more “original,” “closer to nature,” and “communal” on the other. A model case in this regard is the Balkan region as reflected in its history as an object of cultural-geographical myth-making (Herder, Jacob Grimm), travelogues (such as Hermann Bahr's *Dalmatinische Reise*, or Dalmatian journey, 1909), and poetry (prominent examples are Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 1812; Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897).

Although such procedures for Othering were less radical in the near peripheries of Europe than in the overseas colonies, where racism had played a more explicit role since the nineteenth century, the exclusions they generated left deep traces in the peripheral regions of the European continent, as well. Those who have been the object of this Othering have frequently reacted with identity practices that differ substantially from the dominant traditions of what has often been regarded as “core Europe” (→ thematic area Beyer). Even today, the fault lines within the EU and in its area of influence are partly a consequence of the long-term effects of such historically entrenched differentials. Analyzing regional path dependencies of this kind can thus explain some of the centrifugal tendencies that run counter to the project of European unification.

This is where studies in comparative political science can come to bear in their recent, increased interest in the historical aftereffects of past state institutions (→ thematic area Zuber). An analysis of how “center” or “periphery” has been applied to Europe's southeastern edges is a good example of such research. Looking at “historical legacies” allows us to examine the impact of imperial, colonial, and communist regimes on contemporary political and social phenomena (see Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2017; Simpser et al. 2018). Claims for systematic *effects* of past institutions are empirically supported by the fact that they can be confirmed by comparisons at the subnational level—for example, between eastern and western Ukraine, between former

Prussian and former Russian regions of Poland, or along the former military border between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires in present-day Croatia. The greater challenge lies in theorizing and empirically identifying *causal mechanisms* that can explain *why* and *how* past state institutions can continue to have an impact today despite the extensive political and social transformation brought about by communism (Ekiert and Ziblatt 2013). The void that has hitherto characterized the analysis of historical aftereffects developed by political scientists can be filled by the concept of narrative. In this context, our research group will pay special attention to the previously underexposed role of political and cultural elites who are actively involved in (re)constructing imperial pasts and shaping identity-forming narratives of European belonging (e.g., via reference to the Habsburg legacy). Such narratives contribute to the fashioning of collective memory and connect past formations of rule with the present. On a pragmatic level, especially favorable opportunities for exemplary research projects are to be found in the historical border region between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires. Doctoral students working on this region will be able to draw on Christina Zuber's research experience, language skills, and contacts in her role as dissertation advisor (Zuber 2013, cooperation with the Faculty of Political Science, University of Sarajevo).

C. Entangled Histories of the Twentieth Century. Understood as a dynamic relationship existing across multiple scales, the conceptual pair of “centers” and “peripheries” also reveals exchange relations between parts of Europe and the non-European world that do not run along the axis of European hegemony, but through semantics and practices of social rebellion, separatism, anticolonial struggles for independence, and other liberation movements. This is the starting point for contemporary historical research on interimperial and decolonial entanglements in Europe in the twentieth century (→ thematic area Reichardt). A prominent example of this kind is the influence that Antonio Gramsci's teachings, which were strongly influenced by the plight of the rural population of Sardinia, have had on India and Latin America. Conversely, the radicalized sections of the student movement during the 1970s modeled themselves ideologically and stylistically on the South American guerrilla struggle. This also had an impact on the New Left's theory production (see Reichardt 2019b; Erdur 2018), which modified its Marxist premises by reformulating them in the language of cultural studies, allowing universalist concepts to become less prominent compared to an emphatically conceived notion of identity founded in difference (Young 1990; Appiah 2018). One research lacuna here remains the extent to which these movements adopted and reworked impulses from anticolonial, liberational forms of nationalism. Leftist anti-imperialist terminology was also used by the emerging “New Right” in the 1970s and 1980s (Feit 1987; Weiß 2017), where it employed references to anticolonial liberation movements to fight, for example, for the emancipation of the German “Volk” from the perceived cultural imperialism of the United States (Wagner 2017). Since the 1980s, corresponding figures of thought and practices (antiestablishment tendencies, organization as a movement, provocation) have played a significant role in Europe's highly networked international right-wing populist movements (Reichardt 2020).

Conversely, the entangled history of fascism—which appears to be easily adapted in a wide variety of contexts, including left-wing revolutionary movements (Peronism), precisely because of its militantly antiuniversalist thrust—must also be included in the overall picture. In the 1930s and 1940s, the fascist empires of Europe expanded to control non-European territory and—compared to the classical empires of Britain and France—developed their own imperial conceptions of what Carl Schmitt called *Großräume*, or large spatial spheres, together with global zones of influence. These events opened relations of exchange with fascist peripheries in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, the Far East, and Latin America. The way in which global interrelations and forms of appropriation reshaped the original forms of European fascism and its core countries Italy and Germany must also be addressed by future research (see Reichardt 2017, 2019a, 2019b, 2021 et al., Motadel 2014).

Hypothetical examples of dissertation topics and postdoctoral projects

Literary studies: *Ulm–Santo Domingo–Bogotá: Local Entangled Histories in the Context of the Welser Colony of Venezuela; Orientalism in the German Baroque; Eternal Peace or War Capitalism? Constructions of Self and Perceptions by Others in the Literature of the*

Enlightenment Period; Overseas Nativism: On the Alliance of Heimatliteratur and Colonial Seizure of Land in the German Empire; Agrarian Romanticism in Twentieth-Century Anticolonialism

History: *“Tiers-Mondisme” in Sardinia; Naples as a Laboratory of Porous Modernity; Gramsci in India; French and Born in Algeria: Between Colonialism and Decolonization; Gabriel Audisio’s Multicultural Mediterraneanism; Political and Everyday Histories of Anticolonial Brokers from Asia and the Near and Middle East in Berlin and Rome during the 1940s; The Strait of Gibraltar as a Eurasian Bridge to Africa; Ethnopluralism and Liberation Nationalism in the New Right of Germany and Europe; Provincializing France: Globalization Discourses in Modern France; This is Africa! Spatial and Temporal Localizations of the Mezzogiorno, 1860–1960; Environmental Histories of Mass Tourism on the Mediterranean since the 1960s; Berlin, Rome, Tokyo: The Role of Metropolises in Interwar Right-Wing Intellectualism; Border Regimes and Border Zones: On the Topics of Peripheral “States of Exception”*

Political science, ethnology, law: *Where Does Europe End? The Political Construction of Center and Periphery in Southeastern Europe; “Habsburgs” vs. “Ottomans”: The Political Mobilization of the Imperial Past in Southeastern Europe; Historical Institutions and State Trust in Southeastern Europe: From Causal Effects to Mechanisms; Managing Autonomy: Cultural “Image Cultivation” of European Minority Regions between Brussels and the Provinces; The Association Agreements of the European Union with the ACP States between Regional Integration and Postnational Entanglement*

2.1.3.4 Narratives of Self and Other

Ever since there has been talk of “Europe,” its identity and mythological foundations have been fragile. The incorporation of antiquity and the claim to solely represent Christianity brought no harmony but instead generated permanent aporias, not least within the different European regions (e.g., Rome and Moscow). The story of the king’s daughter from Asia Minor carried off to Crete—whose real historical background has been formed by trade, violence, and migration between the coasts of the Mediterranean—has hardly suited as the founding narrative for a territorially defined. Given the long history of discord between so many European powers, “Europe” has rarely been more than a cry of complaint or an idealized memory. The dilemma between power politics and a call for European identity has remained characteristic to this day. To some, Europe appears as a “subject without narrative” (Dufour 2006). Others appeal to what Europeans share without being sure of just what it is or what history it is based on. In all of this, it remains debatable whether there is any cultural heritage that can be taken as distinctive for Europe, or what might be offered to allay such doubts (→ thematic area Vogel). In day-to-day politics, at any rate, one hears repeated complaints that there is a lack of a coherent European narrative to organize political solidarity and provide an affective basis for the formation of a European community. Indeed, **as a space offering a common point of reference Europe is only loosely connected to experience. At best, it functions as a selective rubric for isolated experiences and remains strangely devoid of empirical content** (→ thematic area Koschorke). Fictional narratives, especially, with their own evocations of “experientiality” (Fludernik 1996), can serve here as an effective complement. There are many reasons to believe that narrative’s plurality of perspectives is what makes “Europe” possible as a space of identification in the first place. It is worth analyzing more closely how the fictional individual experiences of the protagonists in these narratives are brought together to form a sequence and made part of “Europe” as a cultural frame that allows their narrative synthesis (though never fully narrated) to imbue a construct of Europe found only in symbolic form with experience, thereby also allowing “Europe” to appear plausible as a space of commonalities and shared convictions. This makes it all the more important to examine the question of what shape the continent takes in non-European historiographies of Europe and their geopolitical scenarios or in current postcolonial narratives of the Other.

A. Europe as a Space of Narrative Imagination. Accordingly, those who call for a narrative of Europe must engage at the same time with the possibilities and the impossibility of narrating Europe. Research in our graduate program will do so from six points of view:

1) First, it will **reconstruct the master narratives** that have shaped the dominant descriptions Europe has employed to describe itself, along with their long-term cultural impact. These include the distinction between the true God and idols (i.e., Jerusalem); the distinction between civilization and barbarism (i.e., Hellas); the model of *translatio imperii* and its various historical applications (i.e., Rome); and the asymmetrical narratives of modernity that Europe has claimed in order to distinguish itself from the rest of the world, e.g., Enlightenment, secularization, along with their colonial and racist undercurrents.

2) This will be followed by a historiographical reappraisal and periodization of more recent narratives of Europe. An (incomplete) list of these includes

- the emergence and diffusion of Eurocentric concepts in the various scientific cultures since the nineteenth century (and the countermovements to these cultures)
- various narratives of crisis, decline, and renewal from the twentieth century, some of which are bound up with visions of liberal, conservative, or fascist political unification, or with various projects of cultural and political fusion (Pan-Europe, Eurafrika)
- reactions to the delegitimization of Europe in the Second World War and in the process of decolonization
- the fusion of “Europe” with the “West” in the context of the Cold War, which allowed Eurocentrism to be transferred to modernization theory, where it temporarily found a new home
- the unification project associated with the EU and the fall of the Berlin Wall, which coincides with the success of new postcolonial narratives of Europe in academia
- the provincialization of Europe under the influence of non-European voices and the rise of Asian countries, leading even to the vision of a “global Asianization” (Khanna 2019)

The extent to which such narratives determine the mapping of the cultural and political landscape is particularly evident in a comparative perspective. A paradigmatic case is found in the lines that were drawn between two blocs in the Cold War era (→ thematic area Kolář). The narratives of self used to construct a notion of one half of Europe facing the Atlantic gained a new point of reference in the concept of the “West.” Older forms of the Western narrative of hegemony, including the notion of a civilizing mission vis-à-vis the barbarian East, were reinterpreted and further developed during the Cold War, as exemplified by Hans Kohn’s dichotomy between “civic” and “ethnic” nationalism (Kohn 1982). Postwar Europe’s narrative of itself as a peaceful, nonviolent power has proved particularly stable—as a contrast to both the bellicose United States and the troubled and underdeveloped Third World. Since 1989, the European narratives of the twentieth century have continued their optimism in the progress of an Enlightened liberal order, which imagines that in European history after 1945 the use of violence gradually diminishes or disappears altogether. On the one hand, this ignores the colonial wars waged by Western Europe even after 1945. And on the other, the myth of peaceful postwar Europe perpetuates the bipolar view of the Cold War, which associates post-1945 violence exclusively with authoritarian regimes and dictatorships that appear as deviations from the Western norm. Recent research on violence—which also identifies tendencies toward internal pacification in the authoritarian regimes of the East of this period that are based in notions of law and a welfare state, even as Western societies were conversely characterized by a high degree of structural violence—means that such dichotomies must be reexamined. The critical revision of canonized concepts such as “public sphere” or “civil society” that follows from this insight challenges us to rewrite European postwar history, too, from such a perspective.

3) For literary reflections of Europe in the narrower sense, the route maps of literary heroes are significant, insofar as they make it even possible to localize the sites through

which they lead by means of place names or other references. The continent itself almost never emerges as a literary entity in such works, and national frames of reference, too, vary in their prominence, whereas regional and national markers play a considerable role. Migrant existences, one can say, are oriented in their lifeworlds predominantly to *places* rather than to larger spaces; as a sign of recognition, the signifier “European” truly begins to circulate only overseas or at the continent’s uncertain edges.

4) It would nevertheless be wrong to conclude that Europe was not a constant theme in fiction even before the process of reflection triggered by the world wars of the twentieth century. The difference is that these texts do not explore “Europe” on a continental scale, in the way that is claimed today for a “European narrative” frequently evoked to support the process of political unification. The **European imaginary tends to be expressed in widely different geographical and sociospatial scales**, covering a broad field of functionally equivalent determinations: Christian, “civilized,” “modern,” “rational,” as the pinnacle of human development in history, bourgeois, urban, etc., along with their respective antonyms. “Europe” remains implicit, though perceptible, in these discourses.

Here, more recent approaches in studies of German and other literatures have proven fruitful in heading off from the usual paths of national philology to instead situate authors and texts in a field of tension between the local and the imperial or, as in the prominent case of Kafka, “on the margins” of several empires (Kontje 2018: 184) (→ thematic areas Koschorke, Vogel). Since the area of German settlement extended across three empires and Switzerland, its more decentralized structure compared to neighboring Western European states produced a correspondingly wide range of marginalizations, some of which took on the character of internal colonialism. The Prussian administrative measures in Westphalia and other inner-German provinces in the course of the modernization measures after 1806 were themselves perceived as colonizations of territory. But the paradigmatic case is to be found later in the Polish territories, which served as a kind of laboratory for subsequent overseas colonialism. This connection is embodied in a figure such as Gustav Freytag, author of the successful novel *Soll und Haben* (1855, translated as *Debt and Credit*) and, after 1882, a committed member of the Deutscher Kolonial-Verein, or German Colonial Association (Ther 2004, also see Kopp 2005, 2012).

5) However diverse the interplay between centers and peripheries may be in Central Europe, the topology in which it is articulated evinces remarkable stability. This also means that it is characterized by a deep ambivalence. The administrative efforts motivated by Enlightenment aims to “lift up” the rural worlds left behind in the process of modernity were met early on by literary-cultural countercurrents that idealize rural life as pristine and authentic and have served to support autochthonous movements that have led, in some cases, to nation-building and political secession. This narratological analysis will thus be complemented, as a fifth perspective, by an **analysis of underlying topics**. One of the working hypotheses of our research group is that in both its politics and imaginaries, the history of Europe has been dominated by a permanent conflict that plays out not only between nations (Hirschi 2012), but also between centers and backbones of modernity, and that this conflict is expressed in two opposing grand semantic systems, each of which has achieved global scope in its own way: to wit, the Enlightenment and Romanticism.

6) Last but not least, a broad spectrum of everyday testimonies, travelogues, historical documents, and—of course—literary texts are to be examined by asking how exchange processes, in both a material and ideal sense, took place in the contact zone between Europeans and the non-European world. These are processes that can only be adequately described with the newer paradigm of translation history. Such a broad historical approach focuses our interest especially on the centuries before the modern consolidation of the idea of Europe. This is true in Europe’s distant periphery for the ways in which the conquest of South America has been represented, in particular since the Iberian arrivals were deeply influenced by Islamic and Jewish institutions, concepts, and understandings of history (Dussel 2004) (→ thematic area Mahlke). Even in cases where otherwise unrelated regions, such as Islamic Al-Andalus or the Rus in Kyiv, participate in and are bound up with developments in the Mediterranean or in Asian (albeit in

respectively different ways), this early phase is of increased interest for attempts to write alternative models of entangled history.

In the current upheaval of the Europe narrative, non-European voices must play a prominent role. Dipesh Chakrabarty's motto of "provincializing Europe" is representative for such attempts at redefinition. This perspective, which originated in the context of the Indian subcontinent, is complemented by views of Europe that have emerged in other regions of the world. It should be emphasized that **the respective experiences with Europe never arose out of contact with the continent as a whole, but only with some of its historical actors, leading to correspondingly selective attitudes.** Indian and South American images of Europe were strongly influenced by the dominant colonial power (Great Britain and Spain, respectively). In the Arab world, by contrast, despite centuries of close relations with societies of the northern Mediterranean, the current engagement with Europe is unfolding within the framework of a more general concept of Occidentalism, which is strongly influenced by more recent experiences with the United States.

A separate focus within the spectrum of our research is narratives of self and other between "Europe" and societies shaped by Islam (→ thematic area König). The fact that the exclusion of Islam from European history continues to influence the formation of identities and is highly charged with affect hardly needs to be emphasized in view of movements such as PEGIDA. Less well known, however, are Muslim views of Europe, which were assumed until the nineteenth century to have been characterized by ignorance and to have changed only under the pressure of European modernity (Lewis 1957, 2001). Spurred by the power of Islamic fundamentalism to shape depictions in the media, attention has been focused, especially recently, on highlighting alterity ("Othering"), instead of considering simultaneously existing entanglements, implicit perceptions, or even cases where constructions of alterity are completely absent (Hermes 2012; König 2015). Instead, we will examine the coexistence of a variety of conceptions of Europe in the Arab world—including in social milieus whose media presence and visibility are less striking. Our joint research matrix elucidated under 3.1.3 thus introduces **religion as one aspect** that is particularly important in this context. Such a consideration is indispensable in view of debates on the "Judeo-Christian roots of Europe," or on "Leitkultur," migration and integration, etc.

B. Between Fascination and a Diagnosis of Crisis. A basic feature of Europe's self-positioning in world affairs is the way it oscillates between opposition and fascination. Even in sixteenth-century texts about Turkey or the Americas, attributions of "strange," "foreign," or "curieuse" function as a cartography of the self. They thus reveal a Eurocentric longing for an assimilation of the Other, in the same form that we also find in the superficially self-critical fantasies of India produced by the Romantics, such as in Friedrich Schlegel's *Reise nach Frankreich* (Journey to France, 1803), which dreams of a synthesis of the "iron power of the North" and the "incandescent ember of the Orient." At the same time, early writings on Europe show how understandings of inside and outside, with their power to set definitions of self and Other, have always been endowed with an impulse of aggression. In the fifteenth century, this impulse made use of the religious difference between Christendom and Islam. Yet after the religious schism of the Reformation, *christianitas* increasingly ceased to serve as the object of such hopes. Instead, the focus shifted to the concept of Europe, as a notion that had remained discursively unoccupied (Oschema 2013; Asbach 2011; Schmale 2000). The fact that reflections on Europe and appeals to its unity were regularly accompanied by a belligerence toward the outside world also casts an ambivalent light on the international systems from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that were intended to establish and preserve peace. Even the process of European unification following the catastrophe of the Second World War appears ambivalent in this light. At the same time that the first treaties for peace on the war-torn continent were being signed, bloody wars were being waged by the European colonial powers beyond Europe in Indochina, Kenya, and Algeria. The colonial crimes committed in this context have so far received comparatively little attention in Europe (Schulze-Engler 2013).

We would nevertheless be painting a false picture if we were to see the colonial period as characterized solely by Eurocentric triumphalism. The recurring idea that Europe reaches a historical twilight, and that the loss of its cultural hegemony necessarily follows from the loss of its political-economic power, can be found as early as Montaigne, and then increasingly in the nineteenth century. In this respect, the decentering of Europe must also be historicized. The geographer Carl Ritter noted in 1850: "When America was discovered, the European Occident became an Orient" (Peschel 1877). Some time earlier, in his study of democracy in America, Tocqueville announced an age defined by the United States and Russia. And even Hegel, who gave Eurocentrism a world-historical dimension while also borussifying it to a certain extent, believed he saw a new era dawning in these two powers in the West and the East that he was not able to integrate into his system of historical philosophy. These are only a few indications that **the self-reflection of (European) modernity certainly has a tradition of its own that questions the central position of Europe, and that this tradition can almost be considered a latent cultural routine.** It became manifest during the years of the First World War, which saw an intensive reception of literature critical of Europe written by non-European scholars, such as Rabindranath Tagore from India or Ku Hung-Ming from China. Again and again, we see in the will to unify Europe a pain or anguish at its birth, beginning with Erasmus of Rotterdam's *Lament of Peace* from 1517, and continuing through the many images produced during the Thirty Years' War or Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, which can be considered one of the few truly "European" novels. It is not only in the founding history of the EU that Europe is evoked and conjured into existence out of awareness of its vulnerability and an impulse of critical self-examination. Even during the phases of most aggressive European expansion, there are many writers who voice self-accusation and self-doubt, in a line that stretches from Montaigne via Heine's "European fatigue" to Nietzsche and Spengler. One peculiar consequence is that Europe always also hears, in the critiques of itself expressed by non-European intellectuals, an echo of its own self-questioning, just as European modernity is characterized in general by a deep ambivalence towards itself.

Hypothetical examples of dissertation topics and postdoctoral projects

Literary studies: *El Dorado and Cannibals: On the Coevolution of Two Myths; The Transcultural Family Novel: Narrating Postcolonial Europe in a Multipolar World; "Indianized, Turkised, Italianized, Frenchized and Germanized Englishmen": Early Modern Constructions of Europe between National Stereotypes and Transcultural Hybridity; The Drama of the European: Stagings of a Void in European Drama and Theater; Nothing beyond Europe: J. G. Schnabel's Insel Felsenburg (Felsenburg Island) as a Political Allegory in the Context of European Robinsonades; Europamüde, Amerikamüde: Literary and Other Public Writing after the 1848 Revolution; The Sick Continent: On the Virulence of the Contagion as a Metaphor in European Discourse from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century; Erased Origins: Arab, West African, and Caribbean Objects in Spanish Literature of the Siglo de Oro; Exotic Perspectivism: Techniques of European Self-Alienation in Travelogues, Utopias, and Satires of the Early Modern Period; Tabula rasa: Historical-Philosophical Constructions of the Russian Empire from Olearius to Herder; Hegel or Spengler? Linear and Cyclical Models of Narration in Europe's Historical-Philosophical Self-Understanding*

History: *A Cultural Border between Europe and the (Arabic-)Islamic World? Historical Constructions of Europe in Arab Historiography; The West, Europe, and European Nation-States in the Arab Media Landscape of the Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries; Conflicting Cultures of Memory: The Crusades and the Reconquista in Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Century European and Arab Historiography; Battlefields, Bloodlands, Balkan States: Mental Mappings of Central Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*

Political science, ethnology, law: *Region, Nation, Continent: Concepts of Identity in Multilevel Systems in Transcontinental Comparison; "One Tyrol": Biographical Constructions of Self and Perceptions by Others in the Regions of Europe's Cultural Minorities; Orbán as the Savior of the Occident? Right-Wing Populism and the Narrative of the Decline of Europe*

2.1.3.5 Integration and Diversity

The cultural efforts to reconceptualize Europe cannot be considered apart from a large number of political, legal, and institutional implications. First among these is the disputed validity of national frames of reference for social organization in a world that is increasingly globally interconnected. In one sense, the European Union represents an experiment on a live patient that is provoking skeptical reactions, not least from within the EU, and offering a target for defensive ethnonationalist reflexes, even as it serves as a model for many other parts of the world. The establishment of such associations of states poses questions of citizenship or denizenship (including statelessness as their flip side), institutional efficiency, and democratic legitimacy, which in turn are closely related to the problem of how social belonging and cultural familiarity can be created or stabilized beyond national framings. Both the physical and the imagined boundaries drawn here are subject to permanent negotiations and sometimes massive conflicts. Problems that are acute and widespread at the national level are multiplied when supranational entities are given institutional form. This applies to the demarcation of individual peoples and states as well as to migration policy, border policies, and Europe's notoriously fuzzy borders themselves, whose changing contours variously include or exclude the British Isles, Russia, Ukraine, the Balkans, or Turkey as "belonging" to Europe. As an entity with malleable external frontiers, Europe has also been exposed during the period of its hegemony to strong influences from its peripheral zones disseminated through the mobility of people, things, and ideas (→ thematic areas Borutta, Thym). The rise of the United States furthermore gave urgency to the question of how "Europe" and "the West" are related. In the course of the twentieth century, the "West" became globalized as it was detached from Europe. The EU, by contrast, is currently experiencing a shift of emphasis towards the East, following its recent enlargement. This development is having profound consequences for the project of European unity, which until now has been heavily dominated by Western European countries and their politics.

Recent years have shown that the unification of Europe is an experiment with high political and economic risks. From a cultural studies perspective, the most relevant questions concern the forces driving this process of integration and those working against it. Do these dynamics consist of an interplay of specific interests that can be exhaustively analyzed from a cost/benefit perspective, or can we identify a substrate of unifying convictions despite the many other tensions we find? To what extent is the European Union still animated by the historical insight that in its absence, otherwise self-destructive energies would once again come to dominate Europe? How do the epochal rupture of 1989 and the EU's eastward enlargement fit into European processes of finding a common identity? What is the relationship between very different historical trajectories, cultures of memory, and mentalities, along with the resulting expectations and fears about Europe (→ thematic area Kolář)? How momentous is the argument, heard more and more frequently after 1989, that medium-sized nation-states would necessarily lose out to larger power blocs in a globalized world? Or can we say that a sense of cultural belonging has in fact developed with a measurable influence on the acceptance of political decisions, especially when it becomes necessary to give up some national sovereignty or to redistribute financial resources among member states? Where do the fault lines run between tendencies toward opening or closing up, both within and beyond national and European borders? What opportunities and resources does a post-national Europe offer for constructions of identity, including for groups of non-European origin? How do European self-descriptions, which are often articulated in normative terms, respond to the epochal geopolitical shift we see following from the loss of Western dominance, or to the rise of new actors keen to exercise their growing power? In short, what role do cultural factors play in a process that has presented itself over long periods of time as an integration from above, and whose progression has produced nodes of interdependency with distinct dynamics of their own that follow from the path dependencies of subsequent decisions?

A. Formalization and Synthesis. In comparative terms, however, **the relative lack of any symbolic integration that might reach an entire population is not unique to Europe as a loose confederation of states. Rather, it represents a feature of multiethnic and transnational entities in general** and is characteristic above all of empires, whose unity derives far more from elite communication and administrative apparatuses than popular acclaim

or national/ethnic identity. For this reason, the achievements and ultimate failure of the Habsburg multiethnic empire has long provided a comparative horizon for studies of the European Union (→ topic area Vogel). Earlier research predominantly treated the pluralism of the Habsburg state as inherently crisis-ridden, most often describing it from the perspective of its future demise, but more recent studies accentuate the stability of a political and cultural structure that was maintained over centuries (Judson 2016, Fillafer 2018). In this context, the bureaucratic-administrative achievements of the multiethnic Habsburg monarchy have gained new appreciation. The role that administration, political science, law, and linguistics played in bringing together a multiethnic region covering large parts of Europe, by achieving territorial unity while respecting cultural diversity, is becoming increasingly apparent (Stourzh 1985; Kann 1975; Heindl 1998). This research prompts us to ask about the concrete processes, rules for language use, procedures, and formalities that made it possible to politically administer an entity as heterogeneous as the Habsburg Empire, and to regulate its cultural grammar. What was crucial for the Habsburg Empire was to define and present its national elements in a way that allowed for identical aspects or similarities to emerge more saliently than differences. **Reexamining Habsburg traditions is relevant for studies of Europe inasmuch as parallels in the political constitution of both entail similar functional necessities that can be called aesthetic in the broadest sense.**

Attention, then, must be paid to the scope and limits of processes through which formalization is imposed upon a vast and heterogeneous territory. Seen from such a perspective, the **unity and cohesion of the multiethnic Habsburg Empire appear to result from efforts to find form that also involve aesthetics, art, and literature.** The aim of our research here is accordingly to counteract the division of centers and peripheries and thus the conceptualization of political space in asymmetrical terms, as discussed in 3.1.3.3. We will focus on the formally aesthetic side to the production of political unity as possibly offering a paradigmatic case for understanding current processes of integration within the EU.

This presupposes a broad notion of formalization: formalization here means standardizing linguistic, administrative, legal, mathematical, geometric, grammatical, and aesthetic procedures that aim to abstract from local conditions in order to produce structures that are location-independent, rules-based, and reproducible. By examining the Habsburg Empire and applying the insight gained to an analysis of the EU, the group will elucidate the ways in which such formalizations have led to integration, while also asking in particular about their aesthetic translations. The scope of their effectiveness comes from their power to abstract from contents so as to be applicable to any context and situation. This desire for a “rule of form” radiates out into a wide range of fields—legal theory (Hans Kelsen), the fascination for artificial languages that are independent of specific cultures (such as Esperanto), or for logical formalizations from Herbartianism to the Vienna School. This question also opens a bridge between the work of our graduate program and the research group “Traveling Forms.”

B. Agonal Unity. There is a crucial difference to the EU, however. The technical-administrative practices of unification in the Habsburg monarchy were supported and “covered” by a symbolic integration via the crown. The European Union offers nothing of this sort. For the foreseeable future, then, the political discussion about Europe will be shaped by competing grand narratives: on the one hand, the promise of unification that today still largely remains a project being advanced by administrative, economic, and intellectual elites; and on the other, the achievement of European standards of social and governmental inclusion, asserted within national frameworks and spaces of resonance that are themselves increasingly displaying populist-xenophobic dimensions.

Against this background, what is needed are **theoretically informed narratives that no longer imagine the European project as a single, consensual endeavor (*E pluribus unum*)** but instead make it possible to envision Europe as an agonistic construct. Even at the supranational level, conflicts can represent effective “forms of sociation,” to use Georg Simmel’s term, that may be examined in order to elucidate the institutionalization of Europe not in teleological terms, i.e., as necessarily developing toward a federal state, but as multidirectional and open, as negotiable and mobile. Such an approach is not meant to simply ignore the fact that secessionist tendencies such as Brexit, or the border closures that have come with the

pandemic, are detrimental to the European project. But it can shed light on the surprising discovery that the history of thinking Europe has been as much shaped by communication rooted in conflict as it has by utopias of European unity. Both the genesis of European states (Hirschi 2012) and the history of the European imaginary in an overarching sense suggest **that rivalry and dissent have themselves had considerable effects in the process of creating a European community.** In any case, it seems worth examining this interplay of agonality and integration in the *longue durée* of Europe's image and media history. One might consider, for example, the history of the continent's "sick body" from Andrés Laguna's *Europa heautentimorumene* (1543) to Ivan Goll's *Eurokokke* (1927). In this motif, the narrative of "crisis," originally a medical *terminus technicus*, unfolds in a sequence of images following the logic of latency and symptom—and of the crisis, regression, and disappearance of the European disease—with repercussions that extend into our current political discourse (Leonhardt 2014).

Both theoretically and historically, what is at stake here is nothing less than the question of how political collectives are formed, what vision of the future holds them together or causes them to drift apart, and whom they exclude. This question, too, can be turned toward the past to investigate "precursor processes" such as the emergence of imperial and state entities on European territory. One might ask here, for instance, about the multiethnic state of Austria-Hungary or about the paradigmatic implications of Germany's unification in the nineteenth century in its various stages (the Rhine Confederation, the German Customs Union, etc.) (Langewiesche 2000, 2008). The proposal to reconceptualize the EU as a "neomedieval empire" follows a similar track—finding an earlier model for its polity in the medieval constitution of the Holy Roman Empire before the Thirty Years' War, i.e., before the emergence of the "Westphalian state" (Zielonka 2007), as complex "system of overlapping authority and multiple loyalties" (Bull, in Zielonka, 162). At the same time, the EU can be compared to other models of federal or confederational unity that have sometimes been held up as viable options for the European project but ultimately failed to be effective. Here, one should mention comparative studies of the failure to unify Latin America, which was what Simón Bolívar sought to do after national independence, or the Pan-Arab movement, which wanted to provide a socialist counterpoint to Europe.

Likewise, to think in yet another direction, we must not **disregard resistant elements that have not found a place in the historiographies** of nation-state formation, but have become more apparent over time or at a later point as buffers against the concentration of power in nation-states and the associated formation of elites. This is an area where projects in political and legal anthropology within the research group can bear fruit (→ thematic area Beyer). Examining the autonomous regions of Europe, these projects retrace **transnational interconnections in contrast to a supposed sovereignty of European nation-states that is often postulated but rarely questioned.** This research needs to examine how Europe's inner peripheries relate to the architectonics of the European Union and what legal means they employ to distance themselves from the national center, precisely through European mechanisms. In concrete terms, this is linked to the question of how the "European regions" as a form of cooperation relate to the movements for autonomy found in some marginalized European areas, such as in the Basque Country, Catalonia, and South Tyrol, with their supporting social movements. Focus will be placed primarily on regional actors and the connection between the performative expression of cultural difference, transnational identity, and strategic positioning in the field of tension between the nation-state and Europe.

Such questions in turn provide impulses for research in literary studies. From a comparative point of view, little work has been done on the function of regional dialects in resisting the dominance of standard European languages in national contexts. The use of regional dialects in literature can indicate an attachment to more local identities even as this discourse is thereby appropriated for nationalist purposes; at the same time, regional dialects can be a symptom of the marginalization and social isolation of certain population groups. We must also consider cultural manifestations of a particular form of communal liberalism that can be traced far back into the past, retains an antistatist dimension, and belongs in this regard to the prehistory of more recent communitarian movements. The same holds true for a "provincial" poetics that characterizes much of the literary production of German realism, with its decidedly regional

focus and eschewal of national capitals, as it does for the role of Southeastern Europe, which has been figured since the nineteenth century as “half-Asia” (Karl Emil Franzos, 1914) (→ thematic areas Koschorke and Vogel), and, more recently, for new understandings of how Central Europe generated visions of political utopia under the weight of the Soviet occupation (Milan Kundera, György Konrád, Vaclav Havel, Andrzej Stasiuk, Jurij Andruchowysch, and others). Such aspects are relevant for a history of the European imaginary to the extent that the weakening of control at a national level benefits not only central EU institutions, but also a resurgence of subordinate units; this can produce alliances between European and regional identifications.

In these cases, the project of “provincializing” Europe gains another meaning: it points to the fault lines that have always run through the continent, and continue to do so, at many different levels. Seen thus, Europe presents a more fragile picture, with multiple internal peripheralizations and asymmetries, than we find painted by conventional critiques of Eurocentrism, which often take a retrospective view that apprehends the continent as a monolithic bloc. To a certain degree, this makes Europe appear more like the formerly colonial world, allowing us to employ the same ethnographic procedures in studying it that are used in other postcolonial contexts. In this respect, our graduate program is committed to following calls that have been recently made to take Europe itself, in the multipolar world of the twenty-first century, as an object of postcolonial study (Schulze-Engler 2013, Patel 2021).

C. Drawing Boundaries: Inclusions and Exclusions. The contribution of legal studies to our joint teaching and research agenda (→ thematic area Thym), which highlights the functional necessities of state and European institutions and thus refocuses attention on integration in its interrelation with diversity, opens up a productive tension with the strongly decentered perspective of cultural studies. Legal scholarship here is responding to an inverse dynamic in which the centripetal effects of Europe’s development are directed from within via the law.

One focus of such research is directed at Europe’s external borders. Europe’s border policies mark a stark contrast to the continental regime of freedom within the Schengen area—a discrepancy that is symbolically heightened by the border protection agency Frontex and the refugee holding camps on the Greek islands. The perspective of migration law paradigmatically shows that the freedoms enjoyed within Europe are historically shaped by an internal dynamic that is not necessarily propitious to progressively opening up the continent’s borders. The EU may present itself as a global peace project committed to human rights that finds itself **imitated worldwide** as a **laboratory for the supranational fusion of national sovereignty** (for example, in Mercosur, ECOWAS, or ASEAN). Such portrayals, however, neglect the fact **that today’s EU** has always been co-constituted by an “outside” toward which it has been forced to relate, and from which it has demarcated itself—and not only recently in the wake of the so-called refugee crisis. The creation of “European citizenship” for those within the Union and separate rules for “third-country nationals” for those coming from without were two sides of the same coin (Groenendijk 2011), which some have pointedly described as “European apartheid” (Balibar 2004). To this day, the treaty objectives and secondary legislation for intra-European “mobility” and extra-European “migration” are fundamentally different (Thym 2016).

One extreme effect of this distinction is the production of statelessness (→ thematic area Beyer). Stateless persons come to Europe not only as migrants or refugees: they are also the direct product of European policies regarding nationality—or the result of their failure. The appropriate metaphor is not that of a periphery or boundary, but of a gap. This gap represents the unresolved question of how the legal sphere of European states relates to individuals to whom international law cannot or does not grant statehood—approximately half a million in Europe. By placing individuals in the state of exception that follows from statelessness (Arendt 2017; Agamben 2002), national governments reassure themselves and their citizens of a normality whose outside entails abject forms of existence. For stateless individuals, conversely, this gap becomes an incremental part of their own identity claims when they describe themselves as nonexistent, invisible, or even as “nowhere people.”

Nonetheless, despite all the reasons that exist for European self-critique, we cannot overlook the paradoxical fact that for long periods of time the process of European unification received much more sympathy, even admiration, from outside than from within. Even as the fading

memory of the twentieth century's historical catastrophes prompted some (Western) European intellectuals to grow rather cool, or at least unenthusiastic, about the idea of a united Europe, the prospect of belonging to the EU—and enjoying rule of law, freedom of expression, democracy, a functioning civil society, and the protection of a welfare state—shined all the more brightly in the EU's neighboring states and far beyond. This promise was not infrequently associated with a burning desire for cultural participation or for recognition from members of the EU. The reasons for the growing disillusionment of recent years need to be examined separately. Several layers of time seem to overlap here. European unification has the character of a postnational and postheroic enterprise (→ thematic field Kolář), especially since it was not launched by war but in response to devastating wars. Yet in Central and Eastern Europe it finds itself confronted with ever more vigorous heroic nationalisms that are themselves products of the post-Soviet situation, and which are often described as postcolonial (Holmes and Krastev 2020, Kołodziejczyk 2014).

It no longer seems tenable to take this as the basis for something like a postimperial European mission (Leonard 2005), especially since opinions differ about the character of Europe as a regional empire. Our graduate program must nevertheless not lose sight of the power exerted by fascination for and the future potential of the “European dream” (Assmann 2018), even as we bear in mind the many reasons for critical self-reflection that have come from the engagement with European history. Finally, this is the context that we would like to take for introducing our own understanding of ourselves, in an institutional sense, into this discussion. We hope that our research will provide answers to the question of what role research in the social sciences and in cultural studies can play in a post-European world as forms of knowledge that are themselves anchored in European traditions.

Hypothetical examples of dissertation topics and postdoctoral projects

Literary studies: *Latin Europe as a Screen for Projections from Latin America; Origin Narratives of Harmonious Coexistence; Post-Brexit Narratives: Renegotiations of Europe in Current British Fiction; Theatre and Migration: British Responses to the European Migrant Crisis; The Swabian Housewife, the Girl in a Headscarf, and the Muslim Man: Stereotypes in Contested Political Narratives; Herbart and the Austrian Literary Tradition; Bureaucratic Novels in Multinational Empires*

History: *The Balearic Islands between Nationalism and Regionalism; The Reinvention of Europe after the First World War: Paneuropa, Atlantropa, Eurafica; Latin Empire: Genealogy of an idea; “La plus grande France”: Global Concepts of France; Stories of Peaceful Europe and Its Civilizing Mission; Transformations of War Memories after 1945 in East and West*

Political science, ethnology, law: *Multilingualism and State-Building: On the Resilience of the Parallelism between the Habsburg Empire and Europe; Département Pays Basque? An Ethnographic Study of the EU's Transnational Programme on Peace and Its Local Implementation; Coordinated Independence Activism between Conservative and Alternative Movements, with a Focus on South Tyrol and Catalonia; “Free Occitania”: Cultural Regionalism in Postcolonial France; Distinctions, Overlaps, and Commonalities in the Legal Status of EU Citizens and Third Country Nationals in the Case Law of the European Court of Justice; Stratified Regimes of Free Movement at the External Borders of the EU; The Code of Values in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union: Between Normative Content and Nonbinding Postulate; Pan-Celtic Alliances in the Twenty-First Century: Anachronisms against the State; Visa Exemptions and Visa Requirement for Certain Countries of Origin as Discrimination Based on Race, with a Consideration of Postcolonial Experience; Stateless in Europe: Activism and Advocacy by Stateless Persons for Stateless Persons*

2.1.4 On the Question of Normativity

It is not only the emotional charge carried by the debates on Europe and their impact on current politics that raises the question of how the members of the research group are normatively positioned. We have agreed to keep our analyses as free as possible from normative preconceptions, regardless of the personal commitment of the participants. We consider it a

descriptive statement, not a normative one, to say that Europe is becoming more “provincial,” that European understandings of history and standards of value are becoming relative in a global frame, and that this also entails a changed view of past centuries. Considered from this perspective, then, our primary concern must be to focus our analysis on the normative stakes that are bound up in so many ways with Europe’s history and present. This also means **retracing the basic tensions, with their various intensities, that characterize the issues charged in our research matrix.** At root, such an endeavor concerns the extent to which ideas and ideals derived from European traditions can still be asserted, or asserted in a new way, without thereby marginalizing the colonial crimes and genocides that have been committed by Europeans. This stance furthermore provokes a host of additional questions. It prompts us to ask about the position of universal rights and norms in the context of an epistemic “pluriverse” (Mignolo 2012; Fischer-Lescano 2020) in which European philosophy and ideals of humanity are no longer privileged; about the ambivalent position of the “Western” canon as both an expression of White dominance and a cross-cultural intellectual heritage that has been rendered globally productive; about the connections between the decolonial questioning of the monopoly position that Western rationality and science have enjoyed and the progressive tendencies toward fragmentation within European cultures of knowledge. One of our aims in educating doctoral scholars will thus be to encourage reflection on the impact of our own stance. Against this background, we ask how it is possible to productively examine the relation between the objectives of political and cultural decolonization, on the one hand, and European integration and modes of inner-EU solidarity, on the other? What conflicts arise when critiques of Eurocentrism and anticolonialism are coopted into the arsenal of illiberal-authoritarian regimes? The respective state of current discussions in each discipline, of course, also plays a role here. The spectrum ranges from anthropology, where some are asking whether European scholars should be allowed to participate in the discourse of decolonization at all (Jobson 2020), to legal studies, where many regard the European-style rule of law that emerged from the Enlightenment as a normatively defensible good both inside and outside of Europe.

3 Acquiring Qualifications in the Graduate program

The dissertations and postdoctoral projects funded by our graduate program are expected to fit into the thematic-methodological framework outlined in 2.1.3 and to make relevant contributions to the aim of reconceptualizing Europe. Further prerequisites for accepting doctoral students or postdocs are a) that the submitted projects are sufficiently defined and can be completed within the funding period, and b) that qualified advisors are available to supervise the project from members of our group, participating colleagues in Konstanz, and our cooperation partners. The research questions listed under 2.1.3 give a sense of the thematic spectrum that possible dissertation work might cover.

The program’s plan to ensure its graduates and postgraduates receive appropriate qualifications is shaped by the interdisciplinary orientation of its research profile and its object of pursuing transnational European studies in dialogue with non-European interlocutors. Based on our previous experience, we assume that doctoral and postdoctoral scholars in the group will work independently from an early stage. We want to offer the best possible conditions for this work while specifically preparing our young scholars for the requirements of the academic and nonacademic job market. During the four-year period of a fellowship in the graduate program, we will enable recipients to achieve a profile of qualifications that is competitive on the academic job market through a record of interdisciplinary research and intellectual exchange, opportunities to organize academic events and realize publication projects, robust international networks developed during research stays abroad, mentoring by external faculty, international events organized by the research group, and last but not least targeted training in key academic skills. In addition, fellowship recipients will have access to a wide range of optional coaching and counseling services to help them prepare for careers outside academia.

4 Program of Study

The Department of Literary Studies at the University of Konstanz has many years of experience with graduate programs, which will directly benefit our new program as well. For example, the design of the curriculum can draw on formats that have been tried and tested in the past. We will also continue to integrate students into research and teaching and to afford them a high level of autonomy and responsibility in organizing their own research and intellectual community. The graduate program will moreover be able to benefit from the unique institutional structure of the University of Konstanz, which is not divided into small-scale institutional units and fosters open boundaries between intellectually related departments. This favors a lived practice of everyday, informal interdisciplinary exchange that is especially impactful in training doctoral scholars. We will continue to place particular emphasis on promoting the career paths of women.

4.1 Internationalization

Recipients of fellowships are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity for a **research stay of several months in a European or non-European** country. Depending on the individual research project, this stay abroad can serve to support field research, archival research, or exchange with established experts or external advisors and mentors. It is recommended that this take place in the second year of study. The program's coordinator and the Outgoing Centre (<https://www.uni-konstanz.de/outgoing-centre/>) of the university will support students in organizing their stay.

The previous graduate programs in literary studies at Konstanz have a strong record of international networking, marked in particular by relationships with universities in the United States; regular transatlantic seminars were held on average once a year with institutional partners at the University of Chicago and Yale University (documented at www.uni-konstanz.de/transatlantik). The international focus of this new program, however, is planned to take a different form with its intention to go beyond the Euro-Atlantic academic world. The aim is to reflect the guiding idea of the eccentricity of Europe in the program of study and advising for doctoral scholars. Funding will be provided for Mercator Fellowships, i.e., guest stays of several months in Konstanz by renowned experts, as well as external mentorships, with emphasis on scholars from outside Europe. These cooperative relationships are also intended to produce a vibrant exchange of faculty in the form of visiting guests and longer-term placements of externally financed fellows in Konstanz. Our partner institutions will also have a right to nominate doctoral and postdoctoral scholars for fellowships, and these applications will be given special consideration.

4.2 Structure and Types of Academic Events

In its design, the program of study is based on the experience and best practices we have gained from the previous graduate programs in Konstanz, "The Figure of the Third" and "The Real in the Culture of Modernity." It consists of the following types of academic events:

- *Research Colloquium.* The two-hour research colloquium is held every other week and is reserved for doctoral and postdoctoral scholars to present their work, along with individual invited guests. It provides a forum in which the projects of these young researchers can be discussed by all members of the graduate program. Each doctoral and postdoctoral scholar is required to present their project in the colloquium once a semester as it progresses through its various stages of development (in the fourth year, this is required only once over the course of two semesters). From the outset, the research colloquium encourages doctoral and postdoctoral scholars in the group to present their work to a selected audience and to prepare accordingly. It thus makes a crucial contribution to the quality assurance of the graduate program: in our experience, it has proven to be an extremely useful tool to ensure that dissertations are completed in a timely fashion (and that problems are detected early on). It also establishes a shared

context for discussions among the junior scholars in the group that promotes intellectual exchange.

- *Foundational Seminar.* The foundational seminar (also two hours long) is held every other week alternating with the research colloquium. In the foundational seminar, members of the graduate program read texts together in order to engage with theoretical and methodological foundations of our research and test their concrete applicability to questions from an interdisciplinary perspective. The foundational seminar is thus the central site for the graduate program's intellectual work.
- *Core Colloquium.* The core colloquium supplements the foundational seminar. It is open to the public and serves as a platform for lectures by the professors participating in the group and by guest speakers. The program will be initially designed in consultation with the group's junior scholars, who will then entirely take over its organization. Guest speakers from outside of Konstanz will usually offer a shorter-length seminar.
- *Research Lab.* Once a semester, the core faculty of the group will meet together with doctoral and postdoctoral scholars in a closed session to discuss the main theoretical contours of the group and agree on interdisciplinary points of focus in the program of study.
- *Events with cooperation partners.* This regular core program will be supplemented by seminars and workshops with professors and possibly doctoral scholars from cooperating institutions. Similar forms of cooperation have been highly successful in recent years, especially with partners in the United States. In this new graduate program, joint events with external participants will focus on anchoring perspectives of the European peripheries and areas outside Europe in the program of study, including in the choice of invitations for guests. Plans for the first cohort include an event in Pretoria (2023) and one in St. Petersburg (2025), should this be possible by then. Graduate students will be actively involved in making these plans—first, in order to meet the needs of their individual research projects, and second, to help them develop independence and skills in organizing academic events and exchange. As another important contribution to the teaching program, we will invite Mercator Fellows to actively participate in shaping the program of study during their stay in Konstanz.
- *Key Qualifications.* In addition, students will be encouraged to attend a full-day workshop once a semester organized by the university's Academic Staff Development. The workshop is specifically tailored to the career stage of doctoral scholars and teaches key academic skills that are important for successfully completing dissertations and developing an academic profile.

The working languages in the graduate program will be English and German. Applications can be submitted in both languages. Fluency in English is assumed in all sessions for the entire group. However, it will generally be possible to present projects in German when this is the main scholarly language of the topic. Students from non-German-speaking countries will be offered free German courses by the Welcome Centre. In order to maintain the linguistic diversity of the disciplinary cultures involved, flexibility is called for here depending on specific needs. The language in which research is to be published will depend on the conventions of each respective discipline.

- *Events from the regular teaching program of the university.* Of course, students are free to take advantage of the regular courses offered by the university.

Members of the graduate school are expected to be present on site during the semester. Persons who are on research visits abroad are expected to participate in events of the graduate school via the internet.

4.3 Guests and Mercator Fellows

Both the interdisciplinary nature of our research agenda and the international orientation of the group are strong reasons for a program of visiting scholars. As a smaller university, Konstanz lacks faculty in many important areas of expertise. Here, however, we can also make use of existing regional networks (Tübingen, Basel, University of Zurich). The graduate program expressly aims to integrate doctoral scholars into international academic exchange.

Recognized scholars from Germany and abroad will be invited as part of the core colloquium (for one-day visits), and for workshops and conferences (for visits lasting several days). In order to best support the specific research interests of our doctoral and postdoctoral scholars, invitations for visiting scholars and Mercator Fellows are expected to be made on their initiative, or at least in coordination with them. All invited visiting scholars will enjoy access to the comprehensive services of the university's Welcome Center.

4.4 Further Qualification Measures

As elaborated here, the graduate program sees itself as a research institution and as such it is committed to the basic theoretical profile of research in cultural studies at the University of Konstanz. However, its purpose is not only to train young scholars. As with the earlier doctoral programs in Konstanz, "The Figure of the Third" and "The Real in the Culture of Modernity," it aims to give participants a theoretical awareness of the special conditions characterizing sites of political and social interaction and transition zones. Not only is this reflected in the current professional activities of former participants: analyzing the global dimensions within European self-conceptions and perceptions of Europe by others has implications that go far beyond academia. Similar to the master's program "Cultural Foundations of Europe," which was founded in 2008 and prepares graduates for a dissertation in cultural studies while also providing qualifications in additional professional fields within an international context, we expect that graduates will work in a broad spectrum of contexts, as well as moving on to further study to obtain additional academic qualifications. They will be well positioned to find work in international organizations and NGOs, in the field of cultural exchange and foreign cultural policy, in foundations and publishing houses, or in the media and in public relations. We can expect that employment opportunities in these fields will continue to experience strong growth in the coming years as a result of European integration and global political and cultural networking.

5 Advising and Career Development

5.1 Procedures for Announcing Fellowships and Selecting Fellows

We invite applications from students in disciplines in cultural studies and the social sciences whose previous study and possible research activities are evidence of a desire to pursue an academic career, and whose respective research projects can be productively integrated into the overall program. Moreover, in selecting fellows we will consider the balance between the participating disciplines. Applicants can be expected to have completed their previous degrees in a timely manner, with the grade of at least "gut" ("good" = the second highest grade possible). Applications should be based on a project outline of approximately ten pages. The selection of concrete areas in which future doctoral scholars can work is limited by the fact that we must be able to offer research advisors from among the faculty in Konstanz with appropriate expertise. Decisions on awarding fellowships are made by the selection committee, which includes all faculty members of our group.

5.2 Plan for Advising and Career Development

Advising in the graduate program aims to give students solid support in writing their dissertations and making timely progress while fostering their independence, in consideration of their individual circumstances. Although it should be possible for students to continue an advising relationship with an external advisor (depending on the university and field from which

they come), an (additional) advisor from among the faculty in Konstanz will be required. Doctoral students must submit a report on the status of their work to their advisors in Konstanz at least once a year and have a discussion about the state of their progress, which will be documented in a report submitted to the group's speaker. All doctoral scholars are expected to present their projects at the research colloquium twice during their first year. In accordance with the university's Code of Practice for Doctoral Researchers (<https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/research/research-career/code-of-practice-for-doctoral-researchers-at-the-university-of-konstanz/>), which sets standards for appropriate research advising, supervision agreements will be signed with all doctoral scholars.

5.3 Equal Opportunities in Research

The University of Konstanz committed itself to a family-friendly university and to gender equality in a Strategy to Promote Equal Opportunity (<https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/equalopportunities/gender-equality-in-science-and-studies/standards/equal-opportunity-plan/>) adopted in 2018, which was formulated on the basis of previously successful measures to ensure equality. As an additional focus area, the university has established the Konstanzia program to foster gender equality in career and personnel development, which includes the mentoring programs MEiN (Mentoring with Experts and international Networking) and the Konstanzia Fellowship (a mentoring program for women postdoctoral scholars). In addition to these objectives and actions, the university committed itself to a Code of Practice on Diversity to ensure an organizational and academic culture that is free of discrimination (<https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/equalopportunities/diversity/diversity-at-the-university-of-konstanz/mission-und-vision/code-of-practice-on-diversity/>).

Measures taken by the University of Konstanz to support families follow the "Family in the University" charter developed by the Best Practice Club of the same name (signed and published in 2014), which is organized in three programs targeted at specific groups: "Studying while Raising a Child," "Combining Research with Raising a Child," and "Combining a Career with Raising a Child." The compatibility of academic research and work with family responsibilities is to be ensured through a wide range of benefits or services (daycare, subsidies for research trips, etc.) and by the possibility of flexible working hours (flexible submission deadlines and requirements to be present on campus) along with targeted support (training, coaching, personal assistance). Parents on parental leave should be included in all communications and remain involved, in particular, in any decisions made by the group regarding the program of events and invitations to scholars. As in the past, flexible childcare options will continue to be offered for students with children or caregiver responsibilities in order to provide relief during conferences, block seminars, or summer schools. Grants for travel or childcare costs awarded on the basis of need are intended to make it possible to reconcile extended absences (conference visits, research trips, etc.) with family responsibilities. Junior scholars with family caregiver responsibilities should have access to targeted advising from the RGFD and discipline-specific support in career planning. In addition, these individuals will be offered mentoring by a designated faculty member from among those participating in the graduate program. Family caregiver responsibilities are always to be considered in evaluating progress and applications.

6 Academic Setting for the Graduate program

It is not only the Center of Excellence "Cultural Foundations of Social Integration," which existed from 2006 to 2019, that has set the University of Konstanz apart as a center of foundational research in cultural studies. Cultural studies is also designated as one of the five focus areas for the university as a whole. In 2020, the Center of Excellence was reorganized as a Center for Cultural Studies Research (ZKF, director: Christina Wald). The ZKF will doubtless provide a conducive setting for our program. Institutional and scientific synergies may also arise with the university's Institute for Advanced Study for Junior Researchers (<https://www.uni->

[konstanz.de/zukunftskolleg/](https://www.uni-konstanz.de/zukunftskolleg/)), which is financed by the university's excellence funding and open to projects by scholars from all disciplines. The Institute of Advanced Study is currently increasing its focus on promoting scholars from the global South through special fellowship programs (ZUKOnnect- and Herz_Fellowships).

Even more important, however, are existing institutions and initiatives at Konstanz that, taken together with our new program, are developing into a new research priority in the field of European cultural studies. Among these are the research center "Cultures of Europe in a Multipolar World" (spokespersons: Albrecht Koschorke and Kirsten Mahlke), which opened in January 2019, funded by the Dr. K.-H. Eberle Prize; and the Constance Mediterranean Platform headed by Manuel Borutta. Since 2020, the university has been working with four other universities to form the "European Universities Initiative" (EUI), an association of five European universities committed to reforms aimed to develop synergies above all in the field of university teaching. This cooperation could also be extended to doctoral training. The university's participation in the nationwide Social Cohesion Research Center (Forschungszentrum Gesellschaftlicher Zusammenhalt, <https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/research-institute-social-cohesion-risc/>) directed by legal scholar Daniel Thym, also has a strong European component. Social science expertise can be added to our research activities through cooperation with the Konstanz Center of Excellence "Politics of Inequality" (<https://www.exc.uni-konstanz.de/en/inequality/>), to which applying faculty member Christina Zuber belongs. Forums for this collaboration with local research institutions could include core colloquia or workshops.

These institutions document the high level of commitment characterizing the University of Konstanz's promotion of young scholars. They are, moreover, an expression of a cross-disciplinary research agenda focused on Europe that has become increasingly prominent in recent years. Our (post)doctoral fellows should thus have ideal conditions for their study and research. The large number of activities at the university with direct relevance to their work will ensure that members enjoy many rich opportunities for informal encounters and intellectual exchange, while also being able to develop their own research profile.