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Research Programme

| 2022-2025

Disruption – Critical Moments
in Socio-Spatial Transformation

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Introduction

The IRS researches the complex interrelationships between social change and socio-spatial transformation. It pursues an actor-centred research approach. The research focuses on actors who initiate or influence the development of space with their knowledge, their practices, and their strategies for action. Furthermore, the IRS pursues a social-constructivist approach, in which the emphasis is placed on how the qualities of spaces are perceived, interpretatively appropriated, collectively negotiated, and therefore also evaluated. Finally, the IRS explores how social actors coordinate themselves to jointly bring about new perspectives on space and combine individual resources for action.

The IRS, as an institute for research on society and space, provides a platform for the exchange of social-science spatial concepts, with a relational, social-constructivist understanding of space providing the focus of the IRS itself. Material space is a context for as well as a result of social action. The focus on change, transformation, and spatial development ultimately requires a distinct processual perspective in which the spatial and temporal dimensions must be thought of integrally.

The IRS advises actors from politics, administration, and civil society, from the local and regional to the national and international levels, on the sustainable design of villages, cities, and regions.

With the Scientific Collections, the IRS also operates a research infrastructure that is used nationally, and increasingly internationally, for historical research.

Disruption

When it comes to the viability of villages, cities, and regions, it is our expectations for the future that become the focus of attention. To date, the question of “megatrends” and “grand challenges” has dominated: that is, complexes of problems that will most likely have significance for many decades into the future. Not least in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, however, a second important aspect has emerged that highlights certain processual qualities that the corresponding transformations have. In all likelihood, socio-spatial transformations do not occur continuously and in linear fashion, but are characterized by disruption, that is, surprise events or ruptures that create extraordinary uncertainty, shake up contexts of meaning and significance, and threaten social values, but which nevertheless necessitate quick response. This research programme is dedicated to the disruptive qualities of socio-spatial processes of change (see Chapter 2). The topic is taken up in institute-funded research in a cross-departmental project and three lead projects but will also shape other activities of the research programme, such as its transfer activities and third-party funding strategy.

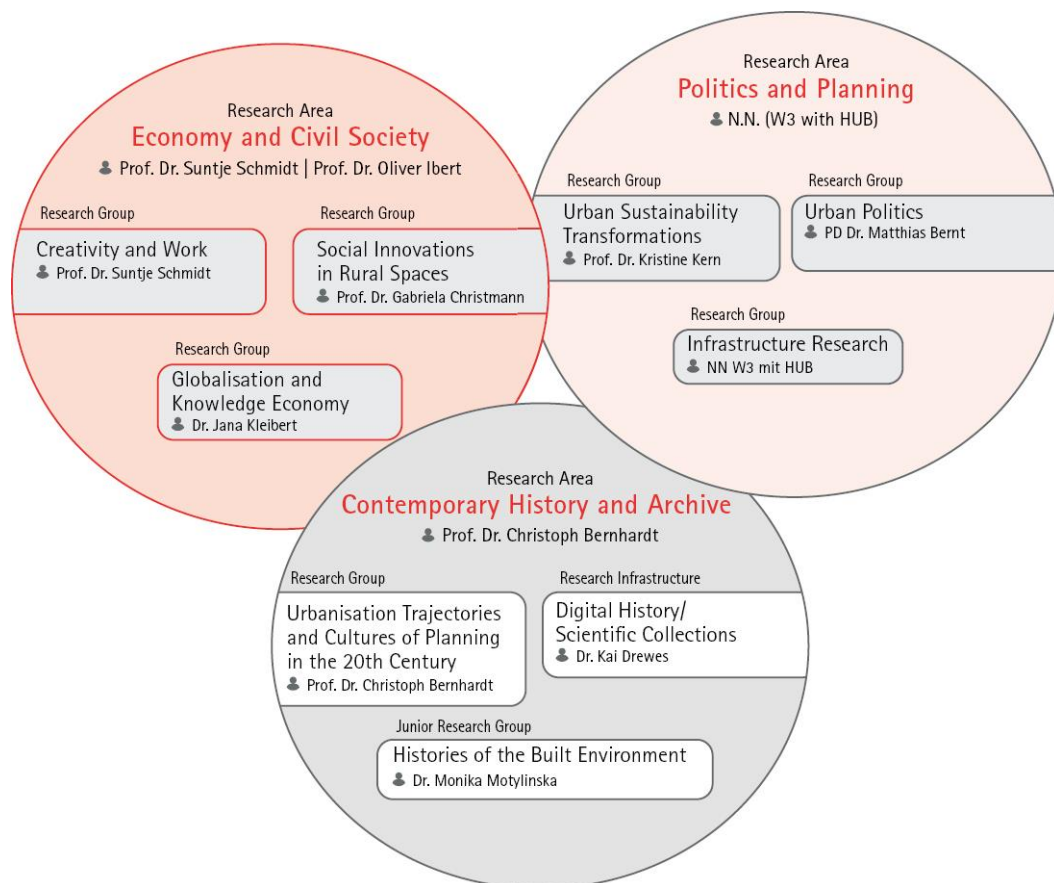
The “IRS 2025” strategy process and new research organisation

This research programme is the key result of “IRS 2025”, a strategy process undertaken over the course of more than a year. The process was initiated at the start of Prof. Dr. Oliver Ibert’s tenureship as the new director of the IRS in the summer of 2019. Its strategic plan was adopted in spring 2021 and, since then, numerous projects and measures described in the strategic plan and supported with the necessary resources have been implemented.

With this research programme, the IRS brings to fruition a restructuring of its research organisation for which the strategic process paved the way. At the turn of 2021/22, the five existing research departments will be transferred to three principal research areas: Economy and Civil Society, Politics and Planning, and Contemporary History and Archive.

The research priorities form long-term fields of expertise at the IRS. At this level, research financed by the institute is conceived in the form of lead projects, transfer culture is practised, the portfolio of third-party funded projects is managed, and the interaction of different subunits is shaped. The qualification projects docked onto the research are also coordinated at this level.

Various subunits are located within the research areas. The dominant subunit at the IRS is the research group. In addition to these there are junior research groups and a research infrastructure group. At the level of the research and junior research groups, the everyday practice of research is lived out in the form of project management, and scientific exchange within project teams is shaped.



Two research groups have already been established in the research area Economy and Civil Society, namely the groups “Social Innovations in Rural Spaces” and “Creativity and Work”. Another research group, “Globalization and Knowledge Economy”, is currently being set up. This is the continuation of a junior research group that had mainly been financed through third-party funding.

A total of three research groups have been set up in the research area Politics and Planning: “Urban Politics”, “Urban Sustainability Transformations”, and “Infrastructure Research”.

The research area Contemporary History and Archive includes the research group “Urbanization Trajectories and Cultures of Planning in the 20th Century”, the junior research group “Histories of the Built Environment”, which is predominantly financed by third-party funding, and the research infrastructure “Digital History/Scientific Collections”.

The merging of research into research areas has an influence on the internal governance of the institute, and the challenges of internal cooperation and research coherence are different to those of the previous structure with five research departments. In terms of governance, a new body has been formed in the form of the Research Council (see Section 2.1), which is involved in all strategic decisions on the direction of research. With regard to research, part of the integration work now takes place within the research areas, under the leadership of coordinators and within the framework of lead projects that cut across research groups. Another part takes place as cooperative collaboration between the research areas, in fields that overlap thematically, as well as in collaborative work on a cross-departmental project dealing with the primary theme of the research programme. Institute-funded research is, in this research programme, thus exclusively integrative.

The strategy plan of the “IRS 2025” strategy process lists further measures and projects that are assigned to the topics of institutional governance, knowledge transfer, personnel development, and sustainability and recognition. Their implementation is reflected in the following sections, in particular the section on the institute’s transfer culture (Chapter 5), and corresponding sections on knowledge transfer in the research areas (Sections 6.6, 7.6, and 8.6), on the promotion of junior researchers (Chapter 3), and on internal cooperation (Chapter 2).

Milestones

A prominent milestone for the institute and its development is an evaluation by the Leibniz Association scheduled for 2024. Our deviation from the usual three-year research programme plan to one of four years, from 2022 to 2025, partly owes to this milestone. The four-year term will enable the IRS to focus on its preparation for the evaluation and offers the opportunity to take evaluation results into account in the research programme for 2026 onwards. Other significant milestones in the present programme include personnel changes at the second-tier management level. The new management of the research area Politics and Planning will begin its work at the IRS at the start of the programme. With the retirement of the long-standing departmental and research-area head, Prof. Dr. Christoph Bernhardt, a new head for the research area Contemporary History and Archive will be recruited in May 2023.

1 Disruption – Critical moments in socio-spatial transformation

1.1 Problem outline and previous research approaches

Problem outline

The 2010s and start of the 2020s can be described as a historical period of upheaval and uncertainty. On the one hand, a diverse range of international crises with socially far-reaching, negative consequences demanded political action beyond the confines of established institutions - from the global financial crisis of 2008, the Fukushima nuclear disaster of 2011, and the Brexit vote in 2016, to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic at the turn of 2019/2020. Boundaries of a territorial, disciplinary, or sectoral nature were thus regularly overstepped (the “trans-boundary crisis”; Boin et al. 2009), while the various crises interrelated in complex ways. In the process, far-reaching decisions were made swiftly and under the greatest uncertainty. In view of these developments, crisis management is increasingly becoming a core competence in business, politics, and administration, and even in organizations in which it has previously played a subordinate role (Hällgren et al. 2018). On the other hand, the same period since 2010 has also seemed prone to blockages and failures to take action – despite the highest pressure to do so. In climate policy, in particular, and despite isolated initiatives, there has for years been a yawning discrepancy between diagnoses of the problem by scientists and the political will to take action. The same can be said for other globally present ecological and social problems, such as Holocene extinction, increasing social inequality, and the management of global migration flows. This leads to the paradoxical situation of there being both too much and too little fundamental change.

Research approaches

In this situation, established social-science concepts appear to fall short when analysing the long-term impacts of social change. While the extrapolation of (mega-)trends and developments of more or less probable future scenarios continue to be necessary, these approaches alone are no longer sufficient. They overlook the fact, for instance, that experts and political activists have warned of the many dangers we face, but that these warnings have largely been ignored by the majority of decision makers, that is, until abstract threats have matured into tangible cases in the here and now. Scenarios and trend analyses also tend to be blind to the social tipping points that mark the point at which a development that has been uniform for years unexpectedly escalates. It is precisely these “surprising turns of events”, however, that will occur with greater probability and more frequently in future. In addition, trend forecasts relegate actors to the position of spectators, who are thus left only with the option of adapting to the effects of structural forces, with little opportunity to intervene and discover further possibilities.

An examination of established analytical concepts reveals the limits of their explanatory power, and the need to develop new, more viable approaches. It is precisely such an approach that we seek to develop with the concept of “disruptions”.

Concepts that primarily concentrate on the urgent and exceptional stages of uncertainty and pressure to act, such as the concept of crisis, have recently experienced an ever greater functional and temporal expansion. The debates are increasingly characterized by paradoxical conceptual combinations, such as permanent, latent, or creeping crisis (Boin et al. 2021). From a temporal perspective it is no longer sufficient to assume a “decisive situation under time constraints”, in which there is a “growing problem” to solve (cf. Deutsch 1973). Instead, current crises have long lead times and are drawn out agonizingly slowly, with no clear solution (Boin et al. 2018). From a functional point of view, one can observe a dissolution of boundaries in multiple dimensions, with territorial boundaries being blurred just as much as those between organizations or the policies of various

sectors. The circle of actors is expanding considerably, while a conceptual expansion has also occurred in response to a postulated ubiquity and normalization of the sense of crisis. In the process, however, the semantic core of the concept of crisis as a “low probability/high impact event” (Weick 1988) has been eroded. What is clear is that these novel kinds of crisis can no longer be solved through crisis management alone; what is required much more is crisis governance by means of collective action (cf. Kornberger et al. 2019), which has, however, been little researched. The concept of crisis has also been criticized for an overemphasis on its threatening aspects of uncertainty and time scarcity, while leaving the opportunities afforded by crises little remarked upon (James and Wooten 2010). The concept of disruption brings more attention to the turning points at which linear developments suddenly become critical experiences, and to the embedding of crises within multi-dimensional problem complexes. The current lack of emphasis in crisis research on learning in, for, and in the wake of a crisis is also addressed.

Research on innovation concerns processes of change shaped intentionally by actors. Classical innovation research in the tradition of Joseph Schumpeters (Schumpeter 1911) principally analysed processes of “creative disruption” in business. This direction was continued further in the concept of “disruptive innovation” (Christensen 1997), which still attracts much attention in contemporary entrepreneurship research. Economic innovation does not necessarily have to contribute to solving the big problems that humanity faces, however. Indeed, their success can among other things intensify these problems. In transformation research, individual innovations are thus placed within the perspective of more comprehensive transformation matters (Geels 2002; Geels and Schot 2007; Coenen et al. 2012). In research on “social innovation” (Mumford 2002; Cajas-Santana 2014), normative aspects are also dealt with in the analysis in order to orient them towards socially desirable conditions, for instance inclusion or sustainability. All the same, the issue of how the new is “valued” has hardly been examined within innovation research (Melchior 2021). Disruptions, on the other hand, characterize situations of radical revaluation and the transformation of evaluative frameworks. This brings to the fore aspects of valuing and devaluing the new and the proven.

Resilience research has a strong affinity to alarming developments that can be traced back to both extreme shocks and more inconspicuously emerging dangers (the so-called “slow burn”). It is also concerned both with the question of how well social systems recover their structures and functions after damage has been sustained, and how societies can anticipate and prevent the occurrence of such damage in the first place. Such anticipatory action is described by the terms adaptation and adaptability (Grabher and Stark 1997; Pike et al. 2010; Hu and Hassink 2020). Resilience research is implicitly oriented towards the preservation of entities that enjoy social esteem.

Owing to this focus on preservation, the concept of resilience has also been criticized for being (too) conservative and oriented towards maintaining the status quo. Strategies of preservation can of course have a progressive character, but resilience alone nevertheless does not appear sufficient for the development of urgently needed, novel options for action. Disruptions place the pre-existing and the proven under a serious test, since maintaining given routines and habits alone seems inadequate in such situations. This sharpens our awareness of the interplay between preservation and renewal.

1.2 Disruption as a heuristic concept

Important preliminary work has already been completed at the IRS in the course of previous research programmes that addressed the above-mentioned research desiderata within the framework of the discourses referred to, for example on vulnerability and resilience (Christmann and Ibert 2012; Ibert and Schmidt 2014), on social innovation (Christmann et al. 2020), and in space-related crisis research (Brinks and Ibert 2020; 2021). Given the disruptions and uncertainties currently observable, we do not consider any of these debates alone to be sufficient.

In the research programme presented here, we therefore propose disruption as a heuristic term that brings together their combined insights and contributes to a better understanding of the interplay between long-term lines of development and short-term development impulses.

Disruptions are characterized by:

- their surprising emergence,
- a developmental dynamic considered “accelerated” or “fast” within the system of reference of the social subgroup affected (cf. Walker et al. 2012),
- an “extraordinary” (Stark 2020) level of uncertainty, distributed unequally among actors (Knight 1921),
- an abrupt reorganization of power relations between those active in the social field, and
- a profoundly ambivalent, often controversial, and even crisis-ridden societal assessment.

At the IRS, particular accentuation will be placed on the points discussed in the remainder of this section.

For actors, disruptions create special contexts for action distinguished from the routine by the above-mentioned characteristics. Actors might be thrown by such disruptive contexts but are also able through strategic action to contribute to the triggering of disruptions, for instance with the aim of using them to gain advantage over other actors. Disruption can thus be simultaneously enabling (by creating benefits to certain actors) and disabling (since they place the usual divisions of power, forms of regulation, and practical routines under pressure). The aim of research is thus to understand the practices of actors that are directed towards, and which need to prove themselves within, these kinds of context. At the same time, emphasis needs placing on the examination of transitions and tipping points between the routine and the exigent, as well as on the interrelationship between the two. In particular, the possibilities for learning and bringing about desired change in disruptive contexts will be investigated, as will the conditions under which disruption leads to sustainable change within governance constellations.

Although very often associated with feelings of relative powerlessness, disruptions are phenomena that arise through social action. Attention must therefore be paid to interest-led processes of social negotiation of their diagnoses, selective abilities to perceive disruption, and processes of the collective performative production of disruption. It is well known from crisis research that the collectively shared diagnosis of crisis is more than a description of a condition, but rather contributes to creating that diagnosed state (Bösch et al. 2020). It is therefore not only a matter of anticipating disruption and the appropriate responses to it, but also explicitly of the possibility of disruption being used strategically or even proactively induced.

Disruption can either be feared as a threat, or desired as a necessary “jolt” in the right direction that has so far failed to materialize. It is characterized by divergent, sometimes contradictory assessments of the situation. At the same time, disruptions change established valuation contexts, and thus offer opportunities to reorder existing or introduce new valuation hierarchies and indices.

Finally, while previous conceptions have primarily focused on the temporality of crises or disruptive innovations, at the IRS the analysis of their spatial aspect will be prioritized, while simultaneously integrated within a temporal perspective. The examination of spatiality can be systematized by the TPSN heuristic (Jessop et al. 2008), which provides an analytical separation of social phenomena along the dimensions of territory (T), place (P), scale (S), and network (N). Questions arise about the spatial scope of disruption, the spatiality of its governance, its spatio-temporal propagation, and about the uneven spatial distribution of its perception and the strategies adopted to manage it.

1.3 Disruption as a unifying concept for empirical research

In this research programme, disruption will be empirically investigated as significant moments in processes of socio-spatial change. This will be carried out in the three institute-financed lead projects of the research areas (see the summary of the lead projects below in this section, as well as their more comprehensive presentation in Chapters 6, 7, and 8). An institute-financed cross-departmental project will create a common conceptual foundation for the interpretation and synthesis of the empirical findings from the lead projects and will explore the potential of the concept for knowledge transfer and consultation (see Section 1.4). In the course of the research project, additional third-party funded programmes on the topic will be procured and conducted (see Section 2.2).

Lead project “Post-Office: Spatio-temporal transformation processes of knowledge-generating collaboration”

The lead project of the research area Economy and Civil Society addresses the radical transformation processes occurring in knowledge and information-based societies that are characterized, once again, by disruptive events. With the establishment, for instance, of new spatial solutions to knowledge-based work (such as Open Creative Labs), socio-spatial transformational dynamics of collaborative knowledge-generation processes have massively changed the organization and multilocality of work in rural and urban regions. In particular, the often-disruptive innovations in digital technologies have accelerated the transformation of collaborative knowledge-based work practices, creating previously unknown on/offline spatial arrangements. Today, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic have significantly accelerated these transformation processes, necessitating that collaborative practices in knowledge-based work be comprehensively and almost exclusively transitioned to digital forms in a very short period of time, and quite unforeseeably. The lead project “Post-Office” pursues the goal of understanding the transformational dynamics of knowledge-generating cooperation and their disruptive elements, and to discuss the consequences that arise from these for urban and rural regions.

Lead project “Conflicts in planning: Large-scale projects and their potential for institutional transformation”

This investigates large-scale projects as profound ruptures that shake up established institutional routines, and that can subsequently lead to their transformation. Such ruptures occur increasingly where there are contradictions between action-oriented and participative rationalities that can only with difficulty be resolved through politics and planning (Ibert 2007). For the lead project, disruptive events are above all characterized - in addition to the aspects of surprise, acceleration, and uncertainty - by their controversial intensification, leading to an escalation in conflict. The large-scale Tesla settlement project will be examined and compared with other case studies from the perspective of its disruptive effects on policy and planning. In the process, the transferability of the concept of disruption to policy and planning research will be tested. This lead project is particularly interested in the question of how disruptions triggered by the Tesla settlement lead or do not lead to linkages between fields of action at different scales and in different sectors (such as economic policy, nature conservation, climate protection, and infrastructure planning).

Lead project “Socio-spatial transformation in Berlin-Brandenburg 1980 - 2000”

The lead project of the research area Contemporary History and Archive focuses on the political and social causes and consequences of the historic, globally significant disruption of 1989/90 in Berlin-Brandenburg, and aims to provide further insight into three clusters of issues in disruption research. Firstly, historical research on crises and revolutions will be made to serve the deeper understanding of lines of continuity and dislocation in current disruptions. Secondly, the upheaval in Berlin-Brandenburg will be examined as a “laboratory” for patterns of action and governance forms arising from different political-institutional systems and from the emergence of a “unification society”. This can then be used to study contemporary perceptions of such processes and their various stages. Thirdly, the project will analyse disruptions in individual spaces and their respective policy fields – such as housing or commercial development – in relation to overall societal change, thus gaining insights into different types of disruption and their modes of action, for example in opening up potential for new paths of regional development.

1.4 Cross-departmental project: DISRUPTION AND SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT – CONCEPTS OF SPATIO-TEMPORAL DYNAMICS, MODES OF PERCEPTION, AND ACTION STRATEGIES

Project team

Prof. Dr. Oliver Ibert (Head, economic geography), Prof. Dr. Gabriela Christmann (Head, sociology)

Prof. Dr. Christoph Bernhardt (research-area coordinator, historiography), PD Dr. Matthias Bernt (research-group head, political science and sociology), Dr. Wolfgang Haupt (postdoc, political science), Dr. Elisa Kochskämper (postdoc, political science), Prof. Dr. Suntje Schmidt (research-area coordinator, economic geography), Dr. Andreas Kuebart (postdoc, economic geography).

The cross-departmental project “Disruption and spatial development – Concepts of spatio-temporal dynamics, modes of perception, and action strategies” continues to develop the heuristic of disruption (see Section 1.2), uses this to interpret the empirical findings of the lead projects’ research (and beyond), and, conversely, incorporates impulses from the projects’ empirical data for further conceptual development.

The focus in IRS cross-departmental projects is on institute-funded endeavors that for certain topics – intersecting those of the lead projects – formulate common conceptual foundations and pool together empirical findings. They serve to bring together and to collaboratively develop the various fields of expertise of the different research areas. We do not understand the collaborative format of cross-departmental projects only as a structured opportunity for collaboration across the research areas, but also as an important instrument with which we can take hold of and reconceptualize new topics, and thus shape the IRS as a whole. Our very positive experiences, in particular with the former cross-departmental project “Vulnerability and Resilience from a Socio-Spatial Perspective” (2010-2012), encouraged us to continue with the creative use of this format. Through this project’s theoretical approach and original empirical research, we were able to obtain considerable attention not only within the scientific community, but also among practitioners.

During the period 2022-2025, the cross-departmental project will place the following questions centre stage:

- What are the spatial and temporal ranges observable for disruptive events?
- To what extent are there spatial and temporal differences in the perception of disruptions?

- What strategies for action do actors pursue, and what logics establish themselves, in the handling of disruption?
- How can considerations of disruption create value for knowledge transfer?

To this end, previous conceptual approaches and empirical findings will be reviewed and new conceptual contributions developed.

Two joint applications for third-party funding will be made and submitted to the DFG (see Section 2.2). In addition, the results obtained will initially be consolidated in the form of working papers, which will then be prepared for further collaborative publications in international, peer-reviewed journals (see Section 2.3). The cross-departmental project will, furthermore, provide the thematic umbrella for the IRS Spring Academy events (see Section 2.4.1). Last but not least, the cross-departmental project will also provide aspects of its content to transfer activities.

2 Internal cooperation

As will be presented in Chapters 6 to 8 below, research at the IRS will be organized from 2022 into three research areas, in each of which two to three research groups will work. Internal cooperation between IRS researchers thus already begins within the research areas. The aim is to provide for coherent research and stimulating exchange of ideas under the umbrella of each respective area. As much synergy as possible will be created between the representatives of the various specialist disciplines within a research area, because only in this way can complex social transformation processes in cities and regions in all their different facets be analysed and understood. Likewise, it is only against this backdrop that comprehensive strategies for action for the future shaping of such processes can be developed, discussed with practitioners, and further honed. Cooperation will take place in the research areas through their common lead project, which will be worked upon by at least two groups from the research area. In addition, it is hoped that researchers from at least two groups will acquire a joint third-party funded project – thematically connected to the lead project – within the framework of their research area.

What is true on a “small scale” for the research areas applies all the more for cooperation within the IRS on the whole. The following will describe how cooperation between the research areas will be organized – not least in order to counteract the possible danger of segmentation. It remains fundamentally true that research at the IRS must be more than the mere sum of its parts. Our aim is, out of the breadth of our research topics, to generate added value in terms of knowledge gained, as well as to increase the overall visibility of the IRS.

With the research programme 2022-25, the IRS seeks to hone its profile in three points in particular: Firstly, from an organizational perspective, a research council will be established to coordinate joint research work across the research areas and to maintain coherence (see Section 2.1). Secondly, the research subject of disruption provides a new topic for the IRS, in terms of content (see Chapter 1). For collaborative work on this topic, thirdly, the cross-departmental project will be reintroduced, following on from the IRS’s successful experimentation with the format in the past (see Section 1.4). On the basis of this, third-party funded projects traversing the research areas will be procured (see Section 2.2), and publications prepared (see Section 2.3). A further important aspect of cooperation across the research areas will be the jointly organized event formats (see Section 2.4), among which will be counted the Spring Academy, the IRS International Lectures and PhD Seminars, the IRS International Seminars, and the Regional Talks (see Sections 2.4.1-2.4.4).

2.1 Research council

A regularly meeting research council has been established as part of the IRS’s new research programme. The permanent members of this body are the scientific director and deputy, the research area coordinators, the head of Research Management and Communication, and the heads of the research groups. Other IRS employees may be invited as guests on a case-by-case basis.

The research council will coordinate all strategic activities related to research. It will advise and support the Management Board with regard to the further development and implementation of strategies, such as the third-party funding strategy (such as the planning of portfolios and third-party funded projects), the publication strategy (such as Open Access), or the internationalization strategy. Furthermore, it is responsible for the qualification of institute-funded projects and strategically prominent third-party funding applications and for monitoring the institute’s research performance. The research council will ensure that cohesion is maintained for the entire institute when developing a new research programme and implementing the current one, and that synergy is created between the research units.

2.2 Joint third-party funding proposals and projects

Complementary expertise from several research areas can prove advantageous in the acquisition of third-party funding. Thus, third-party funded projects will in the 2022-2025 research programme be proposed and, if successful, worked upon jointly by researchers from various research areas. Third-party funding proposals on the topic of disruption are being developed primarily as part of the cross-departmental project. Within this context, two applications are to be developed and submitted to the DFG within two years. In addition, a further two joint third-party funding applications intersecting the lead projects are to be prepared. Here, too, the topic of disruption will be the focus. The cross-departmental project “Disruption” will serve as a thematic driving force.

2.3 Publications

Results from projects implemented across the research areas will be made accessible to the specialist community through jointly authored publications. As mentioned above, a continual series of working papers with interim results will arise out of the cross-departmental project which, towards the end of the research period, will be elaborated into articles for international, peer-review journals. Additionally, joint journal articles will also be published as part of all those third-party funded projects that have been acquired as part of the cross-departmental project and across the lead projects.

2.4 Joint event formats

Jointly organized academic events are well suited to take advantage of the thematic intersections between work in the different research areas, as well as to place on view the IRS’s research on new topics and to initiate discussion on these topics. These formats, successfully established in the past at the IRS, have proven their worth and will also be continued as part of the new research programme. The Spring Academy, IRS International Lectures and PhD Seminars, IRS International Seminars, and the Regional Talks will address specialist and broader audiences within and outside the IRS.

2.4.1 Spring Academy

The IRS Spring Academy “Investigating Space(s): Current Theoretical and Methodological Approaches” was instigated in 2017. Initially a three-part series funded by the Volkswagen Foundation (2017-2019), it now continues on the basis of our own funding. In 2021 the Spring Academy was hosted as an online event. Annual Spring Academies are planned for the future and will focus on themes that are currently relevant for the IRS. In the context of the 2022-2025 research programme, these will be themes related to the research subject of disruption, for example in connection with pandemics or financial crises. The individual events will each be organized jointly by at least two IRS research areas.

The international event series provides junior researchers the opportunity to discuss theoretical and methodological approaches in the spatial sciences with acknowledged experts, as well as to introduce their own project work to an international public. The IRS will invite renowned scientists from each research field to provide their expertise alongside theoretical and methodological inputs from the work of IRS researchers. Junior researchers must apply to participate and interested junior researchers at the IRS may also apply.

The following events have been concretely planned for the coming year:

Spring Academy 5 (2022) - Spaces of Infection (joint activity of the research areas Economy and Civil Society and Contemporary History and Archive)

Spring Academy 6 (2023) - Spaces of Finance and Commodification (joint activity of the research areas Economy and Civil Society and Politics and Planning)

Spring Academy 7 (2024) - Transdisciplinarity and Social-Scientific Spatial Research (joint activity of the research areas Economy and Civil Society and Politics and Planning)

Spring Academy 8 (2025) - Spaces of Valuation and Authenticity (joint activity of the research areas Economy and Civil Society and Contemporary History and Archive).

2.4.2 IRS International Lectures and PhD Seminars

IRS International Lectures

For the “IRS International Lectures on Society and Space”, internationally renowned scientists are invited to give a guest lecture at the IRS on topics relevant to all research areas. The invited speaker gives an approximately hour-long report on their current research, to which a respondent provides comment before the floor is opened up to intensive discussion. The respondent is recruited from the IRS or invited from a cooperating institution. The format is widely advertised and allows us to attract a large audience beyond the institute and to create broad visibility for the IRS, while also bringing new impulses to the IRS and generating broad resonance within it.

Two lectures will be organized per year, one in the spring and one in the autumn. One event will be organized by each of the research areas in turn. The scientists to be invited and topics for discussion will be determined by the research council at the start of each year.

PhD Seminars

The PhD Seminars are offered as a separate event to the group of IRS doctoral students (see also Chapter 3). They take place twice annually, in connection with the International Lectures on Society and Space, and are conducted by the International Lecture’s guest speaker. The PhD Seminars are devised thematically in such a way as to provide points of contact with the research of the doctoral students. They present an important supplement to the curriculum, especially with respect to the discussion of current theoretical approaches. At the same time, doctoral students are provided the opportunity to network with the renowned scientists invited to take part in the IRS International Lecture.

2.4.3 IRS International Seminars

With the format of the IRS International Seminars, nationally and internationally renowned and emerging scientists are invited to give a guest lecture at the IRS. The seminars have the principal function of enhancing discussion within the institute. The topic of the lecture should have relevance to at least two of the research areas but can also be more broadly construed. The speakers are provided with a flexible framework: the duration of the lecture and the subsequent discussion both vary.

IRS Seminars take place much more frequently than IRS International Lectures but are irregularly scheduled. Guest researchers at the IRS are requested to conduct at least one seminar at the IRS. Ten events per year will be organized as part of the research programme, so that approximately 40 will be planned in the course of its overall duration.

2.4.4 Regional Talks

The Brandenburg Regional Talks are transfer events regularly offered as part of the IRS's transfer culture to actors from politics, administration, business, culture, and civil society. They take place on topics that are relevant to at least two research areas. The desire here is to provide opportunities for direct and creative dialogue on current issues of spatial and social development in the region. Against the background of their own work, IRS researchers give keynote speeches and, where appropriate, recommendations for action on the issues discussed. This is followed by presentations by practitioners and further intensive discussion.

The Brandenburg Regional Talks take place on a regular biannual cycle in May/June and November. Each event is organized in turn by one of the research areas, but topics can also be jointly arranged. The following talks are already planned for 2022:

Brandenburg Regional Talk 52 (May 2022) - Housing estates: The meaning of social mix. (Research area Politics and Planning)

Brandenburg Regional Talk 53 (November 2022) - Digitalization of rural volunteering. (Research area Economy and Civil Society)

3 Promoting junior researchers

The IRS sees itself as a place for the training of outstanding junior researchers. In its promotion of young talent, the institute supports the professional and personal development of junior researchers and prepares them for their careers and the assumption of managing positions in and outside of academia. The IRS has devised two comprehensive development strategies for doctoral and postdoctoral students, codified as an operating agreement, on the basis of which individual arrangements between junior researchers and the institute management can be made.

A need for revision of both operating agreements is recognized as part of the “IRS 2025” strategic process. The negotiation, elaboration, and implementation of these necessary revisions are currently underway, and may possibly be carried out by the start of the research programme. The revision process is also intended to ensure the ongoing implementation of the Leibniz-Association guidelines at the IRS. In particular, the Leibniz Career Development Guideline and Equality Standards will be taken into account in the review of the operating agreements.

Promoting doctoral researchers

The operating agreement provides for doctoral candidates to conclude a doctoral agreement with the director on the basis of a fully developed exposé (comprising the research question and subject of the work, an empirical work programme, and likely schedule), in which the rights and obligations of the doctoral candidates and the IRS are codified. Individual support measures include, alongside continuous advice from an IRS supervisor, an agreement on block working hours and the possibility to apply for a final grant of up to four months (a so-called “annex grant”) as well as a printing subsidy for publication of the dissertation.

The strategic process revealed a need to update and modify this operating agreement. One central change is that a total doctoral period of four years is to be scheduled, with the contractual arrangement initially providing for one year’s employment, during which candidates can prepare an exposé and work programme. If successful, the employment contract can then be extended by three additional years, during which the research can be carried out and the qualification completed. Institute-funded positions will be remunerated corresponding to 65 % part-time contracts at the TV-L 13 German public-service salary scale (instead of 50 % as before).

In addition, as part of its continuing education concept for doctoral students, the IRS has developed formats in which students from all research areas are jointly involved. The concept provides for monthly colloquiums with the doctoral group. Twice per year, theoretical and methodological knowledge and soft skills is imparted (during a full-day workshop in the summer, and a two-day doctoral college in the winter). These dates are arranged by the doctoral group itself. Lecturers include senior scientists from within and outside the IRS. Two further dates per year (in the spring and autumn) are reserved for the PhD Seminars as part of the IRS International Lecture. The internationally renowned researchers recruited for the lecture offer a supplementary seminar for the IRS’s doctoral students the following morning. In addition, the speakers give one-to-one consultations, for instance to provide constructive criticism and comment on an exposé or dissertation chapter. The IRS doctoral colloquium is held on eight additional dates in the course of the year and is organized on an annual basis by the director and senior researchers of the IRS.

The measures that form our further-education concept for doctoral students are to be performed jointly by all leading researchers, as accommodated for in our internal cooperation policy (see Chapter 2).

Promoting postdoctoral researchers

Since the requirements of a profession in science and research are demanding and involve many uncertainties, the decision to pursue a postdoctoral position requires careful forethought and preparation. For this reason, funding at the IRS is divided into two phases, an orientation phase and a profiling phase.

The orientation phase allows initial experience to be gathered, and choices to be made. As a rule, it should not begin more than one year after completion of a PhD and should not exceed a duration of two years. During the orientation phase, candidates should take the first steps along their career path (for instance, making applications for external funding, and collecting publications and teaching experience) with the aim of reaching a clear decision for or against continuing professionally in the field of science and research. Arriving at this decision is a process that will be supported by the institute management. If successful, the orientation phase will conclude in a postdoctoral agreement with the director, on the basis of an exposé and work programme with a schedule for the profiling phase, which usually lasts four years.

The profiling phase serves the targeted acquisition of those competencies that are prerequisites for scientific excellence and are indispensable for an academic career. The overarching goal of postdoctoral funding at the IRS is to obtain professorial appointments or other leading positions within academia. In addition to the traditional path of a postdoctoral qualification, obtained via a monograph or through cumulative publication, the operating agreement also recognizes the independent management of a junior research group, qualification as part of a junior professorship, or the obtaining of a permanent position at a foreign university as possibilities. Important milestones are the successful completion of habilitation procedures, a successful interim evaluation as a special junior professor, the assumption of a deputy professorship, or the successful acquisition of grants to finance junior research groups.

Within the framework of the “IRS 2025” strategy process, it became apparent that the post-doctoral phase, in particular, is accompanied by a very high level of uncertainty. As an initial response to this finding, an operating agreement on the conversion of fixed-term contracts to permanent employment contracts was concluded, in which the criteria and procedures for the conversion to permanent employment and for tenure-track procedures at the IRS are clarified. The operating agreement on the promotion of post-doctoral researchers is to be modified in two areas.

Firstly, career paths in the practical realm should be outlined. The application of knowledge and competences acquired at the IRS in responsible positions as practitioners is seen by the IRS as an important path for knowledge transfer (“transfer via minds”). The operating agreement on the promotion of postdocs, still under negotiation, should therefore focus on career paths beyond the boundaries of the academic system. To this end, the repertoire of qualifying content to be taught is to be expanded to include the topics of science communication, transdisciplinary research, and research-related management.

Secondly, the revised operating agreement is intended to increase gender equality, especially at the postdoctoral phase, which is so crucial for the attainment of leadership positions. In conjunction with a previously concluded operating agreement on the conversion of fixed-term contracts to permanent employment contracts for academic positions at the IRS and on the implementation of tenure-track procedures, it is specifically intended that female academics be brought into leadership positions through tenure-track procedures.

4 National and international cooperations with universities and extramural research institutes

Cooperation agreements and joint appointments

The IRS is situated in a very diverse academic region and actively makes use of this diversity in its collaborations, on the basis of existing cooperation agreements, with universities in the area of Berlin-Brandenburg. These agreements regulate, among other things, the procedure for joint appointment of researchers, and such appointments will be initiated or continued with Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HU Berlin), Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus–Senftenberg (BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg), Freie Universität Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin, and the University of Potsdam, with all of whom agreements already exist, as well as with the European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), with whom a cooperation agreement is soon to be completed.

An important outcome of the “IRS 2025” strategic process was that the previously five research departments will become three research areas. As a result of this, fewer second-tier management positions to be occupied in the form of joint appointments will be available. The network of cooperations based upon such joint appointments is concentrated around BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg (Prof. Dr. Oliver Ibert) and HU Berlin (to be confirmed, coordinating the research area Politics and Planning; Prof. Dr. Suntje Schmidt, coordinating the research area Economy and Civil Society). A joint appointment with the European University Viadrina is envisaged for May 2023 (to be confirmed, coordinating the research area Contemporary History and Archive, following the departure of Prof. Dr. Christoph Bernhardt).

In addition, beneath the second-tier management level, more flexible forms of cooperation related to subsequent appointments to research-group leadership positions will be used to establish collaborations with the other partners of the IRS, for instance in the form of junior professorships, adjunct professorships, or temporary rights to confer doctorates within the framework of junior research-group leadership positions (already existing with Bauhaus-Universität Weimar and HU Berlin).

Collaborative research

The IRS is a member of the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) 1265 “Re-Figuration of Spaces”, directed by TU Berlin. Prof. Dr. Gabriela Christmann serves as co-applicant, member of the board of the CRC, and leads the subproject at the IRS. For the CRC’s second funding period (2022-2025), currently being applied for, Prof. Dr. Gabriela Christmann and Dr. Ariane Sept have applied for a joint subproject, which also offers the option for a possible third funding phase (2026-2029). Following the expiry of several collaborative research projects, the IRS will intensify its collaborative research activities during the research programme 2022-2025.

DFG Research Training Groups

The IRS is, through Prof. Dr. Christoph Bernhardt, one of seven applicants participating in the DFG Research Training Group “Cultural and Technological Significance of Historic Buildings” at Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg. The training group will come to the end of its term in 2023. Prof. Dr. Christoph Bernhardt assists with the supervision of doctoral candidates and in the research programme of the group.

Leibniz Research Alliances and Networks

Following the strategic realignment of the Leibniz Research Alliance and Research Networks, the IRS has focused its network within the Leibniz Association on key projects.

The IRS is a member of the Leibniz Research Alliance “The Value of the Past” (“Wert der Vergangenheit”, spokesperson: Prof. Dr. Martin Sabrow, Centre for Contemporary History (ZZF), Potsdam), which began its work on 1 September 2021. Sixteen institutes from three sections of the Leibniz Association belong to the new alliance, while additional science institutions from Germany and abroad are involved as associate members or cooperation partners. Prof. Dr. Christoph Bernhardt is active as a member of the steering committee, and other researchers from the research area Contemporary History and Archive are involved in the work of the network. The IRS participates in collaborative research on the topics “Evidence Regimes”, “Spatiotemporal Patterns of Order”, “Dynamic Spaces”, and “Digital Heuristics and Historiography”.

Furthermore, the IRS is a member of the Leibniz Research Network “Spatial Knowledge for Society and Environment” (Leibniz R). Prof. Dr. Oliver Ibert is acting in rotation as the network’s spokesperson for 2021/2022. Membership in further Leibniz Research Networks on sustainability research, environmental crises, and interdisciplinary resilience research is under consideration.

Internationalization

The IRS maintains institutional partnerships with the University of Manchester (Department of Geography at the School of Environment, Education and Development), the University of Leicester (Centre for Urban History at the School of History, Politics and International Relations), Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, and the Universities of Turku and Eastern Finland. These cooperations are the result of a proactive strategy of internationalization at the IRS that has concentrated on the focus areas of the UK, North America, Scandinavia, and Poland, and which will be further maintained and intensified. Promising cooperative relationships have recently been initiated in Asia (for instance with the National University of Singapore). The internationalization strategy of the IRS will undergo a process of critical review in the course of the research programme and be revised where necessary.

In addition, the IRS works with numerous other partner institutes in project consortiums funded by EU research programmes, and bi- or multinational and German programmes. Examples include the already funded Innovative Training Network (ITN) “Exploring the Impacts of Collaborative Workspaces in Rural and Peripheral Areas in the EU” (project director at the IRS: Prof. Dr. Suntutje Schmidt; lead partner: Prof. Dr. Vasily Avdikos, Panteion University, Athens), and the envisaged cooperation as part of a project currently under review in the Leibniz Competition on the subject of “The Global Housing Affordability Crisis: Exploring the Policy-Outcome Gap” (applicant: PD Dr. Matthias Bernt).

Since 2020, a further focus of internationalization has been the Scientific Advisory Board. Here, the IRS aims to have 50% of the advisory board members represent institutions from abroad.

5 Transfer culture

To embody a transfer culture means, for the IRS, that the question of how society can concretely profit from the IRS's research is, as a matter of course, present in the research work, and that it is pursued with the same level of creativity and commitment as the scientific research interest itself. The conceptual foundation for this is the dialogical concept of transfer - following the guiding principle of the Leibniz Association and building upon practice already in place at the IRS. "Dialogical" means that societally relevant practical problems are systematically tackled and form the inspiration for application-oriented and basic research at the IRS, and that the findings of IRS research are proactively translated into concrete guidance for practitioners. It means, furthermore, that the IRS paves a way for breaking new intellectual ground for practitioners - based on the perspectives that IRS research opens up. And finally, it means that IRS researchers confidently participate in public and practice discourses on the basis of scientifically sound findings, taking on variable roles - from moderation to resolute advocacy - and negotiating new perspectives for action on an equal footing with practitioners.

When transferring the results of research into practice, the IRS pursues the goal of realizing tangible outcomes: that is, bringing about demonstrable, longer-term changes in the abilities, thinking, and/or actions of concretely defined target groups. With this objective in mind, the IRS goes beyond the realization and tallying up of output such as transfer publications and events. While an overall aspiration to achieve social impact in its research is never abdicated at the IRS, it is recognized that widespread social impact cannot be planned. For this reason, the IRS restricts its research planning to the much more modest, but also more realistic goal of achieving outcomes, without losing sight of the possibility of impact.

The IRS realizes outcomes primarily through three transfer paths: policy and societal advice, transdisciplinary research (largely together with practitioners), and "minds" (that is, people who, following research work in or with the IRS, take their ideas into practice and apply them there). For the first two transfer paths, strategic considerations can be found in the respective research areas (see Sections 6.6, 7.6, and 8.6). Transfer via "minds", on the other hand, relates to the funding strategy for junior researchers, especially at the postdoctoral phase (see Section 3).

These three transfer paths are embedded in a broad and proactive approach to knowledge transfer. All research projects at the IRS are to be examined in a structured manner for their transfer potential. Possible target groups are to be identified, and these are to be proactively addressed through suitable formats. Both basic research (such as DFG projects) and application-oriented research (such as research assignments) can carry transfer potential beyond the horizons initially envisaged for a project. On the other hand, part of the research at the IRS must be motivated by a desire to explore practical problems relevant to society. Lead-project research funded by the IRS itself offers great translation potential here.

Expertise and visibility accumulate as a result of involvement in multiple projects and transfer activities. Occasions for reactive transfer are generated in this way, for example in the form of consultation or peer review requests. Such reactive activities are of high value to the IRS, but a more proactive approach makes it possible to purposefully stimulate interest within society, which then leads to increased demand for the IRS's expertise. Finally, proactive transfer activities can also be driven by knowledge accumulated over the longer term, such as in a thesis-like work on practical topics like "rural development policy".

Science communication, which aims at the public or parts of it, and knowledge transfer, which is directed towards specific target groups among practitioners, are closely related. Science communication creates or increases visibility, and thus creates possibilities for transfer. Conversely, knowledge transfer creates opportunities for science communication.

At the same time, the two can exist independently of each other and might be mutually exclusive in individual instances, for example in the case of confidential consultation (an example of transfer without science communication). In any case, close coordination of communication and transfer activities is necessary, and research should therefore be closely and continuously accompanied by the Research Management and Communication Unit, so that the correct steps can be cooperatively identified.

6 Research area Economy and Civil Society

Research-area coordination: Prof. Dr. Suntut Schmidt and Prof. Dr. Oliver Ibert

6.1 Research-area profile

The research area Economy and Civil Society is characterized by its focus on the role of actors whose entrepreneurial and social practices create and change spatial structures or generate and drive spatial development. The complex interaction of civil-society and entrepreneurial action is addressed with the aim of better understanding socio-spatial transformation processes in digitalized knowledge and innovation-led societies, as well as the interaction between global processes and their local effects, and thus to trace back the uncertainties associated with them. The aim is to accompany the options for designing, adapting, and building resilience into economic and social initiatives and to identify opportunities for strengthening the innovative capabilities of actors.

Thematically, the research area takes an interest in the spatio-temporal perspective of how new ideas emerge, establish themselves, and are spatially disseminated. In addition, new forms of formal and informal employment, digital social innovation, and social initiatives are researched in order to support cities and regions in shaping socio-economic transformation processes and increasing their adaptability to overarching developments in globalization and digitalization. Finally, the research addresses globalization dynamics in the knowledge economy in order to understand new forms of unequal development and to form strategies for dealing with them.

These topics will be investigated with the assistance of concepts of “social innovation” (Rammert et al. 2018), which go far beyond technical and economic aspects of innovation and focus on their social dimensions (Pel et al. 2020). Also of central importance are the concept of knowledge (e.g., Hautala and Höyssä 2017), of knowledge-led (communicative) action (Christmann et al. forthcoming), and multilocal knowledge communities (Müller and Ibert 2015). In this context, the concept of mediatization explicitly considers analogue and digital forms of (communicative) action (Krotz 2007; Couldry and Hepp 2018). Creativity, understood as the ability to make novel and valuable contributions to the transformation of domains, underlies processes of innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as entrepreneurial practices. Socio-spatial transformation is not only shaped by innovation, however, but also by targeted conservation. Accordingly, the research area is interested in processes of the social construction of resilience and adaptability (Christmann et al. 2019). Finally, transformations are explored in the context of concepts of globalization, with asymmetric power relations playing a formative role in the constitution of translocal networks. In particular, the processes resulting from economic activity of geographical relocation across national borders (offshoring), as well as the highly varied social and spatial developments that result locally, are examined.

The three research groups within the research area have developed their own conceptual contributions to these debates and will further shape and supplement them. The concept of the communicative (re-)construction of space concerns the initiating role of communicative action in processes of socio-spatial transformation (Christmann forthcoming). The influence of digitalization in economic and social processes will be examined with the platform-ecology heuristic (Ibert et al. 2022) and digital social innovation (Zerrer and Sept 2020). Offshore spaces and transnational education spaces (Kleibert et al. 2020) are conceptualized as fields of tension between various forms of local and regional border demarcations and translocal networks. Finally, the open-region heuristic supports the connectivity of research to practical innovation policies related to regional action spaces (Schmidt et al. 2018).

Methodologically, the work is characterized by combinations of predominantly qualitative methods, which are mobile or multilocally designed, and which also use digital methods of empirical social research. For conducting spatio-temporal analyses, empirical designs are developed, such as

innovation, crisis, and corporate or creative biographies, but also discourse analyses or focused ethnographies. In each case, the methods are tailored to the specific subject matter.

The research area addresses political, economic, and civil-society actors from the local to the supranational level who deal with issues of economic development, regional-development policy, rural development and innovation promotion, and higher education policy. The research area relies on a dialogical and transdisciplinary transfer approach and attaches importance to developing its own research in close cooperation with practitioners.

6.2 Research-group profiles

The research area combines three research groups from two research departments that existed until the end of 2021 within the IRS's former structure. The research group Creativity and Work emerged out of the former research department "Dynamics of Economic Spaces", and the research group Social Innovations in Rural Regions out of "Dynamics of Communication, Knowledge and Spatial Development". The research group Globalization and Knowledge Economy was formed from the Leibniz Junior Research Group "TRANSEDU". The future lead project will be worked on jointly by two research groups, and further cross-research group activities are planned.

Research group Creativity and Work

Research-group head: Prof. Dr. Suntje Schmidt

The research group is interested in the interactions between creative processes, work, and processes of economic and social change. In this context, local manifestations of dynamics such as digitalization, social transformation processes, and the increasing multilocality of formal employment are explored. The research group investigates creative solutions in dealing with uncertainties in volatile labour markets, investigates the effects of social, organizational, and technological innovation processes on spatial developments, and explores new forms of translocal entrepreneurial action. A particular focus here is on the world of work, where "work" covers the entire spectrum from formal employment to intrinsically motivated creation (Voß 2018). That is, the research group is interested in purposeful human activities that change structures and generate value (ibid.). The research group is thus interested in new forms of work arising from the digitalization of knowledge and creative work, as well as in how new forms of uncertainty associated with this are handled. The research group aims to understand processes of creativity and innovation and their effects on multiple forms of work, on the one hand, and to develop options for action for open regional innovation and economic policies on the other. The research contributions are predominantly located within economic and social geography, but are organized in an interdisciplinary and, where appropriate, transdisciplinary way.

Research group Social Innovations in Rural Regions

Research-group head: Prof. Dr. Gabriela Christmann

The research group analyses the processes of emergence, establishment, and dissemination of novel ideas, practices, and projects in rural areas, referred to as social innovation. The group thus contributes to innovation research and to the study of transformation processes in rural areas, taking the diversity of rural areas into account. Novel solutions are examined, by means of which rural actors address central challenges in areas such as local supply, mobility, health care, work, education, culture, and communication. To the extent to which technical innovation, in the form of digital technologies and applications, are a component of socially innovative solutions, they will receive special attention. Innovative forms of urban-rural cooperation are also incorporated into the research. The innovatively oriented actions of actors from civil society and social enterprises are of just as much interest as those of actors from local politics and administration.

Research group Globalization and Knowledge Economy

Research-group head: Dr. Jana M. Kleibert

The research group Globalization and Knowledge Economy derives from the work of the Leibniz Junior Research Group “TRANSEDU”. It pursues broader globalization research and develops new empirical topics related to the knowledge economy that go beyond the critical-geographic education research of the original junior research group. The group is interdisciplinary but locates its contributions primarily in economic and urban geography. Theoretically and conceptually, the group contributes to perspectives in political-economic and cultural-economic geography focusing on both material and symbolic constructions of space. Current research focuses on the marketization and internationalization of European universities, regional policies for creating a knowledge economy through foreign university locations, and the impact of globalization crises on transnational higher education. Methodologically, the group pursues translocal and multilocal research, taking as its focus the often-unequal relations between the Global North and South. Current regional focuses of research are Europe and Asia. Analyses are based on qualitative human-geography and social-science research and, to a lesser extent, on quantitative data collection.

6.3 Lead project “POST-OFFICE: SPATIO-TEMPORAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES OF KNOWLEDGEGENERATING COLLABORATION”

Project team

Prof. Dr. Suntje Schmidt (Head, economic geography) and Prof. Dr. Gabriela Christmann (Head, sociology)

Alica Repenning (doctoral student, economic geography), Dr. Ariane Sept (postdoc, planning and sociology), Nicole Zerrer (doctoral student, communication science), Dr. Lukas Vogelgsang (postdoc, sociology and management studies)

Keywords

Knowledge-based collaboration, on/offline spaces, digitalization, disruption, urban spaces, rural spaces

6.3.1 Problem outline

The ability to drive processes of change with novel, creative social practices is a key competence that enables individuals, social groups, and organizations to shape such processes. However, transformation processes in particular are characterized by disruptive moments that direct, change, or accelerate them in unforeseen ways and introduce new uncertainties and ambiguities into the equation. Two transformation processes are particularly relevant for our research: the transformation to a knowledge and innovation-based society and digital transformation processes. What both processes have in common is that disruptive moments repeatedly occur, thereby changing the long-term dynamics of change. Socio-spatial transformation dynamics in collaborative processes of knowledge generation have led to massive changes in the organization and multilocality of work in rural and urban regions through the establishment of new spatial solutions to knowledge-based work (such as Open Creative Labs). In particular, often disruptive innovations in digital technologies (such as digital platforms) are accelerating changes in collaborative knowledge-based work practices, creating previously unprecedented online and offline spatial arrangements. It is already clear that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly accelerated these transformation processes: within a very short period of time, and completely unforeseen, collaborative practices in knowledge-

based work have had to be consistently, and almost without exception, converted to digital forms. At the same time, new collaborative solutions are emerging that could persist even beyond pandemic containment measures. In the context of these disruptive dynamics, not only are spatio-temporal processes of collaborative work changing, but there are also consequences for urban and rural regions. Rural areas in particular may become more than ever the starting point for mobile working. New residents are moving in and new forms of working and living in the countryside are emerging - but so, too, are new relationships between city and countryside, which question previous dichotomous concepts of the urban and the rural.

Disruptive moments in transformation processes: Socio-spatial and digital transformation in collaboration in knowledge and innovation-based societies

Innovative solutions require social processes of collaboration, exchange, and sometimes also the collision of unfamiliar practices and ideas (Amabile 1996; Miettinen 2006; Hautala and Ibert 2018). The new is thus not only created in the specially equipped, physical-material environments of research facilities, laboratories, or offices at the hands of qualified groups such as scientists, entrepreneurs, or innovative start-ups - it can be generated by all social groups (von Hippel 2005; Brinks 2016). New socio-spatial forms for the organization of collaborative knowledge-based work, such as Open Creative Labs, coworking spaces, maker spaces, open workshops (Schmidt 2019), and village shops are disruptively changing practices of collaboration (Avdikos and Pettas 2021). Working hours and places are being recombined to an unprecedented extent, leading in turn to new uncertainties. These changes also entail further transformation processes, for example by combining (temporary) work in the countryside with social engagement in rural or possibly even urban regions. This can be seen in initiatives such as CoVillages ("KoDörfer"), which advocate for a knowledge-based transformation process in rural regions by inviting digital workers to volunteer as pioneers in public welfare-oriented regional initiatives. In addition, new socio-spatial solutions for knowledge work enable the value of that work to be renegotiated.

Digitalization processes induce further disruptive elements into the transformation dynamics of knowledge and innovation-based societies because they rapidly and fundamentally change the way actors network, exchange information, and collaboratively generate new knowledge. Personal forms of co-presence are complemented by digital formats and collaboration practices (Grabher and Ibert 2014). Being present, meanwhile, can indicate both simultaneous presence in a concrete place and the simultaneous or delayed digital interconnection of social actors in a wide variety of places and time zones (Cetina 2009; Hine 2015; Grabher et al. 2018). Moreover, physical co-presence in one place does not automatically go hand in hand with social interaction. For the spatiality of knowledge work, this means that spatial arrangements emerge that are constituted both online and offline, and that novel practices are enabled by digital solutions that complement, differentiate, or even render partially obsolete analogue practices. It is becoming apparent, for example, that users of digital platforms are creating online and offline opportunities for knowledge-based work according to their needs. Civil-society actors in rural regions have also discovered digital tools to develop innovative solutions to everyday challenges of living in the countryside (Sept 2020). And here, too, digital action by actors and digitally supported solutions for urban and rural areas hold potential for further socio-spatial transformations (such as for regional development).

Disruptive development: The COVID-19 pandemic as an accelerator of transformation processes

It is apparent today that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have considerably accelerated the transformation processes described. Within only a short period of time, and entirely unforeseen, collaborative action in knowledge-based work, in particular, has had to be converted consistently and

almost exclusively to digital forms. We view these developments not only as “disruption-like”, but - because of the very fundamental and abrupt changes - as fully “disruptive”. The question is: what comes next? Will radical changes related to the pandemic be “rolled back” once it is over? Or will changing practices in knowledge and innovation-based work and the accompanying socio-spatial changes continue on the path already taken? We are already hearing from companies that, following the learning experiences of the pandemic, for a variety of reasons they largely wish to abandon their former office buildings. Is mobile working therefore the future? What does this mean for urban and rural areas? A wide variety of actors in cities and in the countryside are now fundamentally operating under conditions of considerable uncertainty. For knowledge and innovation-based work in particular, the question is whether and in what form new, innovative practices will emerge as a result. What is clear is that individuals, social groups, and organizations are repositioning themselves in terms of their forms of interaction, and that they are beginning to question existing practices. It can be assumed that not only the forms of interaction will change in the long term, but that mobility needs will also arise anew (or be limited) and that new socio-technological niches will be opened up by social actors in the course of flexibilization and digitalization.

The lead project “Post-Office” pursues the goal of examining the future, following after the dominance of the traditional office. It will seek both to understand the dynamics of change in knowledge-generating cooperation and to determine the resulting consequences for urban and rural regions.

6.3.2 Research questions

The lead project addresses a total of three sets of questions. The first constellation of questions aims to understand new spatial forms of knowledge-generating collaboration, including online and offline arrangements, and to shed light on consequences for the transformation processes in urban and rural regions that potentially accompany these. Socio-technological niches established for social interaction and forms of collaboration are reconstructed from the perspective of the actors. By “socio-technological niches”, we understand user-specific material, digital, and social opportunities and constraints for knowledge-generating collaboration. The issue requires improved understanding of the mediation and intertwining of online and offline situations.

Question constellation 1: Which (analogue, digital, and hybrid) spatial arrangements are constructed through digital possibilities and limitations in the course of collaborative knowledge generation?

- How are the socio-technological niches of online and offline possibilities and limitations used or circumvented for social innovation and creative processes?
- How do synthetic situations (as hybrids of online and offline forms) influence practices of collaborative knowledge-generating work?
- What opportunities and challenges does this create for urban and rural transformation processes?

The second set of questions addresses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the spatio-temporal dynamics of knowledge-generating collaborative practices. Here we are interested in the social constructions of uncertainty that emerge among the studied actors due to the pandemic and the post-COVID-19 future. We assume that disruptive events are evaluated ambivalently and controversially by the actors, and that different resilience-building strategies are formed by dealing with the disruption. Specifically, we shall distinguish between short and medium-term strategies in order to derive statements about emerging transformation processes in rural and urban regions.

Question constellation 2: What effects does a disruptive event such as the COVID-19 pandemic have on the spatio-temporal dynamics of collaborative knowledge-generating practices?

- Which individual and organizational uncertainties and related resilience strategies for dealing with (post-)COVID-19 changes can be reconstructed?
- What short and medium-term strategies for collaborative knowledge generation are used in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What opportunities and constraints do digital technologies and digital platforms present in this context?
- What opportunities and challenges does this create for urban and rural regions?

The third set of questions, finally, addresses the interplay between the first two constellations.

Question constellation 3: How can the interplay between the spatial, temporal, organizational, and social solutions for knowledge-generating social practices, on the one hand, and management of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, on the other, be described? What role does the disruption of the pandemic play in this?

6.3.3 Theoretical approaches

In theoretical terms, the lead project will enable us to follow up on conceptual preliminary work already accomplished by the two participating research groups Creativity and Work and Social Innovations in Rural Regions on topics such as spatio-temporal innovation and creative processes, digitalization and knowledge-generating practices, and the social construction of resilience. These conceptual considerations are to be expanded upon and interconnected empirically in the lead project and by means of concepts already available within the scientific community.

Spatio-temporal innovation and creative processes

Novel and valuable ideas and practices emerge in dynamic, multilocal, and often disruptive processes of creative collaboration (Christmann et al. 2020; Yigitcanlar and Inkinen 2019; Brinks et al. 2018). Spatial and temporal contextual conditions influence such processes by enabling socio-material constellations of interrelated action, or by being purposefully established and used by the actors involved (Schmidt et al. 2018; Feldman et al. 2019; Cohendet et al. 2020). Temporary events such as the “Summer of Pioneers” combine the transitory work of often urban and otherwise detached knowledge-based workers in the countryside with local civic engagement and cooperation. Remote work (Zenkter et al. 2021; Hafermalz and Riemer 2020), coworking in rural and peripheral areas (Vinodrai et al. 2021; Rodríguez-Modroño; Thomas 2019) and expanding home-office work are expressions of an increasing flexibilization of working times and places, as well as a novel spatial and temporal organization of knowledge-generating collaboration (Tremblay and Yagoubi 2017; Avdikos and Pettas 2021; Schmidt 2019).

Knowledge-based work practices are consequently in a process of transformation (Pel et al. 2020) that integrates new social and material contexts into knowledge-generation processes and challenges the previously inhabited material environments such as the traditional office. In order to reconstruct the spatial multi-scalarity and multi-layeredness of collaborative knowledge-based work, knowledge-generating processes are reproduced in their spatial dimensions and their temporal course, in order to understand the interplay of spatial and social working environments in rural and urban regions.

Digitalization and knowledge-generating practices

Digital technologies now permeate all areas of everyday social interaction (Barns 2019; Hine 2015) - including practices of collaborative knowledge generation and the evaluation of new knowledge (Sept 2020). This removes the spatial perspective that distinguishes between physical and virtual spatial dimensions (Ash et al. 2018) in favour of the on/offline spatial arrangements of collaborative knowledge work. Fashion designers, for example, present their new collections at temporary physical-spatial events, such as a fashion fair, while simultaneously posting about it on Instagram, sharing their impressions, networking with other participants in digital and analogue form, expressing opinions and promoting their own creations. The simultaneous online and offline presence is an integral part of their creative work, and online and offline practices merge inseparably in the process. Not only creative workers, but also social entrepreneurs or digital knowledge workers combine the online and offline possibilities for knowledge-based collaboration and in doing so construct dynamic socio-technical niches (Hermans et al. 2013; Repenning and Oechslen submitted) for the implementation of their projects. This includes synthetic situations (Cetina 2009) in which actors and objects are simultaneously connected online and off. Grabher et al. (2018) broaden this perspective and illustrate that a technologically mediated, temporal co-presence also expresses attention directed towards each other and changes the practices of collaborative knowledge-based work in their spatiality and temporality (Leszczynski 2019).

Social constructions of uncertainty and resilience

Knowledge-based work is a social process (Christmann et al. 2020) that involves personal interactions, serendipity, and temporary and permanent forms of collaboration. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disruptive effect on these processes and practices (Swyngedouw 2020; Yigitcanlar and Inkinen 2019) that has triggered or accelerated processes of transformation and is associated with ambiguity and uncertainty regarding its effects. Unforeseen and extreme in its dimensions, contact restrictions have disrupted established routines and well-established practices of collaboration without any provisions being made for them. This appears to have accelerated digital transformation, with attempts being made to transform forms of collaboration into digital practices, at the same time promoting the spatial transformation towards new types of online and offline collaboration arrangements (Crowley and Doran 2020). This has been accompanied by individual and organizational perceptions of uncertainty about the lasting impact of the pandemic. Such disruptions are perceived and interpreted ambivalently and can simultaneously present both opportunities and challenges. This results in individual and organizational resilience-building strategies to deal with perceptions of uncertainty (Christmann and Ibert 2012), which have implications for the organization of collaborative work.

Based on these theory-driven perspectives, the lead project makes a conceptual and empirical contribution to their further development: the project consistently adopts an extended social-constructivist perspective on the spaces and premises involved in knowledge-generating cooperations. Constructions of social practices, forms of organization, and the routines and structures of knowledge generation are examined. In doing so, possibilities and limitations of digital technologies in construction processes are taken particularly into account in order to come towards an expanded on/offline spatial perspective. On the one hand, this makes it possible to better understand the complex interplay of the transformation of socio-material working environments through digital transformation processes. On the other hand, the social-constructivist perspective enables a better understanding of individual and organizational uncertainties in the context of these transformations, which have been further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

6.3.4 Methodology

Empirically, the project uses a combination of qualitative methods (Onghena et al. 2019) with the help of comparative case studies (Yin 2018) to answer its research questions. In addition to in-depth case studies in Germany, the project will use the existing research cooperation with the University of Turku to critically reflect and contextualize its initial research findings with the help of selected Finnish examples and a research workshop. The project follows a transdisciplinary approach and therefore involves practitioners from the first phase of the project in the concretization of the research questions, the identification of potential case studies, and the interpretation of the empirical findings.

Selection of case studies

The case studies to be investigated have not yet been determined. They will be identified with the help of the expertise of practitioners (such as the operators of Open Creative Labs, civil-society initiatives, and social entrepreneurs) as part of a kick-off workshop in the first project phase, along the following heuristic: firstly, comparable cases in urban and rural regions will be sought, in which creative forms of cooperation are applied to innovative problem solving. This could include examples of mobile or temporarily remote working, as well as platform-based solutions for temporary home-office work in rural regions. On the other hand, cases will be sought in which digital possibilities have already been integrated into collaborative practices. The selection of case studies will thus take into account that we are looking for spatial on/offline arrangements for knowledge-generating forms of collaboration.

Data collection and evaluation

The data collection will focus on the spatio-temporal reconstruction of collaboration processes for the generation of knowledge via problem-centred interviews with involved actors (Ibert et al. 2015; Brinks et al. 2018). This includes users as well as operators of physical and digital solutions for creative collaboration. This form of data collection is complemented by participant observation in selected physical-material contexts (Müller 2013) as well as in digital spaces (Costello et al. 2017; Kozinets 2010) and an accompanying media analysis (Hoor et al. 2018). The aim is to understand transformations and dynamics of change in their spatial, temporal and social dimensions and to analyse them with a view to regional development dynamics in rural and urban regions.

Together with the data collection for conducting the problem-centered interviews and participant observations, there will be an intensive travel itinerary involving field visits of several days in selected rural and urban regions. In addition, as mentioned above, the research design provides for a contrasting case study in Finland. To this end, a research stay of a maximum of four weeks and a residency at the University of Turku are planned.

The research stay in Finland has two main goals. It is our assumption that, due to advanced digitalization and extensive experience in integrating rural regions into translocal processes of shared knowledge generation (such as by integrating virtual reality and 3D environments into knowledge generation), practices can be observed that seem, from a limited national perspective, novel and foreign (Jauhiainen 2021). Out of this, one can expect contrasts that help to interpret and contextualize the transformative effects of digitalization, as well as the spatial and social organization of knowledge-related work. A research workshop will be organized, in addition, to critically discuss the theoretical-conceptual framework of the project, as well as its operationalization and empirical evaluation.

For this purpose, we shall build on the long-standing experience of our colleagues in Turku in researching spatio-temporal innovation processes, knowledge practices in peripheral regions, and their current work on the digitalization of entrepreneurship.

The problem-centered interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and subsequently analysed for content with the consent of the interviewees (Kuckartz 2018; Mayring and Fenzl 2019). Observations will be recorded in the form of field notes and occasionally, where possible, also photographically or by means of selected screenshots, and will be included in the analysis of the interviews. After an initial analysis phase, the interim results will be reflected upon together with practitioners and then subjected to a final analysis.

6.3.5 Work phases

The work of the lead project is divided into five phases. The preparatory and analysis phases include intensive cooperation with practitioners. In the first phase, the empirical work will be carried out in the German case-study regions; in the second phase, a contrasting empirical case-study will be collected in Finland. In the analysis phase, the results of the surveys will first be correlated to one another, owing to the different data sources of the combined qualitative methods. They will then be concentrated into concepts that will in turn be reflected upon again and interpreted together with practitioners. The final phase focuses on the communication of the results in the context of professional events and publications.

Preparatory phase

In the preparatory phase, the state of research will be updated with the help of a structured literature review, in order to elaborate upon the spatial online and offline dimensions of the transformation processes to be considered, and to prepare them for an operationalization of the research questions in the empirical phases.

In addition, the cases to be surveyed will be identified and current challenges from the field elaborated upon and concretized together with practitioners. Initial exploratory interviews will help to identify further case studies and prepare the empirical treatment of the research questions in the form of a research plan.

Data-collection phase 1

In this phase, problem-centred interviews, participant observation, and media analyses will be carried out for the selected case-studies, and the data be secured (in the form of transcription, field notes, and record keeping). The findings will be analysed at an early stage and prepared in the form of an initial empirical paper.

Data-collection phase 2

This phase includes data collection from at least one contrasting case-study in Finland, as well as the organization of a research workshop at the University of Turku during a research stay of about four weeks. In addition to in-depth theoretical and methodological reflection on the research approach, first empirical insights will also be presented for critical discussion.

Analysis phase

The focus of work in this phase will be on the evaluation of data, especially on its integration from the individual survey steps (involving content analysis of the interviews and online and media data). This will include a systematic comparison of the case studies, first comparing those collected in German rural and urban regions, and later including the Finnish data for evaluative comparison. At an early phase of analysis, the interim results will be presented to and interpreted together with practitioners, so that the results of this interpretation phase can be included in subsequent analyses.

Final phase

In the final phase, work will focus on the organization of scientific events (such as sessions at national and international conferences), submission of papers for (inter)national professional events, arranging transfer events, and the preparation of results for publications.

6.3.6 Expected results and products/outcomes

The project addresses disruptive events (socio-material transformations of knowledge work, digital transformations, the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated constraints), against the background of which we expect to find new insights into creative collaboration in knowledge creation.

The project explicitly focuses, firstly, on novel spatial solutions for the generation of innovative problem solving and reconstructs processes of knowledge generation that start in these spaces, use them (temporarily), or include them in translocal dynamics. Through a systematic comparison of collaborative processes of knowledge generation in their socio-material environments, both in urban and rural regions, the project will, to the best of our knowledge, be the first to record new sites of knowledge generation in urban as well as rural spaces, both individually and in their interplay. Our assumption is that this will enable us to better understand their role in the ongoing transformation process related to distributed knowledge work, as well as to form better statements for both urban and rural regions about whether and how such solutions can accompany and influence spatial transformation processes. We shall be able to state whether and how they can actively be used in regional development strategies as instruments for shaping such processes.

Secondly, the results of the project will broaden understanding of digital transformation processes. Complementing existing research, we shall not look at individual digital technologies, social digital platforms, software solutions, or virtual spaces, but rather investigate the integration and combination of numerous digital and physical-spatial solutions for knowledge-based work. In this way, our results contribute to an expanded on/offline understanding of space, and make not only a conceptual contribution, but possibly also provide new impulses for spatial-development policies.

Thirdly, we shall interpret the COVID-19 pandemic as a disruptive event whose effects accelerate the transformation of both physical-material and digitalized knowledge-based work. The project launch will at the same time offer a unique opportunity to observe how novel practices of collaboration in physical co-presence are transferred to alternative digital and physical-spatial solutions and further developed into social innovations. We expect to gain insight into the social and economic sustainability of these impulse-generated solutions, as well as their persistence during the relaxation of social-distancing measures. Finally, we shall observe whether these novel solutions are used differently in urban and rural regions, and to what extent they open up a variety of new possibilities, as well as new challenges, to knowledge-based work.

Since the project will undertake research in the context of, and presumably following, a pandemic situation, and during a highly disruptive period with considerable levels of uncertainty for actors, it will be possible to form statements about the medium-term effects of disruptions.

From the perspective of knowledge workers, we shall be able to reconstruct perceptions of uncertainty and understand their effects on knowledge-generating practices and transformation processes in (digital) knowledge-based work.

We shall be able to show how temporary resilience strategies in the immediate handling of a pandemic lead to medium-term routines and processes of collective knowledge-based work, as well as to further spatial transformation processes.

The project will also question established core-periphery conceptions in innovation research. So far, urban regions have typically been interpreted as centres of knowledge and innovation-based work. Due to their density and diversity, their access to new knowledge via events and creative and innovative milieus, and their openness to the new, they are often portrayed as nodes and facilitators of knowledge-based cooperation. In contrast, rural regions are ascribed very little innovative potential, not infrequently because of their homogeneity and peripherality. The project will contribute to defining these types of space as relationally related to and dynamically interacting with each other in the course of transformation processes.

Publications

One conceptual and three empirical articles resulting from the project will be published in international peer-reviewed journals. In addition, the analyses relating to spatial transformation processes in rural and urban regions will be summarized in both a journal article and a policy paper.

Events and lectures

Conceptual and empirical results will both be presented for discussion within the context of around two lectures per year and per staff member. In the second half of the project, one session per year will be organized at an international conference that will take into account the results and analyses achieved thus far. In addition, at least two practitioner workshops will be organized to actively involve practitioners in the research process (such as in the identification of case studies, concretization of research questions, and evaluation of data).

Other

In cooperation with the Research Communication Unit at the IRS, a broader public will be addressed through such initiatives as podcast contributions and the co-organization of an IRS Regional Talk. The organization of an International IRS Lecture and IRS Seminars with internationally renowned experts and scientists from the IRS will also facilitate interdisciplinary exchange.

6.3.7 Schedule for the lead project “Post Office”

Phases	2022				2023				2024				2025			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
1. Preparatory phase																
Est. current state of research																
Identification of case studies																
Pilot phase																
2. Data-collection phase 1																
Data collection (qual. interviews, observations, media analysis)																
Data analysis																
3. Data-collection phase 2																
Data collection																
Research workshop																
Data analysis																
4. Project completion phase																
Publications																
Follow-up activities																
Planned results and products																
Publications			WP			JP1			JP2		JP3			JP4	PP	
Events			PW							S	PW				S	
5. New research programme																

Abbreviations used:

IC = international conference JP = journal paper PP = policy paper
PW = practitioner workshop S = session SI = special issue WP = working paper

6.4 Qualification projects

Qualification projects of post-doctoral researchers (in alphabetical order)

Name: Dr. Jana M. Kleibert

Project duration: 2015-22

Higher-education institute: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Supervisor: Not applicable

Working title: Management of the Leibniz Junior Research Group “Constructing Transnational Spaces of Higher Education”

Abstract: Globalizing universities can be understood as economic actors involved in the symbolic and material construction of spaces of transnational education. In particular, International Branch Campuses (IBCs), which are emerging in spatially concentrated “education hubs” in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Singapore, and Malaysia, can be understood as sites that crystallize current internationalization and marketing strategies in the global knowledge society. The diverse embedding of IBCs in transnational networks, as well as in local, urban, and national development strategies, is investigated in this project from different political-economic and cultural-economic spatial perspectives and provides a contribution to economic-geographical globalization research. The cumulative postdoctoral thesis was submitted in 2021.

Name: Dr. Andreas Kuebart

Project duration: 2022-27

Higher-education institute: BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Oliver Ibert

Working title: Financial Geographies of Digital Entrepreneurship

Abstract: Corporate finance is widely considered to be among the core issues of entrepreneurial ecosystems. The relevance of entrepreneurial finance is understandable, since the digital business models at the core of contemporary entrepreneurial ecosystems (EEs) require relatively large amounts of capital upfront. However, research on the financial dimension of EEs remains mostly focused on the accessibility of funding for entrepreneurs and startups, although the rapid proliferation of related financial instruments such as venture capital, has wider implications. This project aims to disentangle the geographies of corporate financing for digital firms from a process perspective.

Name: Dr. Ariane Sept

Project duration: 2020-24

Higher-education institute: TU Berlin

Supervisor: Not applicable

Working title: Figurations of the Rural

Abstract: This postdoctoral project focuses on changes in constructions of rural space, as well as their significance for spatial planning and development, analysing the discursive construction of rural spaces and their evolution since the 1960s in Germany. The project sets out to systematize the complexity of these tendencies and debates. In doing so, the project pursues the thesis that it is not sufficient to dissolve the dichotomy of city and country by searching for and postulating the terms of their hybridization. Instead, city and countryside are to be understood as networks of relationships between spatial categories that are subject to a constant dynamic of change, and which can each exhibit their own specificities.

Name: Dr. Lukas Vogelgsang

Project duration: 2021-27

Higher-education institute: BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Oliver Ibert

Working title: Creative Digital Communities - Creation through Participation

Abstract: The project examines creative and innovative processes on digital platforms. The aim is to analyse how crowds and communities are constituted online, and how these collectives together create novelty. A special focus is placed on the role and the relation between crowdfunding and crowdsourcing.

Doctoral projects (in alphabetical order)

Name: Alice Bobée

Project duration: 2018-22

Higher-education institute: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Supervisor: Dr. Jana M. Kleibert

Working title: French Offshore Campuses: Discourses, Strategies, Geographies

Abstract: The project contributes to critically questioning how the socio-spatial dynamics of global higher-education markets are established, maintained, and (de)stabilized. Through an empirical case study of French offshore campuses and an approach from cultural-economic geography, the project investigates: a) which discourses and strategies support the development of French offshore campuses, b) which geographies are (re)produced by these strategies, and c) for whom these strategies are devised.

The three publications of the cumulative dissertation address the interconnections between geographies of French offshore campuses, global asymmetries, and imaginaries, particularly with regard to geographies of international student mobility and geographies of reputation in higher education.

Name: Anna Oechslen

Project duration: 2018-22

Higher-education institute: University of Hamburg

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Gertraud Koch (principal supervisor), Prof. Dr. Oliver Ibert

Working title: Global platform work - Negotiating relations in a translocal assemblage

Abstract: This dissertation project investigates how graphic designers in India organize their everyday work via so-called crowdwork platforms. In the course of mediating work relationships via online platforms, a “planetary labour market” (Graham 2018) is emerging that enables designers to connect with clients all over the world. This development holds the potential for the democratization of access to jobs and for collaboration between experts from around the world to improve products and services. However, in a highly dynamic, volatile, and contingent context, platform workers also do a lot of unseen work to establish and maintain connections, thus creating a tension between the appearance of having left behind the constraints of the “old” world of work, and the persistence or even consolidation of structural inequalities. To integrate this tension, the research field will be constructed as a global assemblage (Ong and Collier 2005) produced through practices of forming and maintaining relationships. The analysis is based on material collected through a combination of online observations, face-to-face and online interviews, and the digital photo diaries of research participants.

Name: Tim Rottlieb

Project duration: 2018-22

Higher-education institute: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Supervisor: Dr. Jana M. Kleibert

Working title: Building the Knowledge Economy, Transforming Cities? Transnational Urban Education Zones in the Nexus of Urban and National Economic-Development Strategies in the Globalizing West Asia and North Africa Region

Abstract: This cumulative dissertation project examines a specific spatial strategy used by governments to attract university campuses abroad, called International Branch Campuses (IBCs): Transnational Education Zones (TEZs). With a focus on the Arabian Gulf region, it examines why TEZs are established in Arabian Gulf cities and to what extent they are integrated into urban and economic development strategies. In order to understand the political economy of these zones, the dissertation project brings relevant debates from the historical-geographical materialist literature on globalization and urban development together with literature from educational and regional research on the Arab Gulf. TEZs are thus to be understood as spatial concentrations of a social power relation emerging at different scale levels.

Name: Marc Schulze

Project duration: 2018-22

Higher-education institute: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Supervisor: Dr. Jana M. Kleibert

Working title: Regulation, Coupling, and (Re)Embedding of Transnational Higher-Education Providers in South-East Asia

Abstract: The countries of South-East Asia offer a diverse range of foreign courses and degrees, some of which can be completed entirely at offshore branches of foreign universities. On the one hand, foreign universities operate in transnational networks and gain access to local education markets with the help of investments and multi-form partnerships with domestic actors. On the other hand, states strategically administer and regulate access to their territorially located higher-education sectors. This project explores regulation and its change over time, as well as the spatial (re)embedding of transnational higher-education providers in Malaysia and Singapore from an economic-geographic perspective. The transformation of higher-education landscapes is considered both in the context of national and global socio-economic restructuring processes, and against the background of changes in other policy fields linked to education sectors. The theoretical and conceptual focus lies on the process by which universities (as transnational actors) and higher-education sectors (as regional contexts) combine and influence each other.

Name: Alica Repenning

Project duration: 2020-23

Higher-education institute: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Suntje Schmidt

Working title: Creative Geographies of On/Offline Mediation: Spaces, practices, and work in on/offline everyday structures. The example of fashion design and the network platform Instagram.

Abstract: The dissertation project starts from the observation that an increasing mixture of online and offline spaces exists in the everyday life of actors. Online interactions influence offline interactions and vice versa. Together, relational on/offline practices form the everyday space of fashion designers (Leszczynski 2015; van Dijck 2013; Barns 2019). In the wake of this, the influence of online platforms is increasingly receiving critical attention under the catchwords “platform capitalism” or “platform society” (Langley and Leyshon 2017; van Dijck et al. 2018). Against this background, the dissertation addresses the questions: to what extent does the constitution of everyday creative spaces change through a combination of on/offline spaces? How are working practices altered? To what extent are interactions and spaces expanded and what new (digital) obstacles emerge? Using fashion design as an example, the online platform Instagram is identified as an influential actor in the socio-technological everyday routine of fashion designers. The role of the platform as a shaper of practices and spaces is critically scrutinized.

Name: Julia Stadermann

Project duration: 2019-22

Higher-education institute: Pending

Supervisor: Pending

Working title: Innovation and Subjective Well-Being

Abstract: The dissertation project is tied to the third-party funded project “Open Region: Regional Challenges as Starting Points for Innovation”. Among other aims, the third-party funded project seeks to formulate policy recommendations for the design of contemporary regional-innovation support. This qualification project builds on comments made by Engelbrecht (2014), according to which such policies are based on the general assumption that innovation leads to an increase in welfare. Given the lack of empirical evidence to support this assumption, Engelbrecht argues that the relevant policies lack sufficient legitimacy. Following the call for comprehensive research on the relationship between innovation and subjective well-being (as an alternative concept to economically oriented welfare indicators), data will be collected and subjected to inferential statistical analysis, allowing initial conclusions to be drawn on the direction of causality between the two factors.

Name: Nicole Zerrer

Project duration: 2019-23

Higher-education institute: University of Augsburg

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Jeffrey Wimmer

Working title: The Mediatized Village: Digital social innovation and smart villagers in rural areas

Abstract: Addressing the question of how village communities experience mediatization processes resulting from digital social innovation, the aim of this dissertation project is to better understand rural digitalization processes, to explore the effects on village communities and to (further) develop a theoretical framework for this research subject. In general, the increasing and more diverse uses made of (especially digital) media can be described by the concept of mediatization, which also allows us to consider the social, societal, and cultural changes brought about by such media. Thus far, however, descriptions of digital mediatization have predominantly focused on urban life. In the context of this thesis, they will be analysed for rural communities. Using the concept of communicative figurations, the interaction of rural residents, social networks, and digital tools in the development of innovative solutions in the countryside will be examined.

As part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network “Exploring the impacts of collaborative workspaces in rural and peripheral areas in the EU” (CORAL, 01/2021 - 12/2024; EU), two further doctoral researchers (to be confirmed) will be engaged. They will research the significance of collaborative working spaces in rural spaces and conduct an international comparison. Both will have their doctoral projects affiliated to the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, receiving supervision from Prof. Dr. Suntutje Schmidt and Prof. Dr. Elmar Kulke. Duration: 09/2021 - 08/2024.

6.5 Knowledge transfer

The projects of the research area all aim to better understand the global and long-term challenges of spatial development associated with transformations associated with an increasingly digitalized knowledge and innovation-based society, and to contribute to addressing these challenges. The addressees of this expertise are actors in regional development policy, innovation promotion, and education policy, at the local, regional, national, and international levels, as well as civil-society actors who promote, initiate, or advance (socially) innovative developments.

These transfer activities employ the entire repertoire of common transfer formats, adapted to their respective situation. The research area has special expertise in new formats of transdisciplinary co-creation of knowledge, in which scientists work intensively with practitioners over longer periods of time to solve concrete, practice-related problems. The subproject “Open Region” in the BMBF initiative “Innovation Hub 13 - fast track to transfer”, for instance, is currently testing new transfer formats in the form of Innovation Salons to support regional problem-centred innovation processes, and Policy Labs to further develop political framework conditions for transfer measures, especially in processes of social innovation.

Political and social consultation

Members of the research area are sought-after partners in political and social consultation on the topics of rural development, regional-innovation policy, and transnational academic education. These consultation services take place in written and verbal form and can be either public or confidential.

Gabriela Christmann performs regular and extensive consultation work on social innovation in rural areas at the EU level, as well as at the federal and state levels in Germany. The head of the Leibniz Junior Research Group “Constructing Transnational Spaces of Higher Education” (TRANSEDU), Jana Kleibert, has expertise on successful and failed investments in the internationalization of higher education, and brings her knowledge to decision-makers at universities and in politics.

Committees are an important form of public consultation. Building on her research experience of creative and innovative processes as an advisory board member of “Raumwerk D”, an urban-development concept instigated by the city of Düsseldorf, Suntje Schmidt now advises the German government as a member of the network “Initiative Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft” (Initiative for the Cultural and Creative Industries) on future issues of the sector. Ariane Sept contributes her research experience on transformations of rural areas as a member of the expert advisory board of “LANDVISIONEN”, a platform for social innovation in rural areas of Brandenburg; the scientific advisory board for the exhibition “Schön hier”, on architecture in the countryside at the Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt; and the steering group “German-Polish Research Centre for Life Models of Old Age in the Countryside” in Heinersdorf. Gabriela Christmann is, among other things, a member of the project-accompanying scientific advisory board of the “Experimentation Workshop ‘Rural Consumer Policy’” (Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection); in an expert group on “Social Urban and Local Development in Rural Regions” (Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community); and in the expert advisory board of the Jugend-Check centre of excellence (Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth).

Consultation activities in the new research programme are intended to consolidate as well as expand upon the level already achieved. The subject of the lead project augments the already established transfer topics with new findings on structural change in forms of work. A focus of our science communication will therefore be to make this newly acquired expertise more publicly known. It is also expected that the structural change occurring in Lusatia will stimulate additional demand for expertise on knowledge-based regional development; the research area will contribute here with a cross-regional and (inter)national comparative perspective. In addition, the situation in Europe following Brexit will continue to generate a lively demand for expertise on transnational forms of academic education.

Transdisciplinary research

An important element of knowledge transfer for the research area consists of transdisciplinary research, which is characterized by the involvement of the addressees of knowledge transfer at the point of formulating the research interest and/or in further research. A share of the research projects conducted by the research area are thus of a transdisciplinary nature.

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network trains doctoral students in an application-oriented manner. Operators of collaborative workplaces in rural and peripheral regions as well as administrative institutions for regional development are directly involved in the network, and in the qualification of junior researchers. In addition, workshops are organized for all the above-mentioned parties as part of five European “Knowledge Exchange Days”, in which the research-led recommendations for action of the 15 doctoral researchers are presented for discussion and further development. The application-oriented research project AppVeL, part of the Federal Programme for Rural Development (BULE), is being carried out in close cooperation with the Think & Do Tank Neuland 21 e.V. This project aims to develop recommendations for tailoring promotion of digitalization in voluntary work and digital education for volunteers, especially in rural areas, and to feed them into funding-policy discourse at federal level. Building on the results, further support and educational offers will be developed for practitioners.

The research area will continue to pursue transdisciplinary research approaches in the future. This is demonstrated, for example, by the lead project “Post-Office”, which at an early stage invites practitioners to a project workshop to jointly concretize the object of research, and to hone the research questions. In the latter phase of the lead project’s research, its results are to be discussed with practitioners and the thus-qualified implications for action will be further developed into an IRS policy paper. In addition, the empirical phase will make the ongoing research work available via an IRS podcast presenting significant interim results. Based on the BMBF initiative “Innovation Hub 13”, BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg has developed a further-training course to certify practitioners as transfer scouts. As part of the training, the research area is organizing a pilot module for the further professional qualification of this important knowledge-transfer target group, in which instruments and measures for shaping knowledge transfer between research and (economic) practice will be taught against the background of an open-region approach.

The research area’s third-party funding strategy (see Section 6.4) aims to consolidate its stock of transdisciplinary research at the level already achieved. Two WIR projects (BMBF) are currently being evaluated. In the project “Regional Change through Innovation for Digital Circular Value Creation”, the task of the research area will be to provide external innovation impulses in the Ruhr via lab formats.

In “The Elbe Valley - Becoming a Resilient Region”, the research area will contribute with an investigation into the consequences and effects of communal living and working places in the region. The project “From Knowledge Transfer to Impact” (BMBF) has also been submitted to the “Knowledge Transfer” funding line. The aim here is to trace successful examples of impact back to transfer sources, and to reveal transfer paths that reconstruct its trajectory not only from universities to regions, but also from regions to research institutions, in order to request means to specifically promote knowledge transfer on this basis.

7 Research area Politics and Planning

Research-area coordination: to be confirmed

7.1 Research-area profile

The research area Politics and Planning analyses the political negotiation and planning of the social and spatial development of cities and regions. It primarily examines the governance of increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous problem situations and how they are dealt with locally. The research is guided by the assumption that global challenges such as climate change, the financialization of spatial development, increasing socio-spatial disparities, global migration, and the pluralization and heterogenization of citizen protests are putting increased pressure on the capacities for action of “collaborative”, “cooperative”, and “partnership-based” governance arrangements in particular. Against this background, the research addresses the possibilities, challenges, and limitations of different governance arrangements.

The concepts of governance, institutions, and institutional change are thus central reference points for the research area. In addition, the concept of resilience is applied, understood as the ability of cities and regions to deal with complex problems, crises, and disruptions. Empirically, the governance of common goods such as housing, urban infrastructures, or climate-neutral, climate-smart, and sustainable urban and regional development are examined. Spatially, the focus is primarily on the urban level of action, although network-like interconnections and relationships to other spatial scales (neighbourhood, regional, national, global) are always taken into account.

The research area Politics and Planning addresses questions such as: What is the local and regional impact of global developments, and how are they negotiated? How can local conflicts over collective interests be dealt with productively? How do cities and regions increase their adaptability to developments and disruptive events that they cannot themselves control? How does the political shaping of urban development change in the absence of consensus? How do cities and regions learn from each other?

In addressing these questions, research methods from policy and governance research, in particular, are applied. The research is carried out primarily within the framework of qualitative, individual and comparative case studies. The focus here is on qualitative methods of social and political research, especially expert interviews, focus groups, and document analyses. Quantitative methods - such as cluster analyses for the selection of case studies - can also be important, however.

The research area's three research groups have each previously developed their own conceptual perspectives, which will also be applied in current research and further profiled and integrated in the future. Of particular importance are the concepts of “peripheralization” (Kühn 2015 and 2016; Kühn et al. 2017) and the “commodification gap” (Bernt forthcoming; Bernt 2020), which together provide an institutionalist and actor-centred perspective on the development of socio-spatial disparities. In relation to urban climate and sustainability policy, the concepts of “embedded upscaling” of local experiments (Kern 2019) and “matching cities” (Kern et al. 2021) have been elaborated, each dealing thoroughly with the potential for and limitations of transferring innovation between cities. Both conceptual strands are to be more strongly integrated in the future, and oriented towards the analysis of multilevel constellations.

The addressees of the research area's transfer work are predominantly to be found in politics and (planning) administration. They deal with urban and regional development, urban infrastructures, urban-development funding, and sustainability policy at the local, national, and even international levels. Outside the state sector, the addressees for consultation services can be found in energy and housing companies, associations, and civil-society organizations.

7.2 Research-group profiles

The research area Politics and Planning comprises three research groups. The research group "Infrastructure Research" is currently in the development stage.

Research group Infrastructure Research

Research-group head: to be confirmed

The profile of the group will be submitted as soon as the joint appointment procedure with Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin for the professorship/research-area coordination is complete.

Research group Urban Politics

Research-group head: PD Dr. habil. Matthias Bernt

The research group Urban Politics deals with the political negotiation and planning of urban development. The focus is on the local handling of global processes, such as the financialization of urban-development processes, the growth of socio-spatial disparities, and increased international migration. The research group understands cities as arenas of collective action by actors. It makes reference to political-science governance concepts and planning theories. These are brought together with approaches from urban sociology and human geography (such as gentrification, citizenship, and segregation) in order to enable an institutionalist and actor-related perspective on the specific processes of urban and regional development. The starting point of the research is the diagnosis that the steering capacities of cooperative, network-like, and partnership arrangements in urban development are increasingly being called into question. New forms of negotiating conflicts are emerging that can no longer be adequately described and understood by the established suppositions of "urban governance" and "communicative planning". Rather, conflicts challenge established policy-planning decision-making procedures and require new approaches to governance. With its research, the research group contributes to the further development of forms of governance in urban-development policy and helps to improve the prospects for shaping urban change.

Research group Urban Sustainability Transformations

Research-group head: Prof. Dr. Kristine Kern

The research group Urban Sustainability Transformations incorporates studies on sustainable urban development, as well as local and regional climate policy. The group is thus connected to discussions on multilevel governance, environmental governance, risk governance, and the governance of natural

hazards. Particular interest is given to the possibilities for action of urban administration and policy from the perspective of international comparison and to institutional change, as well as to the increasing importance of cities and city networks at the international and European levels. In addition, the research group investigates the transfer of knowledge between cities and regions, and between different policy fields within cities. The shaping of sustainability and climate policy is increasingly taking place against the backdrop of drastic disruptive events. This no longer refers only to traditional focusing events such as heavy rainfall or heat waves. Rather, changes in social and political priorities are having an increasingly disruptive effect on established institutional procedures and planning processes. With this in mind, the research group investigates the spatial preconditions of local and regional sustainability and climate policy. The focus is on the development, expansion, and implementation of strategies in climate, health, energy, and environmental policy. In addition, the group questions whether and in what ways experiments and innovations in policy (such as real-world laboratories, pilot projects, and smart-city projects) can be transferred from one city or region to another.

7.3 Lead project “CONFLICTS IN PLANNING: LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS AND THEIR POTENTIAL FOR INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION”

Project team

Dr. Manfred Kühn (Head, urban/town and country planning)

PD Dr. Matthias Bernt (research-group leader, political science and sociology), Prof. Dr. Kristine Kern (research-group leader, political science), to be confirmed (postdoc), to be confirmed (doctoral student), to be confirmed (research-area coordinator, optional)

Keywords

Conflict, governance, large-scale projects, agonistic planning, Tesla

7.3.1 Problem outline

Protest and conflict are occurring more frequently

As a result of major societal challenges such as climate change, globalization, migration, and social inequality, citizen protests are currently on the rise in liberal democracies. Many conflicts arise from the large-scale projects that have become an integral part of planning policies in recent decades. Today, there is practically no major infrastructure project that is not the subject of protest and litigation. In Germany, the Stuttgart 21 project is a prominent example of the escalation of such a planning conflict, giving rise to the term “Wutbürger” (“angry citizen”) and strengthening calls for more democratic participation (Thaa 2013; Wulfhorst 2013). Conflicts are also intensifying in the context of energy transition, with its goal of a post-fossil transformation and the phasing out of lignite.

Protests by environmental groups have been directed not only against the continuation of lignite mining, but also against wind turbines and power lines (Holstenkamp and Radtke 2018; Eichenauer 2018).

Planning processes, today, are generally expected to deliver a search for consensus, negotiation of compromises, and pacification of conflict through participation. However, these expectations are frequently disappointed in the context of large-scale projects. Such projects are associated with top-down policies which are legitimized (at best) through representative democracy and formal approval procedures and which - if things go well - convince the democratic public *ex post*, by their results. The broad consensus is that large-scale projects have a legitimization deficit. They offer little scope for deliberative negotiation and informal participation by citizens. In addition, their results regularly appear disappointing in the light of the expectations raised; the projects are characterized by missed targets, delays and exploding costs (Flyvbjerg 2011). Thanks to a global expansion of development strategies around large-scale projects, research in political and planning science increasingly casts a critical light on the “cooperation optimism” and “power blindness” of the governance approach (Mayntz 2004, for example) and seeks for new approaches in which conflict and power asymmetries play more central roles. In planning theory, the model of communicative planning (Forester 1989; Healey 1992; Selle 2013), once seen as progressive, is being criticized as having become hegemonial. Increasingly, the one-sided emphasis on consensus orientation is being questioned. Due to the necessity to more systematically take into account the importance of conflicts, agonistic approaches attract increasing attention (Pløger 2018; Gualini 2015).

New focus on conflict: Agonism, disruption, and institutional transformation

The lead project starts from the assumption that this is a secular development, and that conflicts will occur more frequently in the longer term. This development can be observed paradigmatically in the implementation of major projects. Here, structural contradictions regularly arise between financial and time constraints resulting from the interests of investment and politics and the growing need for participation of an ever-more differentiated civil society (Ibert 2007). This increasingly leads to conflicts that elude consensual resolution, and that sometimes culminate in fierce political disputes. Globalization and the increased presence of international investors lead to additional difficulties as the interests and logics of action of these global players are not usually negotiated in a national and local context. The concrete interest of a powerful player to invest will change the coalition options of well-rehearsed governance arrangements practically overnight, and new, previously unattainable resources can be mobilized. Hierarchical interventions by political actors and the appearance of new, very powerful private actors with few ties to local traditions superimpose existing, long-term and informal forms of governance. All of this crystallizes in one concrete project. Given the abruptly and (for many of those involved) surprisingly changing general conditions, the urgency of the acting and the fact that different actors are affected to very different degrees, there is a high probability that emerging conflicts will not be solvable within the framework of the institutionalized, let alone consensus-oriented forms, and will instead escalate uncontrollably.

The lead project examines afresh the policy-planning forms of conflict resolution that emerge in such situations, by combining the approach of agonistic pluralism with concepts of disruption and institutional change. According to the agonistic approach, the taming of antagonistic conflicts and their enactment in agonistic arenas of democracy is becoming a major challenge (Mouffe 2014). The linkage of different spatial decision-making levels typical of large-scale projects means that this

challenge is becoming particularly complicated and has to be met by connecting various thematic fields (climate change, regional planning, economic development) and spatial levels. The resulting fractures make large-scale projects potentially disruptive events due to their urgency and the fact that they accelerate decision processes and increase the intensity of conflict. The project addresses disruption from two perspectives. One, it is based on the assumption that large-scale projects massively intervene in established actor constellations and power relations between different levels of action. Two, the questioning of established settings triggered by large-scale projects leads to intensified conflicts, which on the one hand produce a situation with increased possibilities in the sectors and levels of action concerned, and on the other hand can provide positive incentives for, cause or accelerate institutional change due to the presaged developments. From this perspective, disruptions are thus thought of in close relation to social actors and interest groups, and analysed in terms of their effects on governance arrangements in different areas.

Explorative case study: Tesla in Brandenburg

We shall examine the disruption triggered by large-scale projects with the help of an explorative case study on the US company Tesla's settlement in the state of Brandenburg and two comparative studies.

Tesla's new Gigafactory is currently being built on an area of 300 hectares on the Berlin orbital motorway in the rural Brandenburg municipality of Grünheide. The Gigafactory is the largest industrial settlement in the Berlin-Brandenburg metropolitan region, with an investment volume of €4 billion and the promise of 12,000 jobs in the first stage of expansion. Tesla wants to use the factory to produce electric cars for the entire European market. The project is supported by state politicians in Brandenburg to achieve the political goal of climate-neutral mobility and to compensate for job losses in the course of the phase-out of lignite mining in Lusatia.

Since the decision to build the factory, by means of an undisclosed location competition, came as a surprise to the public, protest from citizens and environmentalists has been forming against the project. At the local level, a Grünheide citizens' initiative has been formed, and at the state level, environmental associations are acting against the project. The protests are directed against the clearing of forest, the factory's high water-consumption requirements in a region endangered by drought, and further expected consequences such as increased traffic and settlement pressure. The Tesla case also touches on existing lines of conflict within the country in the field of energy transition and decarbonization. The extensive completion of the Tesla factory without final approval has also been criticized, raising questions about preliminary decisions, the open-endedness of the approval process, and the influence of citizen participation.

The Tesla site was chosen to serve as a case study for the following reasons:

- The case involves complex and multidimensional lines of conflict, including conflicts of interest, location, procedure, and values. The project is currently the largest industrial settlement in Berlin-Brandenburg, and thus has a high priority in the economic policy of the state of Brandenburg. Serious conflict arises between the economy (investments, jobs) and the environment (drinking-water protection, drought). The Tesla settlement has also been justified using the argument of climate-neutral automobility, igniting conflict in the context of post-fossil transformation.

- At the local level, there is the threatened identity of the municipality of Grünheide, which sees itself as a small rural town and does not want to become a “car city”.
- The project is part of the global expansion strategy of the world’s leading electric-mobility corporation, and at the same time has massive political effects at the local, regional, and state levels. The case is therefore particularly suitable for multiscale governance analyses.
- The establishment of Tesla is accompanied by a polarization of the population into supporters and opponents of the project, which is characteristic of large-scale projects in pluralistic democracies (Ibert 2007). The approval procedure for the project is based merely on a formal involvement of public bodies, associations and citizens, and thus eludes consensus-oriented planning procedures that rely on participation and informal negotiation. The fact that parts of the plans for the factory were approved in advance makes it seem questionable whether the approval procedure is open-ended.
- Since the investor has announced further stages for expansion, such as creation of the world’s largest battery factory, it is to be anticipated that further problems will arise, such as growth and development pressure and increasing traffic volume. This means that the conflict will continue in the coming years. The envisaged processing time of the lead project allows for an accompanying investigation of these conflicts as they unfold.
- The proximity of the project to the IRS’s location in Erkner provides excellent conditions for participant observation and expert interviews in the region.

Comparative studies: Stuttgart 21 and energy/climate policy

In order to categorize the case of the Tesla settlement among other cases of conflict in politics and planning, comparative studies will also be carried out as part of the project, focusing on individual, comparable dimensions of conflict.

Firstly, a focused comparison with the large-scale Stuttgart 21 project will be conducted. “S 21” was a prominent case in German political and planning history due to the violent escalation of conflict, the emergence of the so-called “Wutbürger” (“angry citizens”), the failure of mediation and finally, a referendum at the state level intended to democratically legitimize the project. The case served to intensify the call for more participation, while at the same time revealing the limits of such participation. Studies on this case are already available and can be evaluated through secondary analysis. The comparative study will analyse in particular the different forms of citizen participation that arose during the conflict, and distinguish between decision-making forms of representative, deliberative, and direct democracy, which can be assigned respectively to rational, communicative, and agonistic planning models. The comparison is intended to illuminate the complex relationship between conflict and participation.

In the area of energy and climate policy, a focused comparison will be made between the federal states of Brandenburg and Baden-Württemberg.

On the one hand, Brandenburg is a pioneer in the field of wind energy; on the other hand, as a traditional coal-producing state, and due to its status as an energy exporter, it has the highest carbon-dioxide emissions per capita in Germany. Brandenburg is also increasingly faced with the question of how decarbonization can succeed in the future.

In addition to electricity generation, the transport sector is particularly affected. At the same time, mobility transition based on electromobility makes sense only if the electricity required is not derived from fossil fuels. This is especially true for Tesla's planned battery factory (to be the world's largest), because the production of batteries is very energy intensive. Here, Baden-Württemberg acts in many ways as a counter-model to Brandenburg. Unlike Brandenburg, the state has comparatively low carbon-dioxide emissions per capita; and unlike Brandenburg, Baden-Württemberg has played an active role in shaping the energy transition and climate policy, for example by passing a state climate-protection law, establishing numerous regional energy agencies, and establishing a wide range of state support and advisory programmes for private individuals, companies, and municipalities. As a traditional automotive state, however, Baden-Württemberg struggles with similar problems to those that would be faced by the potential automotive state of Brandenburg. Despite their differences, both states have serious problems with the reduction of carbon-dioxide emissions in the transport sector. Here, there are indications of conflict in both states between the automotive industry and the federal and state governments, or between individual ministries within the state government. These conflicts will be examined in the context of this comparison.

In the event of collaboration with the head of the Politics and Planning research area, comparative studies will also be conducted on infrastructural conflicts such as transport, housing, and water supply. The selection of these comparative cases will take place at a later date.

7.3.2 Research questions

The project pursues three central research questions:

1. To what extent are antagonistic conflicts between policy, administration, investors, and citizens transformed into agonistic conflicts?

Here we assume that large-scale projects lead to complex conflicts fought out at different spatial scales and link them to one another. In the case of the Tesla settlement, we are dealing with: a) a classic conflict of interests between the economy and the environment (investments/jobs vs. environmental/drinking-water protection); b) a conflict of location (largest industrial settlement in Berlin-Brandenburg vs. location in a small municipality and in a drinking-water protection area); c) a conflict of procedure (time pressure of a global player vs. national approval and participation standards); and d) a conflict of values (enthusiasm for technology vs. preservation of nature). Similar constellations arise in the comparative case studies. The project aims to investigate the possibilities and limitations of policy and planning in regulating such complex fields of conflict, and to transform antagonistic conflicts into agonistic ones in the context of large-scale projects.

2. How do large-scale projects influence existing forms of governance in politics and planning? In what way do they have a disruptive effect?

We begin from the assumption that large-scale projects, due to their increased conflictuality, challenge established actor constellations, routines, and agreements, and can lead to surprising institutional change. At the same time, the concrete dynamics of individual conflicts crucially depend on the contexts in which they take place. Against this background, we shall investigate when conflicts lead to a disruption of existing power relations and procedures, and when they do not.

Of particular interest are the relationships between the different spatial levels of action (“scale jumping”).

In the case of Tesla, there is already a high degree of conflict. The undisclosed decision resulting from a location competition presented the political public and the affected communities with a done deal. Further tensions arise between national approval and participation standards and Tesla’s global corporate strategy. For example, the investor has exerted enormous time pressure on the approval process, using a factory in Shanghai as a model for the short construction time possible. In addition, the company has repeatedly modified its construction plans. Tesla’s building application has not included definitive building plans for the factory, but is taking place successively with many intermediate stages, fueling suspicion that problems are intended to be concealed from view for the time being. The factory complex is already under construction, although final approval by the environmental authorities has not yet been granted. The suspicion of a preliminary decision in the approval process and alibi participation is obvious to the protesting citizens and increases the potential for conflict even more. The project is threatened with a further escalation of conflict if the environmental associations are successful in suing through the courts because of serious errors in the approval procedure.

In the comparative case study of Stuttgart 21, a major political disruption arose from the contribution of the conflict to the deselection of the sitting state government of Baden-Württemberg and the election of a new government that had been among the opponents of the project.

3. What institutional changes in politics and planning result from large-scale projects?

The aim here is to examine what institutional innovations are triggered by the conflict dynamics resulting from the settlement of large-scale projects.

The investor of the Gigafactory has, for example, already proposed an acceleration of approval procedures in Germany for climate-protection projects, which would be associated with a reduction in participation rights. The Tesla settlement therefore provides a suitable case study for examining the question of whether the demands of business for an acceleration of approval procedures or the demands of citizens for more codecision-making in politics will prevail, and whether the German planning system will thus develop in the direction of more or less citizen participation. Both options harbour considerable potential for conflict in politics and planning.

In the case of Stuttgart 21, the conflict resulted in nationwide discussion about a future expansion of early citizen participation in planning procedures. In the case of energy and climate policy, the question arises whether such large-scale projects can provide the impetus for better coordination of climate and energy policy. In Brandenburg, expertise in this area is currently distributed among different ministries, and there have been repeated shifts of competences between the departments.

7.3.3 Theoretical approaches

The project employs political-science and planning-theory approaches linked by the themes of governance, participation, and institutional change, and is thus linked, above all, to two theoretical lines of debate:

Agonism, conflict, and democracy

According to the theory of agonistic pluralism (Mouffe 2014), conflict is not only legitimate but necessary for the contestation of opinions in pluralistic democracies. Conflict avoids a “post-democratic” pseudo-consensus and a “disenchantment with politics” among citizens. According to Mouffe, it is important to transform antagonistic struggles between opponents into agonistic confrontations, and thus to create a “conflictual consensus”. A decisive prerequisite for the taming of antagonistic conflicts is the acceptance by all parties of rules of conduct for the conflict (Dahrendorf 1972). Institutional procedures of citizen participation therefore play a key role for the acceptance and legitimacy of the results (Heinelt 2018). In planning research, there have been numerous attempts to adopt and develop the political-science approach of agonistic pluralism into an agonistic planning theory (Bäcklund and Mäntysalo 2010; Pløger 2018; Gualini 2015). This approach starts from a critique of communicative planning, which has, with its belief in power-free communication and consensual negotiation of interests, been the mainstream of planning theory to date (Zimmermann 2019). According to the agonistic approach, the resolution of conflict in public arenas and extended forms of participation for citizens are essential tasks for democratic planning. The strengths of agonistic planning theory are seen to lie mainly in the following points: a) it addresses the role of public planning in the growth of conflict in society and in cities (Gualini 2015); b) it enables a re-politicization of planning theory following a supposed phase of “post-democracy” and (re)views planning as a political and democratic practice that is often based on conflicting interests (Gribat et al. 2017); c) it overcomes the alleged lack of alternatives in so-called “post-politics” and allows debates about alternative solutions to enter planning again (Roskamm 2015); and d) it (re)strengthens the role of democratic participation by citizens in planning processes (Bäcklund and Mäntysalo 2010).

There are many questions that still remain open in agonistic planning theories, however. Previous contributions have argued at a very high level of abstraction and using very few examples with rather simple lines of conflict. It is thus largely unclear how the high claims of the theory can be practically implemented and empirically validated. This is especially true for the question of how conflict can actually be dealt with in a participatory and productive way in practice, and through which political-planning institutions this might be promoted. By focusing on agonistic approaches to planning, the lead project thus enters new territory and enables an empirical “grounding” of approaches to planning theory that have so far only been theoretically elaborated.

Multilevel governance

With regard to political-science research, the lead project examines how conflict is managed within an increasingly complex multilevel system. Here, we refer to approaches to multilevel governance (Hooghe and Marks 2003; Piattoni 2010; Weibust and Meadowcroft 2014; Behnke et al. 2019), as well as to rescaling of governance (Brenner 2004; Jessop et al. 2008). These approaches lend themselves to the case study of Tesla, as they account both for the governance of federal systems and for novel arrangements at the local and regional levels. Furthermore, they focus on actor constellations and refer not only to state, but also to non-state actors and their strategies at different levels. In a multilevel system, power does not only shift up and down, but is distributed among a multitude of state and non-state actors. The dynamic interconnectedness of different spatial levels also includes local and regional actors and their strategies at the federal, EU, and international levels.

It is of prime importance that the relationship between the different policy levels is not understood as static but is itself the subject of political debate. As a result, there is not only a dynamic shifting of problems and conflicts between spatial decision-making levels, but also an increase in the importance of multi-scalar and trans-scalar actor constellations and policy arenas – often in addition to and in conflict with already existing forms of territorialized governance.

In this context, the question of how the Tesla settlement affects the economic, energy, and climate policies of the state of Brandenburg, and how it influences already existing conflicts between state actors in Brandenburg (for instance, between the relevant ministries), between the federal states, and at the European multilevel system, is an important one. The dynamics between state and non-state actors in the German and European multilevel system will also be examined. This concerns, among other things, the question of how multinational companies use the different policy levels of multilevel systems to further their interests. The German automotive industry, for instance, has repeatedly succeeded in preventing, or at least weakening, tougher regulation in Berlin and Brussels through targeted lobbying (relating to the carbon-dioxide standards of new cars, for instance). The “Big Three” in the USA (General Motors, Chrysler, Ford) also have much experience using these multilevel strategies (Kern 2000), described in the literature as “venue shopping” (Coen et al. 2020; Beyers and Kerremans 2011; Baumgartner and Jones 1993) or “scale jumping” (Beer and Holli 2007). It remains to be seen whether and how an American company like Tesla will fit into German and European structures and cooperate with European manufacturers, or whether it will go its own way and pursue independent lobbying at all political levels.

By focusing the lead project on trans-scalar constellations of actors, it is possible to draw a dynamic picture of governance relations in multilevel systems, including conflict and the balance of power between different spatial levels. This allows for a more realistic understanding of the governance of multilevel constellations.

7.3.4 Methodology

The project predominantly uses qualitative methods from empirical social research, combining policy and planning analyses (Blatter et al. 2007). The project is divided into three modules, each covering different policy fields: 1) spatial planning and participation, 2) climate and energy policy, and 3) infrastructure policy (optional). The three modules allow for division of labour among the project team and take into account the already existing professional expertise of the researchers and the required qualification profiles of the PhD students and postdocs. The modules will be brought together through quarterly internal project workshops, in which the individual working steps (see Section 7.3.5.) will be synchronized, findings from empirical surveys exchanged, and interim results and drafts for publications discussed. The following describes the methods to be used in more detail.

Comparative case studies

The great strength of case-study based research lies in the possibility of combining different research methods (such as document analysis, interviews, or participant observation) and of measuring complex variables and developing hypotheses. On the other hand, the limited degree to which the results can be generalized is considered a disadvantage of such research (Yin 2018).

The focus here is on an exploratory case study on the location of the Tesla Gigafactory in Grünheide. Analysis of the conflict dynamics will be the subject of accompanying research within the project. The openness and contingency of the processes in the case selected justify the explorative nature of the case study, for which there are no transferable research designs. Furthermore, due to the complexity of the conflicts, described above, and the not unlikely case that further, currently unforeseeable conflict may arise, an adjustment of the research design must always remain on the table. The methodological procedure therefore remains flexible and will be accordingly adapted as a learning system. The project offers the possibility of accompanying the conflict dynamics over several years. A distinction will be made between the antagonistic/agonistic and escalating/de-escalating poles. The four-year duration of the project also makes it possible to observe and reconstruct forms of conflict resolution by means of policy and planning in a participatory manner.

Comparison will be made of the escalating and de-escalating conflict dynamics, the influence of actors on the course of the conflict, and the outcomes of conflict negotiation. These focused comparative studies will be docked to the modules and will be largely based, methodologically, on secondary analysis of literature, research findings, and reports, as well as supplementary interviews to corroborate the findings, where appropriate.

By comparing the case study of Tesla with others, we shall investigate the conditions under which conflict dynamics can be mitigated, and a transformation of antagonistic into agonistic conflicts made possible. Methodologically, we shall work purely qualitatively. In addition to document analyses (including local and regional development concepts, protocols, reports, and press releases), media analyses (local, regional, state, and federal press and TV broadcasts from media libraries, radio podcasts, social media, and the Internet), and participant observation of digital and analogue events (including demonstrations, committee meetings, participation procedures, and state parliament sessions), we shall work primarily with expert interviews at the levels of the community, region, state, and federal government, and up to the EU level. We shall interview representatives from politics at the local level (e.g. mayors and city councillors), regional level (e.g. the district administrator, district representatives, and regional planners), state level (e.g. ministries of business and the environment), and federal and EU levels (legislators and funding agencies); as well as from administration (municipal planning office, building authority), from the state (environmental agency as licensing authority), from the business community (Tesla, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, trade unions), and from civil society (Grünheide citizens' initiative, environmental associations). The project aims to conduct a total of 50 to 60 interviews, which will be repeated with selected interview partners in a second data-collection phase. The semi-structured interviews will have a guideline prepared, will be recorded if consent is given, and, depending on the content of the statements, transcribed in full or in part. The transcribed interviews will then be analysed using qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2015). In order to achieve a structured evaluation of the content, the formation of categories is of great importance in this analytical method. A choice can be made between inductive and deductive category formation. The inductive method takes the approach of summarizing the interview material and deriving its categories directly from the transcriptions. Categories are then determined by a multi-part process of reduction, a procedure particularly suitable for research content about which hardly any theoretical knowledge or research results are already available.

Testing the transferability of the results: Expert workshops

We plan to host two expert workshops with representatives from research and practice. The expert workshops aim for: a) a transfer of research results and “capacity building” for stakeholders at different spatial levels, and b) a critical discussion of the transferability of the results, plus their review.

The first workshop will involve dialogue and a review of the research results at the state level. Research results will be discussed with representatives from local and state politics, planning administration, and citizens’ initiatives and NGOs. This is intended to augment the research by involving perspectives from practice. In addition, the workshop will serve the capacity-building and networking of practitioners from different thematic fields.

The second workshop will be closely related to the comparative studies and will serve to discuss the transferability of the results achieved in the case study on Tesla. To this end, we shall invite a selection of experts from national and international policy, governance, and planning research.

The one-day expert workshops will take place in Berlin and Erkner with 10 to 15 participants.

7.3.5 Work phases

Preparatory phase (months 1 to 6)

During this phase, the empirical data-collection will be prepared by conducting a press analysis on the Tesla settlement and, in particular, evaluating the state of research on large-scale projects, conflict, and participation. Having completed this evaluation and identified the research gaps, hypotheses will be derived to guide the investigation for the three project modules. This phase will culminate in the preparation of two to three working papers on multilevel governance of climate and energy policy, participation conflicts in planning, and, if applicable, infrastructure conflicts (Milestone 1).

Empirical data-collection phase: Accompanying research (months 7 to 36)

The main phase of the project will see the empirical data-collection conducted by means of the collection and evaluation of documents, participant observation of events, and expert interviews. For the interviews, suitable partners will be identified and contacted, and interview guidelines will be developed and coordinated between the three modules. The 50 to 60 interviews will be conducted in two phases. In the first data-collection phase (months 7 to 18), conflict participants from the fields of politics, administration, business, and civil society will be interviewed on their perspectives of the project and the resulting conflict dynamics. This will be followed by an interim evaluation of the interviews during two or three one-day project workshops (months 19 to 21). In a second data-collection phase (months 22 to 30), individual in-depth questions will be asked about any issues that remain unclear, or about new dynamics that have evolved in the course of the project. This will involve some of the interview partners being interviewed a second time. This phase will be concluded with three case-study reports on the project modules, presenting the results of the data-collection (Milestone 2).

Comparative phase: Focused comparative studies (months 22 to 36)

In this phase, which will overlap with the second phase of empirical data-collection for the Tesla case-study, three focused comparative studies will be produced: on multilevel conflict in the organizing of decarbonization (comparative study Brandenburg/Baden-Württemberg), on planning and participation conflicts using the example of the Stuttgart 21 project, and on infrastructure conflicts (optional, case selection still open). This phase will be concluded with written comparative studies elaborating and reflecting upon similarities with and differences to the Tesla case study (Milestone 3).

Evaluation phase (months 37 to 48)

In this phase, the empirical results of the case-study reports will be jointly discussed and interpreted by the project team and compared with the current state of research. New findings will be elaborated upon and initial conclusions drawn. To test the extent to which the results can be generalized and transferred to other situations, two expert workshops will be held with representatives from research and practice. The results of these workshops will be integrated into the preparation of publications (Milestone 4).

In the final phase, the products of the project will be prepared in the form of a book and several articles in national and international peer-reviewed journals and submitted to publishers and editors. Knowledge transfer will take place through presentations at national and international specialist conferences, as well as policy-consultation events (including the Regional Talks at the IRS, and Leibniz in the Bundestag).

7.3.6 Expected results and products/outcomes

Contributions to planning research

The project contributes to the critical revision of agonistic planning theories by reflecting on the chances and limitations of agonistic planning approaches in practice, and by relating the model of agonistic planning to rational and communicative planning. Furthermore, a contribution will be made to participation research in planning sciences by analysing the interplay of antagonistic and agonistic elements in the public arenas of participation. From a more application-oriented perspective, the suitability in practice for conflict resolution of different levels of participation, as well as of formal and informal participation formats, will be analysed. In this way, the project will contribute to improving conflict management in politics and planning.

As products related to planning research, at least eight presentations will be given at national and international conferences. In addition, a session will be organized at a renowned scientific conference. The results will be published in two articles in peer-reviewed journals.

Contributions to governance research

It is expected that the project's results will make contributions to political science, furthering the debates on multilevel governance and conflict in the context of the post-fossil transformation. The political-science debate will thus be augmented in two ways.

Firstly, the project will address the dynamics of conflict within complex multilevel systems, including the local level alongside those of the district, the state, the federal government, and increasingly also the European Union. The multilevel problem has long been the subject of political-science research, but the primary focus has thus far been on the coordination of actors. By comparison, the forms and dynamics of conflict resolution have been less researched.

As described above, however, it is to be expected that conflict in spatial development will gain in significance. The lead project accordingly positions itself to focus on the conflictual nature of multilevel constellations and thus goes beyond the frequently expressed criticisms of the “optimism of cooperation” and the “power blindness” (Mayntz 2004) of governance research.

Furthermore, the project contributes to the growing research landscape on post-fossil transformation. In this field of research, the literature has thus far tended to refer only to a limited segment of actors (focusing only on the regional or EU level, for instance) and has neglected the connections between governance processes at different spatial levels. The project introduces additional complexity here and includes a multitude of possible veto players.

At least four presentations related to governance research will be given at international and national specialist conferences. In addition, a session at a renowned scientific conference will be organized. The publication of the results is closely related to a planned doctorate, which will take the form either of a monograph or of two to three cumulative essays on conflict in the context of multilevel governance and the post-fossil transformation.

In addition, a joint article on the topic of disruption and institutional change will be produced, deepening the conceptual perspective of the project and summarizing it on a more theoretical basis.

7.3.7 Schedule for the lead project “Conflicts in Planning”

Phases	2022				2023				2024				2025			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
1. Preparatory phase																
Est. current state of research																
Development of theses																
Development of working paper																
2. Data-collection phase																
Evaluation of documents																
Press and media analysis																
First wave of interviews																
3. Comparative phase																
Interim evaluation / Workshops																
Second wave of interviews																
4. Evaluation phase																
Comparisons / Expert workshops																
Dissemination/ Products																
Planned results and products																
Publications			WP							JP 1	JP 2	PP	JP 3			JP 4
Events			S			S					2 ExW					
5. New research programme																

Abbreviations used:

ExW = expert workshop IC = international conference JP = journal paper

PP = policy paper S = session SI = special issue WP = working paper

7.4 Qualification projects

Qualification projects of post-doctoral researchers (in alphabetical order)

Name: Dr. Wolfgang Haupt

Project duration: 2022-26

Higher-education institute: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Supervisor: Not applicable

Working title: Governance of climate change in cities

Abstract: The project examines paths of climate policy and climate governance of cities in Germany and Europe. Strategies and measures from the fields of climate protection and climate adaptation will be considered equally as central pillars of urban-sustainability transformation. The project focuses in particular on the dynamics between cities (such as between pioneers, imitators, and latecomers), taking into account their increasing embeddedness in EU multilevel governance, as well as the potentials and limitations of the transfer of policy innovations between cities.

Name: Dr. Elisa Kochskämper

Project duration: 2022-26

Higher-education institute: Technische Universität Berlin

Supervisor: Not applicable

Working title: Urban development paths between resistance and change with regard to crises and disruptions

Abstract: The project examines possible urban-development paths between resistance and change in the context of crises and disruptions. Crises and disruptions, interpreted as negative disturbances of the urban system with different impact spaces and time dimensions, are currently considered one of the greatest challenges that cities face. At the same time, resilient urban policy is seen as a much-cited antidote. In the project, theoretical approaches to resilience are linked with theories of change in political science, in order to conceptualize and trace urban-development paths. Principal focus is placed on the integration of applied approaches that include epistemological assumptions on the social construction, physical materiality, and emotional perception of reality within the collective assessment of crises and/or disruptions. The dynamic between the anticipation of disruption and the reaction to acute crises is as central to the study as those between stability and flexibility or path dependency and innovation.

Doctoral projects (in alphabetical order)

Name: Felicitas Klemp

Project duration: 2019-22

Higher-education institute: University of Bonn

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Nadine Marquardt

Working title: The political construction of critical infrastructures: The example of Smart Cities

Abstract: This cumulative dissertation combines two topics. Firstly, it deals with the question of which specific discourses prevail within the discussion about critical infrastructures in Germany. Secondly, it analyses the digitalization of infrastructures at the urban level. To this end, districts with smart-city projects are called upon as empirical units. The project compares the concept of “securitization” (prevalent in Germany) with that of resilience (prevalent in Sweden), and investigates which visions, concepts, and guiding principles are associated with smart-city projects in Germany and Sweden regarding critical infrastructures.

Name: Gala Nettelbladt

Project duration: 2019-22

Higher-education institute: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Supervisor: PD Dr. habil. Matthias Bernt / Prof. Dr. Laura Calbet i Elias

Working title: Governing Conflict: The Urban Politics of Far-Right Contestations

Abstract: This cumulative dissertation examines how municipalities deal with the growth of the radical right. Specifically, the project explores the question of how radical right-wing positions and racist ideologies are reflected in local processes of negotiation. Against the backdrop of increasing social polarization, it aims to gain new insights into strategies to strengthen democracy in municipalities. The dissertation includes three peer-reviewed publications. The doctoral project is funded by the German Academic Scholarship Foundation.

7.5 Knowledge transfer

The work of the research area examines challenges for the planning and political control of cities arising from global developments. The focus is on how cities deal with climate change, the financialization of spatial development, increasing socio-spatial disparities, and the pluralization and heterogenization of citizen protests. The research contributes to a better understanding of political and planning problems, and develops perspectives for action for practitioners.

The main target groups for the research area’s transfer work are in politics and (planning) administration, alongside energy and housing companies, associations, and civil-society organizations.

The transfer activities cover the entire range of common transfer formats. As a rule, transdisciplinary research projects (for instance, on the further development of large housing estates or on urban climate resilience) are closely connected to formats of policy advice, science communication, and committee activities. The aim is to achieve a high level of visibility in the subject area, which promotes intervention in policy discussions and communication with political decision-makers.

Political and social consultation

This approach has proven particularly successful in the areas of housing and urban-development policy, as well as in the field of municipal climate policy. Here, members of the research area are sought-after partners in political and social consultancy. Their advisory services include both written formats (such as expert reports and policy papers) and oral ones (such as roundtable discussions and committees).

PD Dr. Matthias Bernt has been intensively involved in the area of housing and urban-development policy in recent years, and has participated in numerous consultations, panel discussions, and interviews. Prof. Kristine Kern and Dr. Wolfgang Haupt have been involved in the field of environmental and climate policy, engaging in transfer activities in the form of consultations, interviews, lectures, press work, moderation of panel discussions, and the appraisal and evaluation of transdisciplinary projects.

The consultancy activities of the research area are supported by the researchers' participation in advisory boards, initiatives, and committees. Prof. Kristine Kern and Dr. Manfred Kühn are involved in the Academy for Territorial Development in the Leibniz Association (ARL) and in numerous planning-related working groups. PD Dr. Matthias Bernt is a member of the advisory boards of "Wohnraumversorgung Berlin", the "Initiativenforum Berlin", and the "Kompetenzzentrum Großsiedlungen". Dr. Wolfgang Haupt was appointed to the climate-protection advisory board of the Berlin district of Pankow. The work in the above-mentioned committees contributes significantly to the discussion on municipal options for action (through the submission of statements, advice on the preparation of forums, and discussion events or informal dialogue with decision-makers, for instance). On occasion, contributions are made to the trade and daily press, and expert reports are prepared for state policy.

The research area's transfer strategy in the new research programme builds on previous projects and transfer work (and the expertise gained there) and further develops its transfer activities in the respective fields. The following topics are central to the work of research area (this list might be supplemented once the research group Infrastructure Research has been established): the further development of housing estates, municipal housing policy, conflict management in planning and participation processes, municipal climate policy (climate protection and adaptation).

The transfer fields share a number of connections (such as conflict management and climate policy) and thus offer the possibility of cross-thematic cooperation and mutual support between the research groups.

The transfer work benefits in all areas from the perspective on conflict and disruption established in the lead project, which enables a better understanding of the challenges and limitations of different governance arrangements.

In view of the increasing prevalence of conflict, in housing and urban-development policy as well as in climate policy, we believe that the demand for consultation services in the thematic areas dealt with by the research area will increase in the coming years. Our perspective on conflict dynamics and governance problems, embedded as it is in the profile of the research area, facilitates original transfer work that distinguishes the IRS from other providers in the corresponding thematic fields. A goal of public-relations work in the new research programme is to better elaborate this “brand essence” and to increase its public visibility. We primarily view it as our task to introduce theoretically well founded, overarching, and (inter)nationally comparative perspectives into existing discussions, and thereby to contribute to the qualification and further development of established strategies for action.

Transdisciplinary research

Transdisciplinary research projects are closely linked to our activities in political and social consultancy, and form the backbone of transfer work both in conceptual terms and in terms of visibility, resource acquisition, and access to decision-makers. For this reason, several current projects are transdisciplinary and based on close cooperation with municipal administrations.

- The collaborative project “From Urban Redevelopment Focus to Immigration Neighbourhood? New perspectives for peripheral housing estates” (StadtumMig) examines the potential and problems of former urban-redevelopment areas in their transition to immigrant neighbourhoods and develops recommendations for action together with the cities of Cottbus, Halle (Saale), and Schwerin.
- In the collaborative project “Urban resilience to extreme weather events: Typologies and the transfer of adaptation strategies in small cities and towns”, the aim is to strengthen resilience to heat waves and heavy rainfall, and to make better use of the transfer potential between cities. This is being done in close cooperation with the cities of Potsdam, Würzburg, and Remscheid, and the Johanniter Unfallhilfe e.V. and adelphi think tank.
- The research project “Energy Transition in Social Space” comparatively examines attitudes to energy transition in Berlin and in the Spree-Neiße district of Brandenburg, and develops scenarios and options for action for the implementation of energy transition in different regional contexts.

The application of transdisciplinary research approaches is to be continued and consolidated in the 2022-25 research programme. The proposed research projects “The housing affordability crisis”, “Arenas of Conflict”, and “Urban resilience to extreme weather events” are thus already based on transdisciplinary alliances or contain transdisciplinary research modules. In the research area’s lead project, questions about dealing with protest, managing conflict, and organizing citizen participation processes in planning procedures are central.

In addition to established paths of science communication and policy advice, a close connection between research and practice is striven for, such as through the planned expert workshops. Further formats for the co-production of knowledge will be developed together with regional actors from administration and civil society out of our monitoring of the current conflict surrounding the Tesla settlement.

8 Research area Contemporary History and Archive

Research area coordination: Prof. Dr. Christoph Bernhardt

8.1 Research-area profile

The research area Contemporary History and Archive deals with the design, planning, and appropriation of spaces in recent history, and with related archival and digital conservation. Current research includes the history of urbanization, the history of architecture and urban planning in the GDR from a transnational perspective, the significance of materiality in the historical change of the built environment, and transnational cooperation in spatial development. Another focus is on concepts and practices of archiving and transmission in the digital age, as well as methods and research approaches of digital history.

The research area investigates the historical origins of current processes of spatial development, and opens up the view for long-term continuities, as well as for breaks and crises, in developmental lines. Members of the research area also deal with the challenges of managing the architectural heritage and value of the past in the present. In addition, in an era of digitalization, our researchers examine questions relating to new forms of the transmission and archival storage of current knowledge for future generations, such as digital architectural designs. Our primary addressees are the broader public, civil-society initiatives, and municipalities. In addition, consultation services for other archives, especially small and highly specialized ones, are being developed.

The research area deals with questions such as:

- How can medium and long-term processes of socio-spatial and planning development be analysed and understood across both time and cultures? This question arises in particular from the problem that research on socialist and Western societies in the 20th century was predominantly conducted separately, so that, for instance, methods and theories of socio-spatial inequality that were developed for Western societies are not suitable for socialist societies. The research area therefore specifically works on cross-system approaches.
- How can contemporary references and present-day consequences of historical developments be analysed with the aim of contributing to a better understanding of current problems? The research area pursues the idea of a “history of the present” for building and planning, in order to better analyse, for example, the emergence of the attribution of authenticity to historical buildings, or current controversies about their reconstruction.
- How does planning knowledge circulate between experts across borders, and how is it implemented locally? Transnational historiography has developed various formats and concepts for this, such as transfer research on the transmission of ideas and practices that goes beyond international comparative analyses. The research area examines this topic in depth for the fields of building and planning.
- How are planned spaces appropriated, and how does their usage change? The research area overcomes the traditional divide between planning and architectural history on the one hand and social history on the other, and develops approaches for the integrated analysis of long-term transformations of spaces.

- How can the urban-planning history of the GDR be understood, researched, and archived in an east-west German and international context? The research area specifically addresses normative “charging” and gaps in research, for instance on GDR urban planning, and highlights differences and analogies between development there and in other regions and states, such as France and Poland.

These topics and questions are dealt with using concepts from temporal, planning, and social history research, each of which gives spatial references a central position. In this sense, the use of approaches from socio-spatial research into inequality and historical governance, as well as spatial history, pays great attention to scalar dimensions and processes. With the concept of biographies of place, the research groups examine processes of spatial design at the local level in their embeddedness in transnational and global contexts. Among the concepts that have been significantly shaped by members of the research area itself are the approaches of urban-development paths and path dependency, biographies of place, and historical governance research.

Another focus is on biographical-historical approaches. These are applied in the form of individual and collective biographies, include key actor and network approaches, and are accentuated in the direction of transnational and global knowledge circulation and expert practices. Concepts of digital history and mapping are combined with new forms of source generation, methodologies, and evaluation.

8.2 Research-group profiles

The research area has the special feature that, in addition to its research and junior research groups, it houses the research infrastructure group “Digital History/Scientific Collections”. While the former research group has a primarily historical and architectural orientation, the junior research group conducts more cross-disciplinary work, with an accent on architectural and global history. The work of the research infrastructure group focuses on the maintenance and service offerings of the scientific collections for researchers inside and outside the IRS, as well as digitalization projects, including as part of research and collaborative projects with external partners.

Research group Urbanization Trajectories and Cultures of Planning in the 20th Century

Research-group head: Prof. Dr. Christoph Bernhardt

This research group investigates processes of spatial development and planning history from the perspective of contemporary history. Special focus is placed on the integrated analysis of processes in the history of society and planning in both German states in their European contexts. To this end, the socio-spatial dynamics and development paths of cities and neighbourhoods are analysed as the result of planning interventions and appropriation processes by social groups, as well as of political initiatives undertaken by citizens. The research group works interdisciplinarily at the interface between urban, planning, and architectural history, and examines in particular the scalarity of processes of spatial development. Special attention is paid to the biographies and patterns of action of architects, planners, and civil-society actors, as well as to the practices of circulation and implementation of planning models across borders and political levels. The modern-day relevance of historical processes and the concept of digital history in its linking of research and archival strategies form an important reference point for the investigations.

Junior research group Histories of the Built Environment

Research-group head: Dr. Monika Motylinska

The junior research group conducts interdisciplinary and explorative research on the built environment in global contexts, with a special focus on its materiality. Using approaches from architectural and urban history (such as planning circulation under global conditions), as well as economic geography (e.g. global commodity chains, internationalization of companies) and social anthropology (e.g. ethnography of materials, science and technology studies), the history of the built environment in the 19th and 20th centuries is investigated in all its complexity – from the production of building materials, to the actual construction process, to the appropriation, maintenance, conversion, and decay of buildings and ensembles. The analyses focus on places in the Global South, which are examined in transnational contexts within the framework of relational biographies of place. Through a critical examination of the archive as a concept, as well as methods from the digital humanities (such as deep mapping and network analysis), the junior research group contributes to the history of spatial development and is in close contact with the scientific collections. It aims to question established disciplinary patterns of interpretation and to advance risk-taking research at the interface between history and the social sciences. This approach stems from a Freigeist-Fellowship project “Conquering (with) Concrete: German Construction Companies as Global Players in Local Contexts” (01/2020 - 12/2024, Volkswagen Foundation) and will be expanded in the coming years by attracting further third-party funding.

Research group Digital History/Scientific Collections

Research-group head: Dr. Kai Drewes

In the IRS research infrastructure, analogue and digital source holdings are made accessible online as part of its exploration of digital-history research approaches. At its core are the Scientific Collections for the History of Building and Planning in the GDR, a special archive for the recent history of spatial development in East Germany that is available both to international researchers and the general public. The central tasks of critically reflecting on the collection, preservation, and accessibility of archive holdings are supplemented by a variety of educational activities. These include online offerings and exhibitions, as well as strategic networking with other archives and collaborative projects within the Leibniz Association. Since the beginning of 2020, services have been digitally expanded as part of a special budget, databases have been merged within a dedicated platform, and the holdings have been connected to national and international archive portals (Archivportal-D, Europeana). The examination of digital-humanities approaches, such as the visual indexing of holdings, evaluation of mass data, geocoding and mapping methods, as well as the involvement of laypersons in the indexing and evaluation of materials (citizen science), aims to closely link archive development and digitalization with research.

8.3 Lead project “SOCIO-SPATIAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN BERLIN-BRANDENBURG 1980 - 2000”

Project team

Dr. Harald Engler (Head, historiography), Dr. Rita Gudermann (Co-head, digital history)

Dr. Malgorzata Popiolek-Roßkamp (postdoc, architectural history), to be confirmed (doctoral student)

Keywords

Transformation, socio-spatial fragmentation, political crises/disruptions, civil-society movements, gated areas, urban history of the GDR/BRD

8.3.1 Problem outline

In the mid-1980s, the political-social order in the Berlin-Brandenburg area seemed largely stable, despite its location at the interface of antagonism between systems of the East and West. In the field of tension between institutional division and socio-cultural alienation, intensive mutual observation and selective expert communication across the Wall, West Berlin's role as an outpost and shop window of the capitalist West seemed largely consolidated. The same applied to East Berlin as the capital of the socialist GDR, and to the areas of Potsdam and Frankfurt (Oder) as a hinterland cut off from the western part of the city (Bernhardt 2020).

With the collapse of the GDR and the socialist system in 1989/90, which researchers agree was a “revolution” (Kowalczyk 2009), and with the subsequent reunification of Germany and Berlin, a fundamental break occurred in the political-institutional, economic, and spatial-social order of the region. This rupture came as a complete surprise to contemporaries, including the social sciences, and has so far neither been thoroughly analysed nor satisfactorily explained by researchers, at least at the regional level.

This concerns in particular the longer-term causes and their consequences up to the turn of the millennium. The project addresses three deficits in research, which are essentially based on the continuation of traditional concepts. Firstly, the upheaval of 1989/90 was largely explained in terms of political developments at the international and central state level (such as, in particular, transformation within the USSR and the fall from power of the SED), and neglected the influence and role of spatial-social transformations. Secondly, and related to this, regionally differentiated dynamics have so far hardly been studied in depth -- with the exception of the cases of Leipzig and most recently Potsdam (Zwahr 2014; Bartetzky 2015; Weiß and Braun 2017) – so that no comprehensive study has yet been available for the upheavals in the Berlin-Brandenburg area. Such an investigation seems all the more worthwhile since in the Berlin area both systems came under equal pressure to change. Thirdly, especially for Berlin, separate representations of the two social systems or city halves before 1989 continue to determine the current picture, so that there is only a diffuse understanding (Hochmuth 2017) of the common prehistory and the interdependencies between East and West Berlin at the time of division and their subsequent fusion in the “unification society” of the 1990s (Großbölting 2020).

The initially informal networking between planners from East and West from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s is of great interest for the analysis of governance issues in this disruptive process.

On closer examination, the state of knowledge on the period mentioned is defined by the fact that, within the framework of various modes of memory (Sabrow 2019), both at the level of collective memory and in historiographical research, particular and contradictory narratives stand, largely unconnected, side by side. Among the most important of these narratives is, on the one hand, the emphasis on the significance of political-social movements on both sides of the Wall - especially the GDR citizens' movement in East Berlin and the social movements and neighbourhood initiatives in West Berlin - for the emergence of problems of legitimacy in both political systems, and which contributed significantly to the demise of the GDR. Largely unrelated to this is the narrative of the neoliberal "marketization" (Ahrens et al. 2015) of cities and their neighbourhoods, which took place at the same time. In the 1980s, this took hold of western European cities, including West Berlin, and increasingly determined their development (Balz and Friedrichs 2012). In the 1990s it was transferred to the new federal states, including the former East Berlin (Ther 2016; Holm 2006; Bernt 2003; Lenhart 2001). The present project takes up these two fundamental refractions of perspective in the form of a dichotomy of protest-driven social appropriation and capitalist marketization on the one hand, and the division into East and West of the lines of development in Berlin on the other. Its two central aims are to overcome these refractions by means of an integrated, cross-border analysis and representation of socio-spatial transformations in Berlin-Brandenburg, and to examine the 1989/90 revolution as a test case for reflecting on the lines of continuity and rupture in social upheavals at the regional level in the light of social-science disruption research. The particular depth and radicality of this systemic change offers the possibility for examining disruptions in different social sub-areas in an integrated and comparative way.

This approach will be operationalized and implemented in such a way that, for selected sub-areas and related policy fields, the common central question will be pursued as to which different or analogous forms and mixtures of social appropriation "from below", neoliberal marketization and political control can be observed. The analysis will be carried out, in each case, for both the political-social and the spatial-material dimensions of transformation in selected study areas, so that structural changes, social recomposition, and political initiatives in, for example, old town districts or city peripheries can be empirically examined. Among the various forms and consequences of such transformations, special attention will be paid to the patterns of social fragmentation and exclusion and inclusion. These can be found in very different socio-spatial contexts: for example, in the socialist special zones for businesses and the police, in military areas, as well as in the "gated communities" in the residential areas of the socialist *nomenklatura* and in the wealthy neighbourhoods of the post-reunification period.

The selection of the spaces and fields to be studied also includes an assessment of which in-depth insights the historical observation of ruptures and lines of continuity might be expected to provide for social-science research focused on current disruptions. While, for example, the drivers and dynamics of institutional disruption are more likely to emerge in spaces of conflictual political debate, such as historic building areas, other spaces, such as peripheral special zones, may have offered potential as land reserves for the mitigation or resolution of social conflict, for example in the form of housing. As a result of this consideration, it is planned that the project will examine socio-spatial transformations in residential areas (especially old-town neighbourhoods and "gated communities"), in selected commercial areas (such as brownfield sites), socialist special zones (such as the holiday facilities of

companies and police), and military areas (especially those of the Allies) on the basis of selected small-scale examples.

8.3.2 Research questions

The lead project focuses on three interconnected sets of questions. In the first set of questions, the established historical and sociological patterns of interpretation of the 1989/90 revolution for East and West Berlin will be critically evaluated, in terms of which lines of disruption and evolution they identify, and what significance they ascribe to socio-spatial transformations. The second set of questions focuses on the empirical investigation of socio-spatial transformations between 1980 and 2000 in selected sub-areas and policy fields of the Berlin-Brandenburg region. The third set of questions focuses on the analysis of new socio-spatial arrangements in the region around the turn of the millennium, their specificity from a supra-regional perspective, and the identification of the potential and added value of spatially related historical disruption research.

Research question 1: How does research conceptualize the relationship between ruptures and continuities in the social transformation of West Berlin, and the erosion of the socialist system in East Berlin and its surrounding area, and what significance is attributed to socio-spatial transformations?

- What research concepts and explanations does research on the upheaval of 1989/90 in the Berlin area offer that can be made fruitful for historical disruption research?
- What research approaches on the erosion of the socialist system, on neoliberal “marketization” of cities in the West, and on social movements in both systems are suitable for combining and further developing, with the aim of creating an integrated cross-system analysis?
- What significance does research attribute to socio-spatial transformations for the political upheaval of 1989/90, and what basic patterns of social appropriation and neoliberal urban restructuring does it highlight for the reunified region in the 1990s?

Research question 2: What developments did the system transformation in the Berlin-Brandenburg region display in selected sub-areas and their related policy fields?

- What patterns of socio-spatial transformation emerge from illustrative empirical analyses in the fields of housing and district policy, socialist special zones, and commercial and military areas?
- Which tendencies and variants can be identified in the fields mentioned, especially in the relationship between social appropriation, marketization, political control, and processes of socio-spatial exclusion and inclusion, and how can these be brought together in an integrated description of the development between 1980 and 2000?
- What interdependencies between social inclusion and exclusion and material spatial structures can be discerned in the transformation processes studied, among other things in the light of recent analytical methods of digital history?

Research question 3: What are the main socio-spatial characteristics of the Berlin-Brandenburg region around the turn of the millennium, and what conclusions can be drawn for historical disruption research from the analyses conducted?

- How can the particular socio-spatial constitution of the Berlin-Brandenburg region around the year 2000 be characterized from a supra-regional perspective?
- On which points do contemporary perception, diagnosis of older transformation research, and currently popular interpretations of the socio-spatial and political change of the 1990s need to be corrected?
- What contribution do the analyses make to cross-disciplinary, spatial disruption research, especially with regard to the driving forces and specific dynamics of the 1989/90 upheaval in the Berlin area, its consequences in various social sub-sectors, and, in particular, governance patterns in the run-up to and during the “process of unification”?

8.3.3 Theoretical approaches

The theoretical approaches used for the lead project are taken from the historical literature on the 1989/90 revolution, as well as from recent crisis and transformation research. Other central theoretical points of reference are neoliberalism research in connection to social movements, and approaches to socio-spatial disparities and exclusion research, which can be continued from the previous lead project.

In more detail, work from the first research strand on the political shift of 1989/90 (Ash 1990; Schuller 2009; Rödder 2009; Ther 2016; Dalos 2009) delineate the larger systemic, but also domestic political contexts in which the events at the regional level of Berlin-Brandenburg are to be located. Of particular relevance is work that includes and gives appropriate weight to social change in GDR society as an explanatory factor vis-à-vis its political crisis dynamics, such as the decline in power of the SED (Kowalczyk 2009). In particular, these studies also offer preliminary work on researching and explaining the phenomenon of the creeping erosion of the GDR system beneath the surface of its apparent stability (Ladd 1999; Port 2010), as well as on placing the 1989/90 revolution within longer-term lines of social change from the 1970s (Rodgers 2011; Bösch 2019). In conjunction with the results of recent crisis research (Mergel 2011; Bösch et al. 2020), these allow the shaping of an approach to historical disruption research that is suitable for the subject of the 1989/90 revolution and specific to events in the Berlin-Brandenburg region, and at the same time able to connect to social-science research.

Another central theoretical point of reference for the project is international transformation research. In the lead project, this will be called upon primarily for its historical accentuation (Banditt 2019; Schröter and Villinger 2019) and for how it defines the system transformation following socialism (Merkel 2009; Maćków 2005; Heydemann and Vodička 2013; Böick 2015). Here, the stages in the transition from former communist or socialist autocracies to market-based liberal democracies will be critically analysed. It also allows for the processes in the Berlin-Brandenburg region to be understood in terms of their specificity compared to other post-socialist countries, and thus as one of several lines of development within Europe, which is an overarching goal in the work of the research area.

The approach of transformation research has recently been complemented by research on neoliberalism in contemporary history, which looks at the connections between neoliberal policies, market radicalism, and the New Right, including their role in socio-spatial polarization in cities, from a related perspective (Ther 2016). Together, they provide a suitable theoretical framework for embedding the analyses of the Berlin-Brandenburg area in the larger context of system transformation.

For the analysis of socio-spatial transformations in the narrower sense, theoretical approaches from historical inequality research are taken up. These include theories of socio-spatial disparities and exclusion in socialist and western political systems (Gieseke 2013) as well as approaches to the relationship between social fragmentation and integration (Saldern 2006). For the field of housing and neighbourhood policy, which plays a particularly important role in the project, approaches from social-science movement research can be used to analyse, for example, the struggle of citizens against the deterioration of the historic city areas, as well as the phenomena of “rent evasion” (*“Schwarzwohnen”*) and squatting. Since previous approaches to movement research have been formulated primarily in relation to western societies (Roth and Rucht 2008; Backouche et al. 2018) and can be applied to (post-)socialist societies only with some difficulty, it is important to formulate an approach that is sustainable across systems, for which preliminary work by the research area has already been done (the *“StadtWende”* project). Here, the aim of the project is also to make a theoretical contribution to the further development of social movement research for socialist societies.

Processes of socio-spatial fragmentation and urban milieu formation, as well as their significance for the formation of political-oppositional movements in urban neighbourhoods, will also be researched in the lead project using newer concepts of “mapping” that are being developed within digital history. These approaches can be used, for example, to determine the spatial patterns of the emergence and action of citizens’ groups and social movements, and to gain additional insights into the spatial dimensions of social change and political mobilization from cartographic visualizations.

These mapping approaches will also be used at the micro-level for empirical analyses of the socialist special zones and “gated areas” (restricted military areas, private holiday and residential areas), for the use and appropriation of which special access rules and material borders such as barriers, walls, and fences were or are significant. For their analysis, the approaches to “bordering” and “boundaries” formulated in connection with “mapping” methods (Rodger 2014), as well as the theory of power spaces in the GDR (Lindenberger 2016), will be adopted.

8.3.4 Methodology

Methodologically, three central stages are envisaged for the project. The first of these is the profiling of its research framework on the basis of an in-depth literature review of research on the 1989/90 revolution and of disruption research, with the aim of applying it to regional spaces (in this case, Berlin-Brandenburg). This is followed, secondly, by case studies that empirically examine the key questions on the relationship between social appropriation, marketization, and political control for selected subspaces and related policy fields in the Berlin-Brandenburg region. In the process, individual methodological and theoretical contributions will also be elaborated, especially on cross-system movement research and “mapping”. Thirdly, a synthesis of the individual results will be undertaken and contributions to historical disruption research will be developed from this.

In a narrower sense, the project combines various, predominantly qualitative methods, among which of particular importance are the classical procedures of historiographical source and document analysis, eyewitness interviews following the rules of oral history, and more recent methods of digital history. Furthermore, in view of the cross-system comparative orientation of the project, comparative methodological approaches and transfer analyses will be applied.

Selection of case studies

On the basis of the literature review, paradigmatic cases will be selected for the fields of housing/urban-district policy, commerce/industry, socialist special zones, and military areas. This selection is still to be made according to the criteria of representativeness, pertinence to questions of disruption and socio-spatial transformation over the course of two decades, spatial scope, and sources. Primarily those areas within Berlin's outer orbital motorway are to be considered as possible study areas. For instance, for the topic of housing/urban-district policy, neighbourhoods in the districts of Kreuzberg and Mitte might be considered; for the field of commerce/industry, there are the derelict and incrementally converted industrial areas in Wedding (such as the former electrical company AEG) and Oberschöneweide; and for special zones, there are the holiday areas used by companies and the police in the eastern Berlin hinterland (the GDR district of Frankfurt/Oder), as well as the military areas of Soviet armed forces in Karlshorst or Wünsdorf, and of US armed forces in Lichterfelde/West Berlin.

Data collection and evaluation

In addition to file holdings in the state archives of Berlin and Brandenburg, which are becoming increasingly accessible, data from contemporary social-science studies of segregation research and from surveys conducted by the state and municipalities provide important source material. To a limited extent, these also include quantitative data analysed using simple methods of descriptive statistics. For the GDR period, archival documents as well as "grey literature" from the Institute for Urban Planning and Architecture, a predecessor of the IRS, provide important information. The peculiarities of sources from the socialist period, in terms of vocabulary and validity, need evaluation here, using the relevant conceptual and source-critical approaches of GDR research (Lüdtke and Becker 1997). But the sources for contemporary urban research and public statistics from the west or on West Berlin also need critical reflection with regard to related categories and questions, to identify normative implications in contemporary data collection and so as not to reproduce outdated approaches and results (Reinecke 2021).

Data collection will also include the development of new, as yet inaccessible source holdings inside and outside the IRS, for which the project will receive support from the Scientific Collections as part of their regular acquisition activities. In the preparatory and initial phase of the project, it is planned that holdings available in the Scientific Collections, from internal analyses of the GDR Bauakademie and individual institutes that have not yet been processed, be utilized.

In addition, interviews will be conducted with contemporary witnesses to whom the researchers and archivists of the research area have manifold contacts and privileged access, and who can provide information about informal procedures in processes of social change and politics.

Guided expert interviews will therefore be conducted according to the standards of historical oral-history research (Obertreis und Stephan 2009), some of them as group interviews and eyewitness interviews. In connection with the cross-border approach of the project, interviews will also be conducted with West-Berlin actors, thus broadening the spectrum beyond the oral history research of the research area, which has so far concentrated strongly on GDR actors.

Novel and systematically employed approaches from digital history (Rau und Schönherr 2014) are to be used in the lead project. Additional insights into the dynamics and consequences of socio-spatial transformation, as well as the role and change of structural-material ensembles, will be gained by means of digitally linking and evaluating historical maps and other spatial data, in particular with the assistance of “deep mapping” methods for the analysis of material spatial structures and patterns of use. Digital mapping and other cartographic procedures will also be used to analyse spatial patterns in the political mobilization of citizen groups and social movements.

Already being considered and prepared ahead of the start of data collection is the possibility of making subsequently available the data generated from our oral history and mapping research, as part of our research-data management for external researchers. It is planned that this work be carried out in close connection with the large research network NFD4Memory, part of the National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) of the DFG, in whose work the research area is involved. The aim is to generate model procedures for the systematic provision of data from the research area’s projects, in order to make it available to other researchers on our online portal and to increase the visibility of the lead project and other projects.

8.3.5 Work phases

The lead project is divided into five phases. In the preparatory phase, the basic theoretical approaches of the project are prepared by evaluating international research and the basic literature on the case region. Two coordinated empirical data-collection phases serve to collect sources and documents, interview eyewitnesses, and collect and process mapping data. In the evaluation phase, the data is brought together and analysed, and initial results are formulated, jointly discussed, and summarized. In the final phase, the research will be synthesized and prepared for publications, events, and their presentation in digital form on various portals.

Preparatory phase

In this preparatory phase, designed to elaborate the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the project, the state of research on the framework concepts and topics of disruption and crises, the political revolution of 1989/90, and transformation and neoliberalism will be reviewed by means of a structured literature review relating to the topics of the lead project. The working plan will also be prepared. In parallel with this a review and evaluation will be carried out of the basic empirical research literature on the transformation period in the metropolitan region of Berlin-Brandenburg, with a focus on housing, commerce and industry, special zones, and military sites. In addition, the approaches and methods of mapping in the context of digital history research will be prepared for their use in the lead project.

Data-collection phase 1

In the first data-collection phase, sites and urban neighbourhoods in the Berlin-Brandenburg area will be selected on the basis of the preliminary research. Comparative methodological principles of historical East-West comparisons will be included in the examination and selection of the survey areas under consideration. For the case studies selected, the previously identified and (in part) newly indexed archival holdings will be evaluated, and initial interim results will be jointly discussed in the form of short internal status reports for each unit of work or case study.

Data-collection phase 2

At the beginning of this phase, the raw data for the mapping analyses will be available or supplemented, the collection of which will already have begun during the first data-collection phase. The data will then have inconsistencies removed before being merged and prepared for evaluation and publication. This second phase will, in addition, focus on guided interviews and group discussions with eyewitnesses and their evaluation, on the basis of which further internal status reports will be prepared and jointly discussed. This will be accompanied by final archival research and verification of source evaluations.

Analysis phase

In the analysis phase, the empirical findings will be summarized, and discussed and formulated across the individual units of work and local results in the form of overarching hypotheses on, and initial syntheses of the analysed socio-spatial transformations. Initial results and hypotheses will be presented in selected research forums, discussed with practitioners and contemporary witnesses, and summarized in a suitable form for a broader public.

Final phase

In the final phase, the results will be prepared for publication and a larger conference will be organized to bring together historical and social-science perspectives and findings. Applications for third-party funded follow-up projects are planned, and initial arrangements have already been made for internal cooperation with the research area Politics and Planning. Important results from the research of the lead project, especially those deriving from digital history approaches, will be published on the research area's new portal.

8.3.6 Expected results and products/outcomes

The project addresses basic questions about the historical development of Berlin-Brandenburg at the end of the 20th century and provides contributions to cross-disciplinary disruption research in addition to basic historical knowledge. It is expected that new results will be generated primarily in three fields.

Firstly, based on a critical examination of the fragmented state of research on the 1989/90 revolution and the subsequent transformative phase, the project formulates an overarching analysis which will make the analogies and divergences, ruptures, and continuities in the developments in the eastern and western areas of the capital region more comprehensible. It will bring together hitherto fragmented perspectives and research strands. Without negating fundamental systemic differences, longer-term lines of neoliberal urban restructuring going beyond the rupture of 1989/90, will be shown to have been closely intertwined processes within a coherent explanatory framework. This approach will likewise be applied to social movements on both sides of the Wall, and to the social changes of the “unification society” of the 1990s. In the process, the micro-analyses of the case studies are predicted to reveal the important role and effects of (material) border demarcations and structures, the “de-bordering” effect of the removal of spatial barriers, and the associated release of social energies and appropriation of spaces.

Secondly, systematic analytical access to central processes of social transformation at the regional level promises to provide insight into the fundamental social shifts that have occurred in fields such as housing, commerce, special zones, and military areas, the complexity of which has conditioned the hitherto prevailing fragmentation in collective memory and research. The tense interferences of social appropriation, neoliberal “marketization”, and political control will be critically reconstructed and processed by means of a spatial analysis for selected study areas in the form of complex biographies of places. It is hoped that the results for the period between 1980 and the turn of the millennium, which is now gradually coming into the focus of historical research, will become a point of reference for relevant research.

Finally, the project is expected to make substantial contributions to cross-disciplinary research on disruption, which will be sustained by a number of sources. On the one hand, evaluation of the extensive historical research on crises, medium and long-term continuities, and ruptures in social development will help to secure the innovative direction of the IRS’s intended cross-disciplinary approach in this field, and to give it a contemporary historical perspective. Furthermore, by investigating the globally historic disruption in 1989/90 at the Berlin-Brandenburg border, the project generates a reference point against which other disruptions can be critically measured and reflected. Lastly, the case analyses will also generate extensive knowledge about “sectoral disruptions”. Here we anticipate very different disruptions and dynamics (in the fields of housing and commerce, for instance) and potentials associated with disruptions (for example as a result of changes in land use) to emerge.

Publications

Besides the traditional formats of peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers, online publications in digital history formats are also planned. Scientific publications will appear in the form of a special issue, a conceptual article, and two empirically oriented articles in international, peer-reviewed journals. At least one academic dissertation is also to be produced in close connection with the lead project. With regard to online offerings, the publication of at least one database and interactive map on the special zones and gated communities is planned, which will be presented on the research area’s new portal as well as, possibly, in other repositories.

Events and lectures

A total of at least 15 presentations on the project findings are to be given at national and international conferences and events. Two sessions each at international and national conferences are also planned. In addition, a research and a practitioners' workshop and an international final conference will be held on the topic of the lead project. Other products that will shape the profile of the research area are the "Workshop Series on the History of Building and Planning in the GDR", at which interim results from the lead project are presented in a conference format.

Other

Among the special formats that help to define the profile of the research area, and to which the work in the lead project will also contribute, are academic contributions to exhibitions and exhibition-accompanying activities, for which there are initial plans and requests. In addition, considerable weight will be attached to the forms of research-data management mentioned above, such as the timely provision of research data for external researchers. Finally, an IRS International Lecture and several IRS Seminars with internationally renowned experts on the topic of the project are planned. In addition, at least one IRS Regional Talk on the topic will be organized.

8.3.7 Schedule for the lead project “Socio-spatial transformations in Berlin-Brandenburg 1980-2000”

Phases	2022				2023				2024				2025			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
1. Preparatory phase																
Est. current state of research																
Operationalisation mapping																
Consolidation of disruption																
2. Data-collection phase 1 and 2																
Selection of case studies																
Data collection																
Archival research																
3. Analysis phase																
Follow-up research																
Evaluation of archive material																
Evaluation of interviews																
4. Project-completion phase																
Publications																
Follow-up activities																
Planned results and products																
Events	WD		S			S		WS	WD		S		PW		IC	
Publications						WP		JP 1					JP 2		JP 3	SI
5. New research programme																

Abbreviations used:

IC = international conference JP = journal paper OD = online database PP = policy paper PW = practitioner workshop
 S = session SI = special issue WD = workshop discussion on planning history WP = working paper WS = workshop

8.4 Qualification projects

Qualification projects of post-doctoral researchers (in alphabetical order)

Name: Dr. Piotr Kisiel

Project duration: 2021-2026

Higher-education institute: Frankfurt/Oder

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Paul Zalewski

Working title: Urban Development and Reconstruction of German and Polish Cities 1940 – 1960

Abstract: The project researches the influence of war damage mapping on reconstruction and post-war urban planning in the GDR and Poland. The comparison between those cities that until 1945 belonged to Germany but were assigned to Poland after the war, and cities in East Germany/ the GDR is the focus of the analysis. The aim is to deepen our understanding of the so-called Socialist City and to shed light on the role of war damage mapping, pre-war planning, and monument conservation for its formation and change. The project is part of the BMBF programme “Kleine Fächer – Zusammen stark,” which supports the career development of post-doctoral researchers.

Name: Dr. Monika Motylinska

Project duration: January 2020-December 2024

Higher-education institute: Bauhaus-Universität Weimar

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Hans-Rudolf Meier, Prof. Dr. Johan Lagae

Working title: Transactional Architectures: German Entrepreneurial Builders and Their Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa

Abstract: This cumulative habilitation project examines the entrepreneurial projects of German construction companies and architects in the context of foreign construction activities in sub-Saharan Africa. Using several case studies, different phases of the construction process will be illuminated, and the transactional relations between the actors involved will be related to the respective built object. The project is a contribution to architectural history in dialogue with building history, science and technology studies, and economic geography. Empirical studies will be undertaken in 2022 and 2023 in West and possibly Central Africa.

Name: Dr. Małgorzata Popiołek-Roßkamp

Project duration: 2021-2026

Higher-education institute: NN

Supervisors: NN

Working title: Military zones after the political caesurae 1945 and 1989

Abstract: The habilitation project (financed from the IRS core budget, duration 48 months) researches the history of conversion of former military areas in Germany after the political system changes in 1945 and 1989. The aim of the project is to recognize different patterns of dealing with these areas,

using various examples and approaches from governance research and including different groups of actors, and to research the question of conversion strategies, commemorative cultures and musealization practices.

Planned postdoc projects of the research area: Stefanie Brünenberg and Dr Daniel Hadwiger are working towards postdoctoral projects within the framework of IRS junior-researcher promotion and are currently in the orientation phase.

Doctoral projects (in alphabetical order)

Name: Sadia Amin

Project duration: January 2021-January 2024

Higher-education institute: Bauhaus-Universität Weimar

Supervisor: Dr. Monika Motylinska

Working title: Local Roads, Global Connections

Abstract: The project deals with current road-construction projects in South Asia (Pakistan) and Africa (prospectively in Nigeria). Using ethnographic methods (qualitative interviews, participant observation), transport infrastructures will be investigated with a focus on the role of construction workers and their relationship to local and global construction companies and projects. Field research is scheduled to begin, following a design phase, in the course of 2022. An extension by one year to a total of four years is being sought.

Name: María Jeldes

Project duration: January 2021-January 2024

Higher-education institute: Bauhaus-Universität Weimar

Supervisor: Dr. Monika Motylinska

Working title: German Construction Companies and the Production of Infrastructure in Latin America

Abstract: This dissertation project examines the projects of German construction companies in Latin America in the context of global interdependencies. It begins from the observation that the decision-making processes of corporate actors and the dynamics of the construction market are insufficiently taken into account in representations of economic globalization. Using theoretical approaches from economic geography (including internationalization of companies and global commodity chains), the various activities of German actors and their contribution to the emergence of infrastructure are analysed as part of several case studies. An extension by one year to a total of four years is being sought.

Name: Paul Sprute

Project duration: April 2020-April 2023

Higher-education institute: Bauhaus-Universität Weimar

Supervisor: Dr. Monika Motylinska, Prof. Dr. Johan Lagae, Prof. Dr. Christoph Bernhardt

Working title: Building Post-Colonial Ports of Globalisation: German Companies and Harbour Constructions in West Africa

Abstract: This monographic dissertation project examines the history of port construction in West Africa through extensive archival and literature research, as well as oral history. The focus of the work is on the port construction projects of German construction companies, which are analysed in the context of global interdependencies. Within the framework of several case studies in Liberia, Guinea, and the Ivory Coast, among others, the perspectives of local actors will be confronted with those of German companies, critically evaluated and placed in the history of post-colonial globalization. The field-research phase is to be completed in 2022. An extension by one year to a total of four years is being sought.

Name: Julia Wigger

Project duration: January 2018-December 2022

Further-education institute: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Christoph Bernhardt

Working title: Civic Engagement in the Preservation of Historic Towns in the GDR before, during, and after the Peaceful Revolution

Abstract: The project examines the formation and work of citizens' groups against the deterioration of historic city areas in the GDR using historical and social-science approaches from movement research. The social profile and patterns of action of the citizens' groups, biographies of key actors, contribution of the citizens' groups to the revolution in the GDR, and important developments in the field of historic town renewal beyond the political changes of 1989/90 will be analysed.

8.5 Knowledge transfer

The research area examines the development of urbanization and urban planning in the 20th and 21st centuries from the city and regional to the global-historical level. Particular importance is placed on the strategy of pursuing larger thematic issues and formulating narratives in research crossing between individual projects and scholars, such as with the concept "giving a face to GDR architecture". With the Scientific Collections, the research area possesses significant source material on recent building and planning in East Germany, for whose online presentation a powerful digital infrastructure is currently being built. It is not only in the context of this process that the digital transformation of historical scholarship and archiving is being thoroughly reflected on and shaped. The topics dealt with are highly relevant for social self-understanding and are being pursued on the basis of many years of experience with special formats of mediation, such as exhibitions and a dedicated online portal (see also Section 8.7). In addition to the strong media and public interest, the

special expertise in contemporary history and archives at the IRS is also widely sought after by experts from various professions, such as heritage conservation and other authorities, architectural and other associations, and the administration of other research institutions.

The research area uses various formats and transfer channels as needed (expert discussions and reports, for example). In addition to the already numerous online activities arising from research and collection activities, the greater participation of citizens in the collection of historical information is currently being promoted (such as in the project “Stadtwende”), and increasingly more third-party funded projects are being applied for that contribute to citizen science through special online formats; that is, they aim for a two-way exchange of knowledge between researchers and citizens.

Political and social consultation

The research area provides consultation services to a large number of authorities, institutions, and social actors. One line of knowledge transfer that has been taken up more recently on behalf of public institutions is the scientific reappraisal of the prehistory of federal German administrative authorities and actors in urban development under National Socialism. Other forms of research into building history contexts and testimonies on behalf of public institutions, such as expert opinions for the preservation of historical monuments, are also part of the research area’s profile.

Christoph Bernhardt, Andreas Butter, Harald Engler, and other research-area colleagues advise monument offices at the municipal and state levels, as well as other authorities and institutions (such as Flughafen Berlin Brandenburg GmbH), memorial sites, museums, film teams, etc. on a broad spectrum of questions concerning contemporary history with spatial relevance, and on dealing with the past in the present.

Monika Motylinska and her research group are expanding their transfer activities in several non-European regions by advising monument authorities in Nigeria and South Africa, as well as cooperating with NGOs from the field of heritage activism in West Africa and South Asia. In cooperation with colleagues at the Scientific Collections, consultations for archives in African countries are offered on a selective basis.

Kai Drewes advises architectural associations, individual architects, and other Leibniz institutes on the establishment of archives and the handling of old documents and estates. In the course of the research area’s digital infrastructure project, Rita Gudermann will increasingly advise archives and architectural offices with regard to challenges in digital preservation (and solutions to be developed for this at the IRS). The focus of archival consultation will be on the development of a sustainable digital infrastructure, among other things with regard to the archiving and indexing of large-format plans and other digital designs, such as CAD files.

Within the framework of the research programme, the established forms of consultation will be continued and expanded upon, especially within the framework of third-party funded projects. Particular attention will be paid throughout to the expansion of existing and the development of further online presences. A selection of newer knowledge-transfer formats for a broader public are being incrementally developed. In the 2022-2025 research programme, these include the production of an audio walk as a contribution to the topic of “Historical Authenticity in Building Heritage” and a website on the pictorial memory of building heritage in Berlin-Brandenburg, both as part of the SAW project “Urban Authenticity”. The Leibniz Research Network “The Value of the Past”, which began in

September 2021 and with which the research area is involved, is to conduct comprehensive research on questions of the communication of historical facts to society and the development of formats of “public history” alongside the basic question of how history was and is negotiated in public debates in each case.

Consultation to archives, and in the future possibly also to architectural offices, especially with regard to the preservation and accessibility of special digital formats (maps, databases, websites, CAD files, and so on) will be raised to a new level as part of the ongoing institute-funded project to improve its digital infrastructure.

Transdisciplinary research

The research area is characterized internally by the cooperation of various subjects and disciplines, as well as its profile-forming interweaving of research and archival work. It also has a large and heterogeneous network of external stakeholders with whom it has an ongoing exchange. Since the beginning of its existence, the Scientific Collections have maintained close contact with contemporary witnesses of building and planning in eastern Germany and beyond. In connection with this, the research area’s biennial Workshop Series on the History of Building and Planning in the GDR represent an established, high-demand format of mutual knowledge transfer that brings together researchers, archivists, and curators with architects and planners.

An important element of our third-party funding strategy (see Section 8.4) is the further profiling of the research infrastructure in the field of digital history, which implies continuous work in transdisciplinary formats. The increased involvement of contemporary witnesses in archival work and the employment of their commitment and knowledge in digitization and indexing is thus planned.

With the third-party funding application to the BMWi for CITIZENARCHIVES, a project is in preparation as part of which both procedures and products will be developed to enable small archives to digitize, index, and publish parts of their holdings with the support of their users in efficiently organized, IT-supported processes.

8.6 Development of the research infrastructure

Scientific Collections and digital infrastructure

The Scientific Collections have experienced a significant boom in recent years, reflected, for instance, in the greatly increased number of enquiries received from Germany and abroad, the acquisition of numerous preliminary and posthumous collections, exhibition and online projects, and successful committee work. The great importance and increasing appreciation of the intersectional topic of digitalization is expressed in an increase in personnel and material resources by means of a special budget as well as its new designation as a research infrastructure.

The developments that have been initiated will, in the research programme 2022-2025, be continued and accelerated through the acquisition of third-party funded projects. The areas of digitalization, indexing, and networking and mediation will be given special priority. The core archival tasks (acquisition and indexing of holdings, support for users, and so on) are in continuous development.

In addition to consultation activities for research, museums, monument conservation, and the media, the Scientific Collections will in future increasingly look to architectural firms for cooperation.

Digital History

As a result of the acquisition of a special budget in the course of the last IRS evaluation, a multi-year institute-funded project to improve the digital infrastructure of the Scientific Collections began in 2020 (Head: Dr. Rita Gudermann). This project goes well beyond technical issues such as restructuring the software and hardware equipment. Rather, the collections are developing conceptually and methodologically into a research infrastructure dedicated to “digital history” and offers a coordinating and service function for the entire research area. The aim is also to make its own conceptual contributions to the field of digital history, with events and publications on questions of digital archiving and research methodology, as well as within the framework of the NFDI4Memory network.

After implementing specially designed software, the online presentation of archive holdings will be a focus of project work in 2022. The core of the project will be the creation of an independent portal. In addition, a large number of data sets will be delivered to cultural portals such as the Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek. From 2022 onwards, the in-depth study of digital archiving and indexing of special types of material, in particular of data and planning documents from architectural offices that have already been created digitally, will play a central role. Based on best-practice solutions, a consultation model will be developed, which is to be applied from 2023/24 and also generate revenue.

These and other research infrastructure activities in the field of digital history will be supplemented and expanded upon through third-party funded projects (some of which have already been applied for). In addition to the retrospective digitization of archival objects, developments such as citizen science, deep mapping, 3D and 4D simulations, text mining, and network analyses will also be addressed.

Ongoing tasks

The Scientific Collections is an archive that continues to grow in both analogue and digital terms. The active collection of relevant holdings on the building and planning history of the GDR and East Germany since reunification will remain necessary for some time to come and will therefore continue at the current level (acquisition of at least four holdings per year) until 2025. At the same time, the acquisition of purely digital data will gain in importance. The various types of holdings must be qualified in an appropriate and reflective manner, from differentiated indexing (including keywords, geodata, and so forth) and the long-term guarantee of storage capacities to provenance research and outreach.

In view of its growing acquisition of digital holdings, the Collections Concept formulated in 2017 as a central, strategic document will be reviewed and revised ahead of the evaluation of the IRS in 2024. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the archive in its current form, a first conference on the history of the collection will be held in 2022, and this will be further researched. Contributions to journals and similar publications are intended to present and open up the collection holdings, particularly on a thematic basis. Particular emphasis in the course of the digitization and indexing of holdings and related funding applications will be placed on the photographic holdings, which are available in large numbers in the archive.

Networking and mediation

The long-standing networking activities of the Scientific Collections at the regional and national levels and beyond have been reflected in the Head of the research infrastructure having been elected spokesperson for the Leibniz Association's Archives Working Group, and deputy spokesperson for the Föderation deutschsprachiger Architektursammlungen ("Federation of German-Speaking Architectural Collections"). Participation in these bodies as well as in the new Leibniz Research Network "The Value of the Past" (from the end of 2021, especially in the Lab "Digital Heuristics and Historicism") is of great strategic importance for the collections, especially in terms of attracting funding, collaborative projects, and conferences.

The established formats of public relations and knowledge transfer (guided tours, lectures, exhibitions, participation in the Lange Nacht der Wissenschaften in Berlin, blog posts, publications, and consultation services) will be continued and expanded. The thematic online portal ddr-planungsgeschichte.de will also be continued as a digital subproject.

Successful exhibition activities will be continued and, in the medium term, increasingly oriented towards the digital exhibition space. Several exhibitions are already being planned by the Scientific Collections, including one on architectural drawings from the GDR at the renowned Tchoban Foundation Museum for Architectural Drawing in Berlin for 2023/24.

Networking with other cultural institutions in the Leibniz Association and beyond, on technical issues such as long-term archiving and metadata management, will also continue. The research infrastructure is also part of the consortium National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) 4memory. In addition, workshops on the technical and legal issues of digital collection are in preparation.

Literature

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