



# NEWSLETTER OF THE DFG HUMANITIES CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES "FUTURES OF SUSTAINABILITY"

05/2025 — 13 May 2025



DFG-KOLLEG-FORSCHUNGSGRUPPE  
ZUKÜNFT DER NACHHALTIGKEIT

## Dear colleagues and friends of the Centre,

When we sent our last newsletter, it was winter — and it felt like it. Trump had just been elected, wars raged on, and socio-ecological crises deepened. Now spring is here, the sun is out — but the global outlook hasn't brightened. On the contrary: the ecological and democratic rollback is accelerating. What once looked like slow erosion has become a coordinated assault. In the U.S., the EPA is gutting environmental protections. In Europe, conservative parties are targeting green NGOs and unions. And the organizers of COPs in Dubai and Baku excluded civil society — silencing the very voices that demand higher ambition in reductions and climate justice. As Philipp Jacobi writes in this issue, it's tempting to feel nostalgic for the old days of ecological modernization debates. But this is no time for despair. For many, this moment calls not for resignation but for new strategies, collective organizing, and renewed resistance. This spirit shaped our recent Sustain-Ability event with performer Çağlar Yiğitoğulları at the Schauspielhaus — and it runs through our forthcoming activism workshop and our Young Scholars Conference on Time and Justice. Each gathering strengthens the essential links between scholarship, activism, and practical strategies of environmental defense. So: sleeves up — let's get to work for a less unsustainable future!

Stefan C. Aykut and Cassiopea Staudacher for the Futures of Sustainability team

## OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT MONTHS

# ***From Defeat to Resistance***

***What can we learn from the US nightmare?***

***with Dana R. Fisher & Cara Daggett***

***Moderation: Stefan C. Aykut & Christine Hentschel***

Photo: Martin Kollmann

## **Panel Discussion: “From Defeat to Resistance. What can we learn from the US nightmare?”, with Dana R. Fisher and Cara Daggett, 16 June, 18:00 (Apéro: 17:30)**

Join us on the evening of 16 June for a public panel discussion with [Dana R. Fisher](#) and [Cara Daggett](#), two leading voices in US climate and political research. Together, we'll examine the American case as a warning — and a source of lessons — for democratic and ecological resistance in times of authoritarian backlash. The event is open to all and part of the closed workshop "Activism, Academia, and Alliances in Shrinking Democratic and Ecological Spaces" (16-17 June), which brings together scholars, activists, and scholar-activists from across Europe, Asia, and the Americas to reflect on emerging strategies and explore new alliances for pushing forward a progressive, democratic, and ecological agenda in the face of backlash. Registration for the public panel is required by [e-mail](#).

[More here](#)



Young Scholars' Conference

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## **Time & Justice. Temporal Interrogations into Social-Ecological Justice**

8–10 October 2025

Photo: MolnarSzabolcsErdely via pixabay; Design: Martin Kollmann

### **Save the date: Young Scholars' Conference "Time & Justice"**

We are pleased to announce our upcoming Young Scholars' Conference on ["Time & Justice. Temporal Interrogations into Social-Ecological Justice"](#). This interdisciplinary gathering explores how temporal dimensions restructure conflicts over ecological issues within societal arenas. The conference brings together doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers to examine how alternative paradigms of time could promote just social-ecological transformations beyond eco-modernist notions, integrating perspectives from decolonial futures to questions of loss and mourning. While the call for papers is now closed (and the conference fully booked for on-site attendance), we invite you to join us for an open panel discussion with our distinguished keynote speakers: [David Schlosberg](#) (University of Sydney), [Michelle Bastian](#) (University of Edinburgh), [Christine Winter](#) (University of Otago), [Kübra Gümüşay](#) (author and activist) and [Fatim Selina Diaby](#) (activist). Personal attendance is possible upon [registration](#). The entire program of the conference will be accessible online via a Zoom webinar stream. Access credentials will be published on our [website](#) soon.





# KOLLEG FORUM

# Kolleg-Forum — Summer Term 2025

**04 June**, 16:00 – 18:00, [Ulrich Brand](#) (University of Vienna):

Book Presentation (in German) “Kapitalismus am Limit”

Comments: [Sarah Lenz](#) (Paderborn University), [Kohei Saito](#) (University of Tokyo)

Chair: [Frank Adloff](#) (Futures of Sustainability)

**11 June**, 10:30 – 12:00, [Carl Cassegård](#) (University of Gothenburg): “Critical Theory in Catastrophic Times”

**18 June**, 10:30 – 12:00, [Svjetlana Nedimović](#) (Organizer and Activist, Sarajevo): “Green Future, Grey Present? United Balkans Resistance and Work against Energy Transition”

**25 June**, 10:30 – 12:00, [Philipp Jacobi](#) (Futures of Sustainability): “Degrowth in the backpack of a more-than-human ethnographer – Some theoretical reflections”

**02 July**, 10:30 – 12:00, [Anita Engels](#) (University of Hamburg): “What to do about climate change: From realistic assessments to non-dystopian suggestions?”

**09 July 2025, 10:30 – 12:00**

[Laura Affolter](#) (Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung): “Justice Struggles at Ecuador’s Mining Frontier: Transformative Constitutionalism, Democratic Politics, and the Rights of Nature in Action”

**16 July**, 10:30 – 12:00, [Jan Wilkens](#) (University of Hamburg): “The Dark Sides of Climate Justice: Contesting Just Transitions in a Warming World”

[All dates on our website](#)

## Our fellows in the Summer Term 2025

[Carl Cassegård](#) (Sociologist, Gothenburg), [Ulrich Brand](#) (Political Scientist, Vienna), [Karl-Werner Brand](#) (Sociologist, Munich), [Tanja Busse](#) (Permanent Writer in Residence, Hamburg), [Anita Engels](#) (Sociologist, Hamburg), [Dana R. Fisher](#) (Sociologist, Washington D.C.), [Svjetlana Nedimović](#) (Organizer and Activist, Sarajevo), [Frédéric Vandenberghe](#) (Sociologist, Rio de Janeiro, affiliated via [HIAS](#)), [Nobuo Yamamura](#) (Business Economist, Tokyo, affiliated via [CSS](#))

Get to know our fellows and their work in the weekly [Kolleg-Forum](#) (no registration needed, every Wednesday during the semester)!

[To our fellows](#)

## THOUGHTS AND OTHER NEWS

### The Times They Are A-Changin’

Modern societies change very rapidly, and this also impacts sociological PhD-projects. A thesis can seem outdated even before its publication, if the premises it was based upon are no longer valid. Thankfully, an ethnographic research project is by design flexible enough to deal with changing assumptions. One of the premises that I started my PhD with three years ago was that green “modernization” was the hegemonic “Future of Sustainability” in the Global North.

[by Philipp Jacobi, read on here](#)

### Find us on LinkedIn and Bluesky

We are now active on LinkedIn and kindly invite you to [follow us](#) there! And of course we continue to be active on [Bluesky](#).

## PERSONALIA

### Sarah Lenz transferred to Paderborn University

Our former Research Associate Sarah Lenz recently moved to Paderborn University where she works as a [Senior Researcher](#) at the Sociology Department now. Her research currently focuses on "Digital Energy Nodes: Rechenzentren als Aushandlungsorte der Energiewende" and "Demokratische Legitimation im Strukturwandel: Moralische Deutungen und regionale Transformationserfahrungen". All the best for your new job, dear Sarah!

## LOOKING BACK



Photo: Stefan C. Aykut

## Performance & Talk: "SUSTAIN-ABILITY", 25 April

The format "SUSTAIN-ABILITY" combined a performance and a debate inspired by the thoughts of Bruno Latour and other (pre-)thinkers of the Anthropocene. It unfolded words, sounds, and experiences, and placed bodies in space to map the emotional, intellectual, and political terrain within which we must reorient ourselves in and after the catastrophe. "SUSTAIN-ABILITY" is a collaboration between the performer Çağlar Yigitoğulları and "Futures of Sustainability". With: [Çağlar Yigitoğulları](#) (performance), Lina Ebbecke (Amnesty International), [Juliane Rebentisch](#) (Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg), [Philipp Staab](#) (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), [Stefan C. Aykut](#) ("Futures of Sustainability")





Photo: Martin Kollmann

## Workshop "Degrowth, Planung, Transformation", 17-18 March

In March we hosted a well-attended two day [Workshop on “Degrowth, Planung, Transformation”](#) in cooperation with [The New Institute](#). Together with [Alex Demirović](#) (Basel/Berlin) and [Kohei Saito](#) (University of Tokyo; Fellow at The New Institute) our Fellow [Ulrich Brand](#) (University of Vienna) organized a workshop that drew on current debates, raised new questions, and indicated further need for research.

In view of the growing multiple crises and the climate crisis in particular, it is becoming increasingly clear that the economies and societies of the Global North not only need to be fundamentally restructured, but also dismantled in many areas. This implies not only overcoming capitalist structures, practices, and subjectivities and a completely different model of prosperity, but also comprehensive planning processes. However, many questions remain unanswered: The relationship between democracy and planning, the control of innovation and investment, the coordination of production and consumption patterns, the relationship between labor requirements, qualifications and individual freedom to decide on their own life paths.

These issues and many more were addressed in presentations and lively discussions among the 50 participants. Co-organizer Kohei Saito, who spoke of an impending “dark socialism” in view of the deepening climate crisis, summed up the insights and perspectives of the workshop quite well at the end: “Hopeful”.





Photo: Martin Kollmann

## Book presentation: "Triggerpunkte", 29 January

In January we hosted a well-attended and stimulating evening to discuss the book ["Triggerpunkte. Konsens und Konflikt in der Gegenwartsgesellschaft"](#). Together with co-author [Linus Westheuser](#) (HU Berlin) and in conversation with [Katharina Zimmermann](#), [Anna Fünfgeld](#), and moderator [Stefan C. Aykut](#), we explored the question: How polarized is our society really? And what might a winning strategy for left ecological politics look like? The debate drew strong interest and filled the room, as participants reflected on the study's findings and their implications for today's social tensions—especially in light of the escalating climate crisis. The evening began with an Apéro and concluded in a warm and lively atmosphere, with continued discussions over drinks and snacks.

[To the book](#)

## Fellows in the Winter Term 2024/2025

[Tanja Busse](#) (Permanent Writer in Residence), [Renata Campos Motta](#) (Oct-Dec 24), [Aurea Mota](#) (Dec 24-Jan 25), [Chris Müller](#) (Oct 24-Jan 25), [Susan Paulson](#) (Oct 24), [Frédéric Vandenbergh](#) (Oct 24-Oct 25, associated via HIAS), [Eva von Redecker](#) (Jan-April 25), [Nobuo Yamamura](#) (Sept 24-Aug 25, associated via CSS), [Çaglar Yigitogullari](#) (Dec 24-March 25), [Katharina Zimmermann](#) (Oct 24-March 25).

Thank you all so much for coming and working with us!

[To our fellows](#)

OUTPUT

## Recent Publications (selection)

Adloff, F. (2025): "Rethinking nature's values: methodological animism, gifts and rights of nature", in: Ecosystems and People, Vol. 21, 1, p. 1-15, [Link](#)

Adloff, F. (2024): "Existe-t-il des dons de la nature? - Ontologie, convivialité et symbiose", in: La Revue du Mauss, Vol. 63, 1, 86-108, [Link](#)

Aykut, S. C., Braun, M., Roedder, S. (2024): "Collaborative ethnography of global environmental governance - concepts, methods and practices", Cambridge University Press, 2024, [Link](#)

De la Hoz, N., Silva-Garzón, D., Hernández-Vidal, N., Gutiérrez-Escobar, L., Hasenfratz, M., Fladvad, B. (2024): "Unraveling the colonialities of climate change and action - Introduction to the Special Section on The colonialities of climate change and action", Special Issue, Grassroots – Journal of Political Ecology, Vol. 31, 1, 624-635, [Link](#)

Hentschel, C., Krasmann, S., Zebrowski, C. (2025): "Situational awareness: sensing insecurity and coming catastrophes", in: Critical Studies on Security, Vol. 13, 1, 1-5, [Link](#)

Hentschel, C. (2024): "Im Angesicht der planetaren Zerstörung - Soziologische Perspektiven gegen die Indifferenz", in: Lessenich, S., Scheffer, T. (eds.): Gesellschaften unter Handlungszwang – Existenzielle Probleme, Normalität und Kritik: 78-92, Vol. 2, Berlin: Bertz + Fischer (IfS Aus der Reihe; Volume 2), [Link](#)

Hwang, J. (2024): "Liminal space for progressive leftists in South Korea's bipartisan politics after the 2024 general election", in: Journal of Contemporary Asia, 1-11, [Link](#)

Hwang, Y., Hwang, J. (2024): "Out of fire into the frying pan? - The ripple effect of the Russia–Ukraine war on Korean denuclearization", in: Peace review, Vol. 36, 4, 637-647, [Link](#)

Lacbawan, M. (2025): "Post-indigeneity and the Edge of Environmental Obligation in the Philippine Uplands", in: Annales Societatis Litterarum Humaniorum Regiae Upsaliensis 2024-2025: 119-126, Uppsala: Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskaps-Samfundet i Uppsala, [Link](#)

Lacbawan, M. (2025): "Refusal, Invisibility, and the Indigenous Question", in: Esquire Magazine Philippines, [Link](#)

Lenz, S. (2025): "Sustainability, climate change and convention theory", in: Diaz-Bone, R., Larquier, G.d. (eds.): Handbook of economics and sociology of conventions: 1–22, Springer Nature Switzerland AG, [Link](#)

Rothe, D., Hentschel, C., Schröder, U. (2025): "Recomposing the climate-security nexus: A conceptual introduction", in: Geoforum, Vol. 159, 2025, [Link](#)



## The Centre out and about (selection)

12 May, Discussion, Stefan C. Aykut: "Wie weiter mit der 'Klimawende'?", [Abendsalon Hadley's](#), Hamburg

05 March 2025, Keynote, Stefan C. Aykut: "Gemeinsam weiter - wie und wohin?". Conference "[AktiKo.Vier - Gemeinsam weiter!](#)", Hamburg

20 March 2025, Lecture, Sighard Neckel: "[Klima der Gerechtigkeit. Befunde und Perspektiven](#)". Hochschule Emden

13 March 2025, Keynote, Sighard Neckel: "The Pitfalls of Transformation. On Precarious Figurations". Conference "[A Climate of \(De-\)Civilization? Shifting Dynamics between Nature and Society](#)" at Technische Universität Dortmund

12 March 2025, Panel Discussion, Stefan C. Aykut: "Umwelt und Sicherheit: Aktuelle Herausforderungen für die Internationale Gemeinschaft", Opening panel of the [39. Biennial Conference of the German Society of International Law](#)

11 March 2025, Discussion, Sighard Neckel: "[Ich, das Klima und die anderen](#)", taz-Salon Kiel

21 and 25 February 2025, Book launch events, Juneseo Hwang: "[Justice now! A story of the ecocide resistance movements that change the world](#)" (translated from Korean), published on 7 February 2025, Publisher: May Books, South Korea, Book launch events in Seoul (21 February) and in Samcheok (25 February)

29 January 2025, Keynote, Christine Hentschel: "Sustainability and Apocalypse: an Orientation". Alumni Conference, Centre for Apocalyptic and Postapocalyptic Studies: [Sustainability and Apocalypse](#), University of Heidelberg

20 January 2025, Lecture, Sighard Neckel: "Reichtum in der ökologischen Krise", [Ringvorlesung zum Klimaschutz](#) an der Technischen Universität Berlin

15 December 2024, Lecture, Frank Adloff: „[Das Anthropozän als soziologische Herausforderung: Gesellschaftliche Ursachen und Folgen der Klimakatastrophe](#)“, Philosophische Gesellschaft Bremerhaven e.V., Bremerhaven.

[More here](#)

## The Centre in the media (selection)

05 May 2025, Juneseo Hwang: "[Is 'Green Reconciliation' Coming to the Island of Ireland?](#)", in: Peace News Network.

05 February 2025, Sighard Neckel: „[Das Ideal des Kaputten \(Neckels Klima-Fragen#5\)](#)“, in: Hinz&Kunzt. Das Hamburger Straßenmagazin, Nr. 384 (Februar 2025), p. 56

06 December 2024, Sighard Neckel: „[‘Wir passen häufig unsere Erwartungen an’](#). Der Soziologe Prof. Sighard Neckel erklärt, wie uns Erwartungen an die Gesellschaft, Politiker und die eigene Familie beeinflussen – und welche Rolle die Religion dabei spielt“, in: Hamburger Abendblatt. Beilage „Himmel und Elbe“, p. 5.

25 November 2024, Interview with Stefan C. Aykut about COP 29: "[Un accord minimal qui permet de sauver la face](#)", Le Monde

[More here](#)



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