

BERLIN-BRANDENBURGER COLLOQUIUM
FÜR UMWELTGESCHICHTE
WINTERSEMESTER 2022/23



Donnerstag, 20.10.2022 Fabian Zimmer (Berlin):
Hydroelektrische Projektionen. Eine Emotionsgeschichte der Wasserkraft im Industriefilm
Kommentar: Agnes Limmer (München)

Donnerstag, 24.11.2022 Birgit Müller (Paris):
Sensors versus Senses. Control and the Perception of Reality in Climate-Smart Farming
Hybrid: Salle Georg Simmel, Centre Marc Bloch, 3. Etage, Friedrichstr. 191-193 und Online

Mittwoch (!), 14.12.2022 Stefan Esselborn (München):
Die Risikoindustrie: Kernenergie und Risikowissen in der BRD
In Kooperation mit der Abteilung Wissen -Wirtschaft-Politik (Rüdiger Graf), ZZF Potsdam
Abweichend: 16-18 Uhr, Hybrid: Humboldt-Raum, Am Neuen Markt 1 und Online

Donnerstag, 12.01.2023 Nuclear Energy in Europe: Double book discussion
Engaging the Atom. A history of nuclear energy and society & Pathways into and out of nuclear power
Kommentar: Stephen Milder (München)

Donnerstag, 02.02.2023 Katja Bruisch (Dublin)
Extraction and the making of place: How the peat industry transformed a central Russian region

Ort: **ONLINE:** <https://hu-berlin.zoom.us/j/66478482134?pwd=SGQzeWczUFB2bGdnSXlMU3lNOEwvZz09> ; Meeting-ID: 664 7848 2134, Passwort: 005056

Zeit: **18:30 – 20:30 Uhr**

Kontakt: **Astrid M. Kirchhof** astrid.m.kirchhof@hu-berlin.de

Jan-Henrik Meyer meyer@zzf-potsdam.de

Kooperationspartner:



BERLIN-BRANDENBURGER COLLOQUIUM

FÜR UMWELTGESCHICHTE

WINTERSEMESTER 2022/23



Donnerstag, 20.10.2022 Fabian Zimmer (Berlin):

Hydroelektrische Projektionen. Eine

Emotionsgeschichte der Wasserkraft im Industriefilm

Kommentar: Agnes Limmer (München)

Abstract:

Um den Ausbau erneuerbarer Energien wird heute mehr denn je gerungen. Doch schon Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts sorgten massive Investitionen in den Bau von Wasserkraftwerken für Konflikte: Der Vision vom unerschöpflichen, sauberen Strom standen Sorgen um die Zerstörung von Natur und Landschaft sowie die Kritik an mangelnder Beteiligung der betroffenen Bevölkerung gegenüber.

Fabian Zimmer untersucht diese öffentlichen Auseinandersetzungen der 1950er-Jahre ausgehend von Industriefilmen und weiteren PR-Materialien dreier exemplarischer Wasserkraftunternehmen: der Bayerischen Wasserkraftwerke AG in Deutschland, Vattenfall in Schweden und Electricité de France in Frankreich. Der Autor analysiert, wie die Unternehmen Filme einsetzten, um die Emotionen der Öffentlichkeit gegenüber dem Wasserkraftausbau zu managen. Er arbeitet die Narrative und Rechtfertigungsstrategien der Unternehmens-PR heraus, bindet sie in die breiteren Debattenkontexte ein und kann so zeigen, wie sich in den 1950er-Jahren der Umgang mit Emotionen in öffentlichen Auseinandersetzungen um Energieinfrastrukturen wandelte.

Short Bio:

Fabian Zimmer arbeitet an der Schnittstelle von Kultur-, Umwelt- und Technikgeschichte. Er studierte Geschichte und Germanistik an den Universitäten Heidelberg und Lund, forschte am Deutschen Museum und am Rachel Carson Center und wurde an der Ludwigs-Maximilians-Universität München promoviert. Seit 2020 arbeitet er als wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter des Fachgebiets Technikgeschichte an der Technischen Universität Berlin.

Publikationen: Zimmer, Fabian, *Hydroelektrische Projektionen. Eine Emotionsgeschichte der Wasserkraft im Industriefilm*, Göttingen: Wallstein 2022; Zimmer, Fabian, "The Day of the Waterfall—Tourism, Identity, and Gender at the Trollhättan Hydropower Plant." *Environment & Society Portal, Arcadia* (Autumn 2021), no. 33. Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. <https://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/9372>; Zimmer, Fabian, "Renegotiating the public interest. EDF's alpine hydropower constructions and industrial film (1940s-1960s)", in: Aschwanden, Romed / Buck, Maria / Kupper, Patrick / Schmidt, Kira J. (Hrsg.): *Conflicts d'usage depuis 1950 | Conflitti d'uso dal 1950 | Nutzungskonflikte seit 1950 (Geschichte der Alpen / Histoire des Alpes / Storia delle Alpi 27)*, Zürich 2022, S. 189–203.

Kooperationspartner:



BERLIN-BRANDENBURGER COLLOQUIUM

FÜR UMWELTGESCHICHTE

WINTERSEMESTER 2022/23



Donnerstag, 24.11.2022 Birgit Müller (Paris):

Sensors versus Senses. Control and the Perception of Reality in Climate-Smart Farming

Hybrid: Salle Georg Simmel, Centre Marc Bloch, 3.

Etage, Friedrichstr. 191-193 und Online

Abstract

In the face of growing uncertainty in weather patterns, weed infestations, crop pests and fungal diseases the industry proposes to provide the farmers with total surveillance of their crop via satellites, drones, sensors in the field and mounted on their agricultural equipment. In this paper I want to explore how digital farming reshapes the imaginaries and practices of large-scale grain farmers on the Canadian prairies of Saskatchewan. How does it affect their relationship to the crop plants they seeded and the weeds that spontaneously emerged? How do their skills to work with the natural elements grow, diminish or simply change through the new technology? How are weeds perceived by sensors and how are the data produced competing with the perceptions and the sensorium of the farmers? What do plants tell farmers and can they still listen? Underlying these practical questions is a broader concern with the nature and future of our technology addicted/trusting industrial system. Farmers still have to compose more directly than city dwellers with the natural elements. They cannot pretend to have broken free from the daily dictates of the weather, nor ignore what non-humans are up to. I will take as a point of departure Marx' insight that human work is part of nature and explore what happens to the interactions between plants and humans if human senses are mediated through electronic sensors and algorithms that belong to powerful agricultural corporations.

This talk is part of a series of lectures this fall by Birgit Müller in Berlin on *Farmers, Soils and Seeds in the Globalization*. This lecture series will explore the visions of the world and of the future that underlie the everyday practices of agricultural producers. I will examine the intimacies of agricultural practices in both industrial agriculture and subsistence farming. In a historical situation where farmers around the world face multiple forms of dispossession, their practices interact with the complexity of ecosystems and the influence of climate change, and are exposed to state interference and the dominance of multinational corporations in agricultural markets. I will explore how the lives of soils and seeds are deeply rooted, not only in the physical environment, but also in the political and economic power structures that have become global.

Short Bio:

Birgit Müller is professor of anthropology and Directrice du Laboratoire de l'anthropologie des institutions et organisations sociales (LAIOS) and Directrice de Recherche au CNRS, Paris

Kooperationspartner:



BERLIN-BRANDENBURGER COLLOQUIUM

FÜR UMWELTGESCHICHTE

WINTERSEMESTER 2022/23



Mittwoch (!), 14.12.2022 Stefan Esselborn (München):

Die Risikoindustrie: Kernenergie und Risikowissen in der BRD

In Kooperation mit der Abteilung Wissen -Wirtschaft-Politik (Rüdiger Graf), ZZF Potsdam

Abweichend: 16-18 Uhr, Hybrid: Humboldt-Raum, Am Neuen Markt 1 und Online

Abstract:

Seit den späten 1960er Jahren entwickelte sich das „Risiko“ immer mehr zu einem zentralen Konzept in der öffentlichen Diskussion, der wissenschaftlichen Erforschung, sowie der politisch-administrativen Bearbeitung von Umwelt- und Gesundheitsgefahren aller Art. Statt deterministisch zwischen Sicherheit und Gefahr zu unterscheiden wurden nun zunehmend probabilistische Risiken berechnet und gegeneinander abgewogen. Innerhalb weniger Jahre entstand ein völlig neues, umfangreiches Forschungs- und Geschäftsfeld, das sowohl die (naturwissenschaftlich-technische) Risikoabschätzung, als auch die (psychologisch-sozialwissenschaftliche) Risikowahrnehmungsforschung umfasste. Woher kam dieses neue Feld, und wie kam es zu dieser extrem schnellen Institutionalisierung? Wie, wann und in welchem Ausmaß konnte sich das „Risiko“ als Evidenzpraktik in technischen, politischen und juristischen Kontexten tatsächlich durchsetzen? Beide Fragen sind – insbesondere für den Fall der Bundesrepublik – eng mit der Geschichte der Kernenergie und den Konflikten um ihre Nutzung verwoben. Die Verbindung zwischen Kernkraft und Risikowissen bildet daher den Gegenstand des laufenden Forschungsprojekts des Vortragenden, in das der Vortrag einen Einblick gibt.

Short Bio:

Stefan Esselborn ist Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter an der Professur für Technikgeschichte der Technischen Universität München und Bearbeiter eines Teilprojekts der DFG Forschungsgruppe “Practicing Evidence – Evidencing Practice”. Er arbeitet zu Themen aus der Wissenschafts-, Technik- und Umweltgeschichte, der Geschichte von Wissen und Expertise, sowie der Geschichte von Risiko und Sicherheit.

Publikationen: Esselborn, Stefan and Zachmann, Karin. “Nuclear Safety by Numbers. Probabilistic Risk Analysis as an Evidence Practice for Technical Safety in the German Debate on Nuclear Energy.” *History & Technology* 36,1 (2020). doi.org/10.1080/07341512.2020.1766916; Ehlers, Sarah, and Stefan Esselborn, eds. *Evidence in Action between Science and Society Constructing, Validating, and Contesting Knowledge*. New York: Routledge, 2023.

Kooperationspartner:



BERLIN-BRANDENBURGER COLLOQUIUM

FÜR UMWELTGESCHICHTE

WINTERSEMESTER 2022/23



Donnerstag, 12.01.2023 Nuclear Energy in Europe: Double book discussion
Engaging the Atom. A history of nuclear energy and society & Pathways into and out of nuclear power
Kommentar: Stephen Milder (München)

This session is devoted to the memory of our late colleague
Christian Forstner († 2022)

Abstract:

In the wake of the Russian attack on Ukraine and the end of European reliance on Russian fossil fuels, the controversy about nuclear energy, its future, its role in combating climate change and the security of energy supply is back with a vengeance. The two new books that will be discussed in this session provide the historical background necessary for understanding to these debates. They focus on the ambivalent and change-prone history of relations of nuclear energy and society in Europe. Both books present key results from the EU-funded research project “[History of Nuclear Energy and Society \(HoNESt\)](#)”, 2015-2019.

Edited by Astrid M. Kirchhof, [Pathways into and out of Nuclear Power](#) (open access, Deutsches Museum Verlag) presents and compares the experience of nuclear energy and society in five European countries, where nuclear energy was never introduced, or that have decided to phase out – but not necessarily implemented the plan. Case studies on Austria, Denmark, West Germany, Italy and Sweden, explore the differences between public debates, social movements, politics and the strength of what has been characterised as the nuclear-industrial complex.

Edited by Arne Kaijser, Markku Lehtonen, Jan-Henrik Meyer, and Mar Rubio-Varas, [Engaging the Atom. A history of nuclear energy and society in Europe](#) synthesises the results of primary research on 20 countries in Europe – East and West – and North America, and offers a unique and innovative interdisciplinary account. Chapters explore the economic, societal and political dynamics connected to the growth and decline – or persistence – of nuclear energy, and explain this variety. Chapters cover issues such as social movements, international organisations, the role of trust, the experience of nuclear installations at the border or the specific dynamics of nuclear energy as a “public technology”.

*This debate is devoted to the memory of our late colleague **Christian Forstner**. Christian was a principal investigator and a thoughtful, extremely knowledgeable and generous collaborator in our project, and a friend. His insightful account on the Austrian experience – based on his much wider study of nuclear physics in Central Europe – in the Pathways volume is highly recommended. Many of the insights we gained from his work are reflected in numerous chapters throughout both volumes.*

Kooperationspartner:



BERLIN-BRANDENBURGER COLLOQUIUM

FÜR UMWELTGESCHICHTE

WINTERSEMESTER 2022/23



Donnerstag, 02.02.2023 Katja Bruisch (Dublin)

Extraction and the making of place: How the peat industry transformed a central Russian region

Abstract:

The extraction of peat for the generation of heat and power is a largely forgotten chapter in the history of Russia's fossil economy. This talk will look at the different ways in which peat extraction reconfigured the physical, economic and social geography of central Russia from the late 19th century until the end of the Soviet period. Focussing on infrastructure, workers' experiences and narratives of place and belonging I point to the fundamental tension created by the use of peat in Russia's industrializing economy. While massively degraded from an ecological point of view, peatlands became increasingly habitable for the people who exploited them. Peat, moreover, was much more than a fuel. Over time, it became the bedrock of place-based identities in communities that emerged through a history of extraction and that have struggled to come to terms with multiple social and environmental problems after extraction ended in the late Soviet period.

Short Bio:

Dr Katja Bruisch is Assistant Professor in Environmental History at Trinity College Dublin. Before, she was a Research Fellow at the German Historical Institute in Moscow. Her current project on the history of peat fuel in 19th and 20th century Russia centers on actors, places and energy sources at the margins of Russia's rising fossil economy. She is the author of *Als das Dorf noch Zukunft war: Agrarismus und Expertise zwischen Zarenreich und Sowjetunion* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2014). Other publications include "Nature Mistaken: Resource-Making, Emotions and the Transformation of Peatlands in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union" (*Environment and History* 2020) and "The State in the Swamps: Territorialization and Ecosystem Engineering in the Western Provinces of the Late Russian Empire" (*Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 2019). With Liesbeth van de Grift she co-authored "Reclaiming the Land: The Drainage Paradigm and the Making of Twentieth-Century Rural Europe" (forthcoming 2022 in *Living with the Land: Agricultural and Rural Actors in Twentieth-Century Europe*, eds. Liesbeth van de Grift, Dietmar Müller and Corinna Unger).

Kooperationspartner:

