



**FROM THE DIRECTOR**



The liberal script stands at a critical juncture in its historical development. Recent electoral outcomes across Europe, from local to supranational levels, underscore an increasingly polarised political landscape. Notable examples include regional elections in Thuringia, Saxony, and Brandenburg, where the far-right party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) made significant gains, as well as the French parliamentary elections. In the latter, even though the outcome showed a leftward shift – contrasting the results of the European Parliamentary elections – it concluded with President Emmanuel Macron announcing a right-leaning government coalition. This tendency can also be observed across the globe, playing a role in the last elections in India and, possibly, influencing the upcoming elections in the USA.

These political trends highlight the growing strain on the social fabric of Western democracies, which in turn, could lead to a process of re-scripting, where the liberal script may evolve into a more progressive or regressive form. Alternatively, we could witness an erosion of the liberal script, giving way to either non-liberal or illiberal alternatives. Illiberal scripts subordinate individual self-determination to collective control or vice

versa, whereas non-liberal scripts reject both forms of self-determination altogether.

Understanding these contestations and their potential outcomes is at the core of our renewal proposal, recently submitted by the Cluster of Excellence “Contestations of the Liberal Script (SCRIPTS)” to the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG). The proposal for the Cluster’s research agenda from 2026 onwards, would shift the focus from exploring the nature of contestations and their causes towards analysing the consequences of these contestations, in terms of the resilience or replacement of the liberal script.

Work on these topics is already underway at SCRIPTS. The recent publication of the book “Polarization and Deep Contestations: The Liberal Script in the United States”, co-edited by Senior Professor Dr Thomas Risse of SCRIPTS Prof. Dr Stephanie B. Anderson, Prof. Dr Jean A. Garrison, both of the University of Wyoming, and myself exemplifies this effort. The book examines the radicalisation and polarisation processes characterising deep contestations, providing a critical foundation for future research both within and beyond the Cluster.

SCRIPTS has also started to explore the consequences of contestations. A recent workshop led by Prof. Dr Jessica Gienow-Hecht on illiberalism discussed the challenges liberal states face in maintaining their international image. Prof. Dr Katharina Bluhm’s contribution to “The Oxford Handbook of Illiberalism”, on Russia’s illiberal conservatism, further exemplifies the Cluster’s engagement with these pressing issues.

In this edition of our newsletter, you will learn more about the latest activities laying the groundwork for the future of the Cluster, as

well as changes in our staff, upcoming events, and new publications.

As we move forward, SCRIPTS is uniquely positioned to provide insights into these critical developments and offer guidance that will help society navigate the complexities of the coming decades. We are excited to continue sharing with you not only the results of our work but also our planned path ahead.

Tanja A. Börzel

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## HIGHLIGHTS

### Renewal Proposal | SCRIPTS Sets Course for its Second Act

*SCRIPTS has just submitted its renewal proposal for the next phase of the German Research Foundation's (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) Excellence Strategy, marking an exciting milestone for the entire SCRIPTS community. We had the opportunity to sit down for an interview with our director, Prof. Dr Tanja A. Börzel, to learn more about how the Cluster wants to move forward. In this interview, Prof. Börzel shares key insights on SCRIPTS' future direction, including new research priorities and reflections on the goals already achieved. Below are some excerpts from our conversation. The complete interview is available on our website [↗](#).*

*SCRIPTS has just submitted the renewal proposal for the next phase of the Excellence Strategy, which will begin in 2026. What are the Cluster's goals for the upcoming phase?*

**Tanja Börzel:** During the first funding period, SCRIPTS analysed the nature of current contestations of the liberal script around the world and identified their major causes. Contestations have not only increased globally but also deepened. We argue that polarisation and radicalisation

are largely produced by the liberal script itself. In the next funding period, we will focus on the consequences of the deepening of contestations for the liberal script. Do we see a rewriting, or is the liberal script resisting change, which might eventually lead to its replacement by a non-liberal or illiberal alternative? There seems to be variations in the liberal script's capacity to respond to deep contestations. We want to find out why some varieties are more resilient than others.

*Reflecting on the current phase, which will come to an end next year, what would you say were the highlights of the Cluster's activities and achievements?*

**Tanja Börzel:** Over the past five years, the cluster has accomplished a lot. We have grown into a community that shows a remarkable level of diversity, both in people and perspectives. This is why we have been able to produce an impressive amount of research outputs, ranging from more than one thousand articles and books, around 50 Working Papers, nearly 100 blog posts, think pieces, and arguments, and four public lecture series. Personally, I am particularly impressed by the placement of our early-career researchers, many of whom have taken up positions with leading universities all over the world and have landed great jobs outside academia. Dr Alexander Sorg, e.g., will start a one-year postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard this Autumn, and Lukas Antoine, secured a position as a data analyst at the Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft immediately after completing his PhD at SCRIPTS.

## **Oxford University Press Series | First Volumes of the SCRIPTS' Book Series Now Available**

The conclusion of the first cycle for SCRIPTS also marks an intense phase of publications. The book series with Oxford University Press provides SCRIPTS researchers with an important avenue for publishing their works.

The first volume in the series is titled “Framing Refugees – How the Admission of Refugees is Debated in Six Countries across the World”. Written by Dr Daniel Drewski and Senior Professor Jürgen Gerhards of SCRIPTS, it examines how different countries respond to the arrival of refugees, whether by closing their borders, providing extensive protection, or selectively admitting certain groups while excluding others.

The second publication is the book “Polarization and Deep Contestations – The Liberal Script in the United States” edited by SCRIPTS director, Prof. Tanja A. Börzel, Prof. Thomas Risse, Prof. Dr Stephanie B. Anderson and Prof. Dr Jean A. Garrison. This volume brings together a diverse group of 15 scholars from the social sciences and humanities, representing seven universities in the United States, Mexico, and

Germany. The book explores the deep contestations of the liberal script in contemporary United States from a variety of perspectives, and shows that the rise of Donald Trump is a symptom and a catalyst – but not the cause – of the current crisis in US democracy. The book was written in cooperation with scholars from the Center for Global Studies of the University of Wyoming (UW). On 16 September an event marking the book launch brought together 120 participants at the UW campus.

A third volume „The Liberal Script at the Beginning of the 21st Century - Conceptions, Components, and Tensions“, will be published in the coming weeks. Further edited volumes focusing on Latin America and Asia were submitted and will be added to the series soon.

All books have been published as open-access works and can be accessed free of charge.

[Polarization and Deep Contestations – The Liberal Script in the United States ↓](#)

[Framing Refugees – How the Admission of Refugees is Debated in Six Countries across the World ↓](#)



Prof. Dr. Tanja A. Börzel and Prof. Dr. Stephanie B. Anderson discuss the book "Polarization and Deep Contestations" during event at the University of Wyoming. Photo: Gregory Ronco | University of Wyoming.

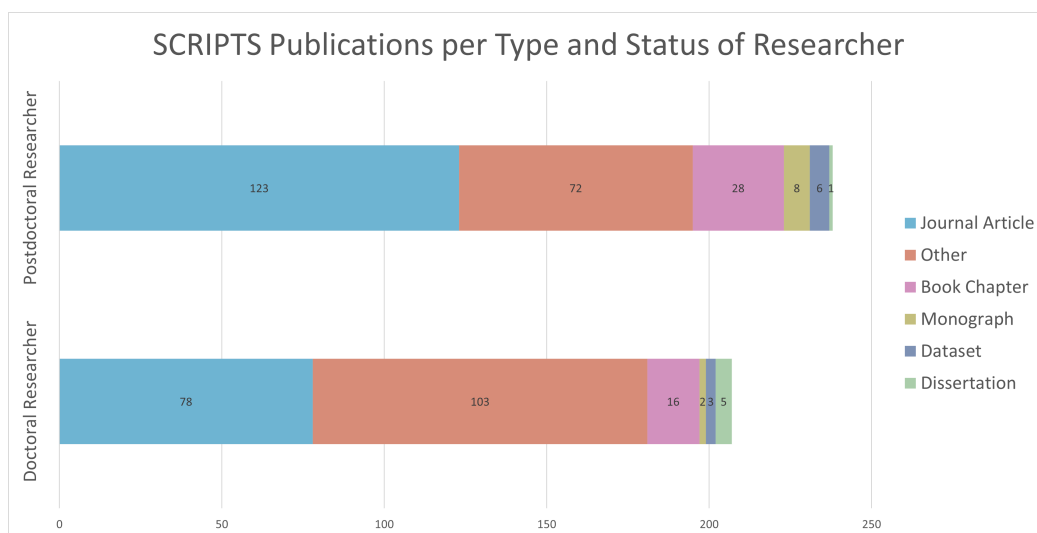
## **Early Career | Achievements from the Cluster's Early-Career Researchers and Alumni**

One of the most impactful achievements of SCRIPTS for the academic community is its support for early-career researchers through the Berlin Graduate School for Global and Transregional Studies (BGTS). By the end of 2023, the 60 BGTS doctoral researchers had published two books, 16 book chapters, and 78 journal articles. Postdoctoral

researchers contributed 16 monographs and edited volumes, as well as 99 peer-reviewed articles.

This record of productivity is also reflected in their professional success after leaving SCRIPTS: seven out of nine PhD researchers obtained postdoctoral positions at renowned institutes, and 15 out of 60 postdoctoral researchers secured prestigious professorships at universities, such as the University of Cambridge. Twenty others accepted postdoctoral positions, including some at SCRIPTS partner institutions. Additionally, three of the four early-career Associated Investigators were awarded tenured professorships at the London School of Economics, Technische Universität Dresden, and Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg, respectively.

We have recently published a more detailed account of the achievements of our early-career researchers [on our website](#) ↗.



## Illiberalism | SCRIPTS Examines One of the Biggest Threats to Democracy

In recent months, the topic of Illiberalism has been especially prominent at SCRIPTS, with several important events concerning the subject taking place in quick succession.

The first was the publication of “The Oxford Handbook of Illiberalism”, to which SCRIPTS Professor Dr Katharina Bluhm contributed with a chapter titled "Russia's Illiberal Conservatism". A book launch, organised by Prof. Bluhm and the RU Orders Academic Coordinator Dr Roberta Astolfi took place in June at the SCRIPTS villa and included the participation of the volume’s editor, Prof. Dr Marlene Laruelle.

A workshop discussing “place branding” also touched on this theme. The event, organised by SCRIPTS Professor Jessica Gienow-Hecht together with doctoral researchers Tobias Klee, Marlene Ritter, and Lesar Yurtsever, examined to what extent liberal states brand themselves in

ways different from illiberal states.

A reflection by Dr Roberta Astolfi on the book launch and discussion with Prof. Laruelle is available on our website [↗](#) and you can read more about the issues with self-branding by liberal states in [Marlene Ritter's blog post ↗](#).

## **The PALS Survey | Dataset Now Available to the General Public**

The dataset collected by the “[Public Attitudes towards the Liberal Script \(PALS\) ↗](#)” global survey is now available at the Refugium portal of the Freie Universität Berlin for download. Carried out across 30 countries with over 60,000 participants, the survey investigates how people perceive the core values and institutions of the liberal script.

Conducted by the SCRIPTS “Comparative Survey” research group between 2021 and 2023, PALS enables key insights into attitudes towards core components of the liberal script, such as self-determination, the market economy, and the rule of law. Preliminary results from ongoing research show, e. g., that while higher development levels and fairer distribution of public goods correlates with stronger support for liberalism, some traditionally liberal countries rank only moderately. Authoritarian values and the feeling of social marginalisation appear to lead to rejection of liberal values.

One of the researchers that used PALS data for his PhD thesis, Lukas Antoine, gave us an interview talking about his experience working on the project as well as tips for new SCRIPTS PhD researchers. [The interview is available on our website ↗](#).

[Link to the dataset on the Refugium portal ↓](#)

## **Asia Conferences | SCRIPTS holds Regional Workshops with International Partners**

From 7 to 11 October, senior SCRIPTS researchers Prof. Dr Tanja Börzel (SCRIPTS Speaker), Prof. Dr Thomas Risse, Prof. Dr Mark Hallerberg, Prof. Dr Genia Kostka, Prof. Dr Yasemin Soysal, Prof. Dr Diana Panke, and Dr Julia Langbein, participated in two workshops hosted by SCRIPTS in collaboration with international partners in China and Japan.

The first workshop, titled "The Transformation of Global Order and China-EU Relations", took place in Shanghai and was organised in cooperation with Fudan University. It focused on China-EU relations within the broader context of the global order, economic governance, and bilateral dynamics. Panels addressed key topics such as the Belt and Road

Initiative, strategic autonomy, geopolitical competition, and economic cooperation, exploring how both powers navigate these challenges.

The second workshop, held in Tokyo in collaboration with Waseda University, focused on the resilience of the liberal connectivity script in East Asia, particularly in the face of economic interdependence and geopolitical tensions. Discussions covered Japan's and China's connectivity models, the Belt and Road Initiative, weaponised interdependence, and the impact of US-China conflicts on regional and global cooperation.

Insights gained from these workshops will support scholars from SCRIPTS and partner universities in advancing their research and finalising forthcoming publications.



SCRIPTS researchers and representatives from the School of International Relations & Public Affairs (SIRPA) of the Fudan University in China during bilateral exchanges. Photo: Mr Ke Liu

## STAFF NEWS

*We are excited to share the inspiring career journeys of several members of the SCRIPTS community. From groundbreaking research to prestigious awards and positions at world-renowned institutions, these individuals exemplify the diverse paths and exceptional achievements possible within our Cluster. In this section, we celebrate their successes and gain insights from their experiences.*

We congratulate **Dr Alexander Sorg**, who will be a [postdoctoral Stanton Nuclear Security Research Fellow at the Project on Managing the Atom and International Security Program](#) at the **Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs**. Alexander was a doctoral researcher at the Hertie School, affiliated with SCRIPTS. He graduated in European Studies in Maastricht and Barcelona and holds an



MA in International Affairs from the Hertie School. We wish him a successful time in Harvard!

For **Sphoorti**, a PhD student at the Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, the **Academic Accelerator Fellowship at SCRIPTS** concluded this year. She particularly appreciated the access to several workshops at different universities in Berlin, under the Berlin University Alliance, which helped her enhance skills required for completing a successful PhD and advancing her future career. "This fellowship provided me with an amazing experience that boosted my individual self-determination. I hope this fellowship continues to provide several first-generation PhDs like me with a wonderful opportunity to be a part of global academia." We wish her great success in her future career path!

**Maximiliano Jara Barrera** [↗](#) is currently in the second year of his PhD at BGTS. He has recently been awarded the **Warren J. and Sylvia J. Samuels Young Scholars of the History of Economic Society 2024 Scholarship** to attend their **51st Annual Conference in Santiago** [↗](#). There, Jara Barrera presented his paper entitled "Transnational Roots of Latin American (Neo)Liberalism during the Cold War (1947–1981)", which is part of his dissertation project.

In 2020, **Lukas Antoine** joined SCRIPTS to work as a researcher on a global comparative public opinion survey, "**Public Attitudes towards the Liberal Script**" (PALS) [↗](#). Lukas was part of the team that planned and implemented the PALS survey as a doctoral researcher and holds a position as a data analyst at the **Stifterverband für die deutsche Wissenschaft** [↗](#), where he is primarily focusing on the issue of teacher shortages.

**Prof. Dr Philipp Dann** [↗](#) (SCRIPTS & HU) and Florian Jeßberger (HU) will be the head of a new Centre for Advanced Studies in Berlin. The German Research Foundation (DFG) approved funding of € 4.2 million in its prestigious "Centres for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences" programme. The Centre will explore the role of law and the impact on law in the context of colonialism and its legacies by providing a platform for cutting-edge research and sustainable conversations between scholars from the South and the North. It will be established in 2025. We congratulate them for this achievement!

As a postdoctoral researcher under the ERC-funded project '**MoveMeRU**' [↗](#), **Dr Diana Rafailova** [↗](#) investigates the intergenerational transmission of historical and political attitudes among families with a Russian migratory background. Diana completed her PhD at the **European University Institute** [↗](#) (EUI), focusing on the effects of political

regimes on school quality and learning outcomes across nations.  
We are thrilled to have her join us as a new [IRC Visiting Researcher](#).

We bid farewell to our esteemed member [Prof. Dr Marianne Braig](#), Professor of Political Science at the Institute for Latin American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin, SCRIPTS Principal Investigator, Member of RU Temporality, and part of the BGTS Faculty, as she enters retirement. At SCRIPTS, Prof. Braig particularly contributed to the perspective of transregional area studies, thereby enhancing the diversity of viewpoints within the Cluster. Her contribution to the principle of double reflexivity was critical for the Cluster. Prof. Braig also co-authored major publications, including “Latin America and Asia – Relations in the Context of Globalisation from Colonial Times to the Present” together Prof. Carlos Alba and Prof. Stefan Rinke. In 2023, Prof. Braig was also awarded the degree **Doctor honoris causa** by the [Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú](#) (PUCP). We extend our heartfelt thanks to her for being a part of the SCRIPTS community!



Prof. Dr Marianne Braig. Photo: Kathy Otto/SCRIPTS

## UPCOMING EVENTS, CONFERENCES, AND WORKSHOPS

*To stay up-to-date with upcoming and past SCRIPTS Events, follow us on [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).*

### Discussion Series | Georgia in Focus

*In collaborations with the Center for Liberal Modernity (Zentrum Liberale Moderne, LibMod), the Konrad Adenauer Foundation South Caucasus, the Eastern Partnership Plus project (funded by the Federal Foreign Office) and with the kind support of the European Commission*



Tbilisi Georgia. Photo: Nina Matcharashvili | Unsplash

## **Discussion | The EU and Georgia - what are the consequences of the election?**

28 OCT, 07:00 PM | Vertretung der Europäischen Kommission Berlin, Unter den Linden 78, 10117 Berlin

Georgia faces a fateful decision: the upcoming election on 26 October will determine whether the country's future lies in closer alignment with the EU or Russia. SCRIPTS speaker, Prof. Dr Tanja Börzel, will discuss with Dr Khatia Kikalishvili, (Center for Liberal Modernity) and Dr Mikheil Sarjveladze (Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena) what the election results mean for the relationship between Georgia and the European Union. The event will be held in German.

[Further Information and registration](#) ↓

## **Day Conference | EU-Expansion in the Context of Geopolitics, Reform Requirements and Absorption Capacity**

13 NOV, 09:00 AM | Akademie der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Tiergartenstraße 35, 10785 Berlin

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the current geopolitical changes have led to a new EU expansion dynamic. The process of EU expansion is caught between geopolitics, reform requirements and absorption capacity. At the beginning of the new institutional cycle at EU level, which began with the European elections in June, the focus is on the question of the future direction and concrete implementation of EU

expansion policy. German-English simultaneous translation will be available.

[Further Information](#) will be available soon on our website ↓

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## Berlin Science Week | SCRIPTS Event series „Threatened Science“

*In four events during Berlin Science Week, the series "Threatened Science" will bring together representatives from research, the leadership of scientific institutions, politics, civil society, and those directly affected.*

*The series is organized by the Excellence Cluster "Contestations of the Liberal Script (SCRIPTS)" in cooperation with the Berlin University Alliance and Berlin Research 50 e.V. All events are in German.*



Photo: Vlad Tchompalov | Unsplash

### Threatened Science | Self-Censorship

1 NOV, 07:00 PM | Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Senatssaal, Unter den Linden 6, 10117 Berlin

The opening event of the "Threatened Science" series will discuss, whether and how hostility leads to self-censorship and how institutions and researchers can preserve their freedom of action.

[Further Information and registration](#) ↓

### Threatened Science | Unwelcome Truth

4 NOV, 07:00 PM | Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB), Reichpietschufer 50, 10785 Berlin

Scientists often become symbols of politically imposed burdens on society and uncomfortable change. How does science deal with this dilemma? And what does it mean for scientists when they present uncomfortable insights to the public?

[Further Information and registration](#) ↓

### Threatened Science | Questioning Scientific Authority

6 NOV, 07:00 PM | Zentrum für Osteuropa- und internationale Studien, Mohrenstr. 60, 10117 Berlin

The processes of scientific knowledge generation and validation are often misunderstood or deliberately exploited for disinformation, resulting in numerous consequences for society. What counter-strategies can science employ?

[Further Information and registration](#) ↓

## **Threatened Science | Political Interference**

8 NOV, 07:00 PM | Leibniz-Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung, Meierottostr. 8, 10719 Berlin

In the final event of the "Threatened Science" series, researchers and politicians will discuss the forms of political interference in science and the strategies that can be used to counteract them.

[Further Information and registration](#) ↓

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## **Short Talks | Nervous Democracy**

Humboldt Labor at the Humboldt Forum, Schloßplatz, 10178 Berlin

"How much nervousness can a democracy endure before it loses its equilibrium? From the nervous tremors at its political centre to the convulsions at its fringes, where do these strains arise? How does hysteria intertwine with reason? What forms of democracy must we unlearn, rethink, and reimagine to preserve both its integrity and adaptability? And where will we stand five years' time?"

These, among other questions, lie at the heart of the Short Talks on "Nervous Democracy", where journalist Georg Diez meets with and interviews SCRIPTS researchers.

#1 - "Transformation shock", with Prof. Dr Steffen Mau on 30 October at 06:30 PM

#2 - "Politics and Restlessness", with Prof. Dr Christian Volk on 14 November at 06:30 PM

#3 - "Hysteria and Reason in the USA", with Prof. Lora Viola, PhD on 18 December at 06:30 PM

[Further information and registration](#) ↓.

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## **Berlin Science Week | Clear the stage for science!**

### **Science Slam of the Berlin Clusters of Excellence**

7 NOV, 07:30 PM | Roadrunner's Paradise Club, Saarbrücker Str. 24, 10405 Berlin

At the Science Slam, scientists representing the seven Berlin Excellence Clusters get creative to present their research subject in an entertaining way to the public. Costumes, props, movies, power-point presentations or other experimental setups – it is all allowed. Only time sets the limits – every slammer will have six minutes at most. The winner is chosen by the audience.

[Further information available on our website](#)↓.

## PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

*A selection of current journal articles and book chapters (in alphabetical order by authors) published in the framework of SCRIPTS. See all publications on our website* ↗.

### JOURNAL ARTICLES

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#### **The ambivalence of doubt - Hostility to science as a source of danger for the liberal order**

Janika Spannagel (SCRIPTS & FU Berlin)

*Zeitschrift für Menschenrechte*

The social significance of science has steadily increased with the growing complexity of global crises and the demand for rational solutions. However, this development has also generated fears and is viewed critically or even with hostility by parts of the population. Taking a closer look at the phenomenon of science scepticism, the article sheds light on its various forms, provides an empirical assessment based on recent survey data, and discusses the dangers that anti-scientific attitudes pose to both academic freedom and the liberal order.

[Online access](#)↓

#### **State Sovereignty and the Protection of Human Rights. How Military Humanitarian Intervention is Supported by Citizens Around the World**

Jürgen Gerhards (SCRIPTS & FU Berlin), Lukas Antoine, Rasmus Ollroge (SCRIPTS & FU Berlin)

*International Journal of Sociology*

While the international community broadly supports prioritising human rights over national sovereignty, there is considerable reluctance, especially in highly modernised societies, to use military force to enforce these rights. The authors argue that this reluctance creates a legitimacy challenge for political actors and presents a dilemma for policymakers and INGOs advocating for human rights. This paper presents findings from a survey conducted across 26 countries, analysing citizen support for military intervention.

[Online access](#) ↓

## **Why do states discriminate between refugee groups? Understanding how Syrian and Ukrainian refugees were framed in Germany and Poland**

Daniel Drewski, Jürgen Gerhards (SCRIPTS & FU Berlin)  
*American Journal of Cultural Sociology*

Previous studies suggest that countries discriminate between refugee groups based on cultural similarity to the host population and whether they are fleeing from a rival regime. The authors argue that these explanations overlook how political actors frame the identities of both the host nation and the refugees. The contrasting responses of Germany and Poland to Syrian and Ukrainian refugees illustrate this. While Poland welcomed Ukrainians and rejected Syrians, Germany showed little differentiation in its admission policy. Their analysis reveals that Germany employed “cosmopolitan” frames emphasising humanitarianism and international law, while the Polish government used mostly “communitarian” frames by focusing on national sovereignty and cultural boundaries.

[Online access](#) ↓

## **Lives in Welfare States: Life Courses, Earnings Accumulation, and Relative Living Standards in Five European Countries**

Anette Eva Fasang (SCRIPTS & HU Berlin), Stefan Bastholm  
Andrade, Selçuk Bedük, Zafer Buyukkececi, Aleksii Karhula  
*American Journal of Sociology*

How do work and family life paths differ across welfare states with varying support from the state, market, and family? This article compares life courses up to midlife in Denmark, Finland, the UK, and Germany. It reveals that while high earners follow similar patterns, life courses of low earners vary greatly, influenced by national welfare policies. Women in “familising” welfare states, such as Germany and the UK, are most likely to face low-earning paths compared to those in more egalitarian systems.

[Online access](#) ↓

## **The limits of sportswashing. How the 2022 FIFA World Cup affected attitudes about Qatar**

Johannes Gerschewski (SCRIPTS, FU Berlin & WZB), Heiko  
Giebler (SCRIPTS, FU Berlin & WZB), Sebastian Hellmeier,  
Eda Keremoğlu, Michael Zürn (SCRIPTS, FU Berlin & WZB)  
*PLOS ONE*

Non-democratic regimes have increasingly been hosting major sports events looking to boost their visibility and image abroad, which sparked debates about the potential for “sportswashing”. Using the case of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar the authors examine how the framing of the tournament influenced opinions about Qatar abroad.

[Online access](#) ↓

## BOOKS

### **Polarization and Deep Contestations – The Liberal Script in the United States**

Tanja A. Börzel (SCRIPTS & FU Berlin), Thomas Risse (SCRIPTS & FU Berlin), Stephanie B. Anderson, Jean A. Garrison

*SCRIPTS Series, Oxford University Press*

This book examines the deep contestations of the liberal script in the contemporary United States from a variety of perspectives, and shows that the rise of Donald Trump is a symptom and catalyst, but not the cause, of the current crisis in US democracy. Each chapter addresses three key questions: (1) How unique is the situation in the United States compared to other democracies? (2) What are the primary drivers of these challenges? (3) What are the likely consequences for the future of American democracy?

[Online Access](#) ↓

### **Framing Refugees – How the Admission of Refugees is Debated in Six Countries across the World**

Daniel Drewski, Jürgen Gerhards (SCRIPTS & FU Berlin)

*SCRIPTS Series, Oxford University Press*

In this book, Daniel Drewski and Jürgen Gerhards demonstrate that governmental refugee policies, as well as the positions adopted by opposition parties, are heavily influenced by how they frame their country's collective identity on the one hand, and the identity and characteristics of refugees on the other. By defining the "we" and the "others", politicians draw on collectively shared cultural repertoires, which differ between countries and political constituencies. The book is based on a discourse analysis of parliamentary debates. It explores the specific framing of national identities and the corresponding perceptions of otherness by focusing on six countries that have faced a large influx of refugees.

[Online access](#) ↓

## OTHER WRITTEN OUTPUT



## **Chapter: “Russia’s Illiberal Conservatism” – in “The Oxford Handbook of Illiberalism”**

Katharina Bluhm (SCRIPTS & FU Berlin)

*The Oxford Handbook of Illiberalism, Oxford University Press*

The Oxford Handbook of Illiberalism addresses the rise of illiberalism, offering a theoretical framework and the latest research on the topic. SCRIPTS Professor Katharina Bluhm, contributed to the volume with a chapter analysing Russia’s illiberal conservatism and highlighting two major strands: anti-imperial conservative nationalist and conservative-revolutionary views on Ukraine.

[Online access ↓](#)

## **Special Issue: Academic freedom: Global variations in norm conceptualization, diffusion and contestation – an introduction**

Janika Spannagel (SCRIPTS & FU Berlin), Kriszta Kovács (SCRIPTS & WZB)

*Cambridge University Press*

The special issue explores what academic freedom means, how this may vary on a global level, how the norm spread around the world and what current contestations look like. The Introduction, written by Janika Spannagel (SCRIPTS) and Kriszta Kovács (SCRIPTS), defines some terms essential to this debate, such as the freedom of science, academic freedom, freedom of scientific research and the right to science, and offers an analytical framework for the various contributions of the special issue.

[Online access ↓](#)

## **SCRIPTS WORKING PAPER SERIES**

### **Welcome to the Liberal State! Place Branding as a Historical Practice**

Jessica Gienow-Hecht, Tobias Jonas Klee, Marlene Ritter, Lesar Yurtsever

*SCRIPTS Working Paper No. 48*

In this Working Paper, the authors establish a set of criteria and argue that liberal states often fail to market themselves effectively, not primarily due to the intentions behind their campaigns, but rather because of reasons related to legitimacy, temporality, and the role of audiences. They examine three historical case studies: Catalan separatists in the 1930s, Turkish diplomats during the era of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and early Western European organisations in the 1950s.

[Online access ↓](#)

## **Contesting Borders. Towards a Gender Analysis of Secessionism. Historical and Political Science Perspectives**

Gülay Çağlar, Jessica Gienow-Hecht

*SCRIPTS Working Paper No. 47*

This Working Paper explores how the principle of collective self-determination translates into imagined borders and identities. The authors first examine gender as an analytical category in border studies; second, they review the literature on gender and the history of separatism; and third, they analyse two potential solutions, drawing on historical and contemporary case studies from the North-American Civil War and Catalan separatism. Self-defined minorities that present liberal projects pose a gendered challenge to liberal societies, often aiming to turn the liberal script upon itself.

[Online access](#) ↓

## **Putting the Masculinity into Liberalism. Gender Essentialism and Catalan Self-Perception as a Progressive Liberal Democracy**

Johannes Heß, Tobias Jonas Klee

*SCRIPTS Working Paper No. 46*

The present-day narrative of Catalan nationalism emphasises its liberal and progressive nature, in contrast to what is portrayed as dictatorial and backward Spain. A key feature of this liberalism is the strong presence of feminism within Catalan institutions and civil society. The narrative of Catalonia as a liberal space par excellence has historical roots that date back to the end of the 19th century, when Catalans also portrayed themselves as liberal in opposition to a despotic Spain. They infused this liberalism with notions of rationality and masculinity. The authors examine the tension between the historically masculine nature of Catalan national symbols and the contemporary efforts to frame Catalonia as a feminist space.

[Online access](#) ↓

## **Deep Contestations and the Resilience of the Liberal International Order**

Thomas Risse

*SCRIPTS Working Paper No. 45*

The Liberal International Order (LIO) has demonstrated remarkable resilience throughout its history since World War II. In this Working Paper, Risse argues that the survival of the LIO depends on three crucial factors. First, the response by LIO defenders to the deep contestations. Second, the reform of key LIO institutions to enhance inclusiveness. And

third, the implementation of effective institutional solutions that address both global inequalities and the existential threat of climate change.

[Online access ↓](#)

## **Towards a Typology of Contestation. Four Types of Contestants**

Michael Zürn, Nieves Fernández Rodríguez, Lena Röllicke, Maximilian Weckemann, Alexander Schmotz, Stefan Gosepath

*SCRIPTS Working Paper No. 44*

Liberal ideas, institutions, and orders are being challenged globally and in diverse ways. Based on a cluster analysis, this paper identifies four distinct clusters of contestants challenging the liberal script:

"Fundamentalists", "Authoritarian Populists", "Market-Sceptic Egalitarians", and "Identity-Focused Contestants". These clusters group a variety of actors on the basis of their critiques of liberal principles, epistemological standpoints, intensity of their contestation, identities and emotions.

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## **Fighting "Scandalous Inequalities". A Global Policy Proposal for a Humanity Identity Card and Basic Income**

Ettore Recchi

*SCRIPTS Working Paper No. 43*

Hunger and lack of legal identity stand at the lowest point of the distribution of vital and existential capabilities across humankind. These extreme situations conflict with the main tenets of the liberal script and expose "scandalous inequalities" of basic rights between the haves and have-nots. This article proposes to tackle them globally by introducing a Humanity Identity Card, associated with a basic income supplement for the most vulnerable half of the world population.

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## **Academic Freedom in Liberal Constitutional Democracies. Justifications, Limits, Tensions, and Contestations**

Mattias Kumm

*SCRIPTS Working Paper No. 42*

Mattias Kumm argues that academic freedom has become a central focus of contestation. He clarifies the moral foundation underlying the right to academic freedom and distinguishes between the very different principles defining its scope and limits in liberal and illiberal societies. By fostering a deeper understanding of academic freedom and the principles supporting it in today's context, Kumm provides a clearer perspective on

the severity of the challenges that academic freedom faces today – and what could be lost if those challenges are not addressed.

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## **Between Populism and Technocracy. The Impoverishment of the Individual's Political Role and the Vulnerability of Liberal Democracy**

Roberta Astolfi

*Working Paper No. 41*

Populism and technocracy undermine liberal democracy by eroding individuals' political role, Roberta Astolfi argues in this Working Paper. While populism undermines the political role by involving individuals in "massifying" processes, technocracy reduces it by detaching them from their active political sphere. As the political role of individuals fades, so too do representativity and responsibility. Consequently, if representativity and responsibility deteriorate, the vulnerability of liberal democracies increases dramatically.

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## **Beyond Liberal Narratives. China and the International Human Rights Order**

Xinyuan Dai, Lucie Lu

*Working Paper No. 40*

China's rapid rise is transforming international relations and impacting the global human rights landscape. This paper examines whether China challenges, undermines, or seeks to replace established international rules. By analysing over 93,000 recommendations from the UN Universal Periodic Review (2008-2021), the study reveals that China selectively endorses certain human rights norms, a strategy similar to that employed by the United States and other nations. Notably, China's stance aligns with many countries, particularly resonating within the Global South.

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## **Music and Human Rights Since World War II**

Jessica Gienow-Hecht, Steffen Just

*Working Paper No. 39*

This paper explores the global intersections of music and human rights since World War II, proposing new pathways for examining the subject through sound and musical practices. While historians and musicologists have examined various aspects of human rights, the explicit connection to sound aesthetics remains largely unexplored. This interdisciplinary analysis combines historiography, music, and sound scholarship to offer innovative insights into the history of global human rights.

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## ABOUT SCRIPTS

The Cluster of Excellence “Contestations of the Liberal Script (SCRIPTS)” is a research consortium that analyses why the liberal model of order has fallen into crisis despite its political, economic, and social achievements.

Interdisciplinary research teams investigate why alternative concepts of social order are on rise, how these contestations differ from earlier contestation, and what the consequences are for the global challenges of our time. In operation since 2019, SCRIPTS is hosted by the Freie Universität Berlin and unites eight major Berlin-based research institutions.

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