



Universität St.Gallen

Jahresbericht 2025

Institut für Politikwissenschaft (IPW-HSG)

Müller-Friedberg-Strasse 8

9000 St. Gallen



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Vorwort

Liebe Leserinnen und Leser

Im Jahr 2025, das weiterhin vom Krieg auf dem europäischen Kontinent, einer fortschreitenden Erosion der internationalen Ordnung, der Schwächung globaler Governance-Institutionen sowie einer besorgniserregenden Vertiefung politischer Polarisierung und populistischer Dynamiken in demokratischen Gesellschaften geprägt war, zeigt sich die Bedeutung eines Forschungsinstituts, das evidenzbasierte Analysen politischer Prozesse liefert, besonders deutlich. In einem Umfeld, in dem Handel, digitale Infrastrukturen und selbst Klimapolitik zunehmend als Instrumente geopolitischer Konkurrenz eingesetzt werden, leistete das Institut für Politikwissenschaft (IPW) einen wichtigen Beitrag durch fundierte, politikrelevante und theoretisch informierte Forschung. Über seine drei Forschungsbereiche – Vergleichende Politische Verhaltensforschung, Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft und Internationale Beziehungen – hinweg war das IPW sowohl in der Grundlagenforschung als auch im Wissenstransfer aktiv: mit Publikationen in führenden peer-reviewten Fachzeitschriften, anwendungsorientierten Analysen in Policy-Berichten, Briefings für politische Entscheidungsträger und wirtschaftliche Akteure sowie durch öffentliche Vorträge, Meinungsbeiträge, Podcasts und Medienauftritte.

Die Forschung am IPW griff im Jahr 2025 zentrale Herausforderungen der Gegenwart auf. Mitglieder des Instituts veröffentlichten in renommierten Fachzeitschriften und trugen damit zu wichtigen wissenschaftlichen und politischen Debatten bei, etwa zu Fragen demokratischer Resilienz, internationaler Kooperation unter zunehmendem Druck sowie zur politischen Ökonomie der Globalisierung. Beiträge erschienen unter anderem in Zeitschriften wie *Nature Human Behavior*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, und *Comparative Political Studies* und behandelten Themen wie öffentliche Einstellungen zu Außenpolitik und Umverteilung, die institutionellen Grundlagen internationaler Ordnung sowie innenpolitische Dynamiken wirtschaftlicher Interdependenz. Diese Arbeiten bereicherten nicht nur den wissenschaftlichen Diskurs, sondern lieferten auch wichtige Impulse für politische Entscheidungsprozesse in der Schweiz und darüber hinaus. Zugleich unterstreicht die Beteiligung des IPW an internationalen Kooperationsprojekten – insbesondere an der European Nuclear Study Group – seine Rolle als Schnittstelle zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik, indem es wissenschaftliche Expertise in aktuelle sicherheitspolitische Debatten einbringt.

Am IPW trägt eine vielfältige und engagierte Gruppe von Nachwuchswissenschaftlerinnen und -wissenschaftlern maßgeblich zur Weiterentwicklung von Forschung und politikorientierter Analyse bei. Ihre Arbeiten widmen sich unter anderem neuen Formen demokratischer Erosion, politischer Kommunikation im digitalen Raum sowie der geopolitischen Neuordnung globaler Wirtschaftsbeziehungen. Besonders freuen wir uns über die erfolgreichen Promotionen von Dr. Nina Zachlod und Dr. Michael Asiedu, deren Dissertation wichtige Beiträge zur Ungleichheits- und Demokratieforschung leisten. Darüber hinaus würdigen wir herausragende Publikationen unserer Doktorierenden und Postdocs, die die hohe Qualität und internationale Sichtbarkeit der Forschung am wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchs des IPW unterstreichen.

Diese Erfolge spiegeln das starke Engagement des Instituts für exzellente Ausbildung und gezielte Förderung junger Talente wider.

Die anhaltende Dynamik des IPW zeigt sich auch in seiner weiteren institutionellen Entwicklung. Wir freuen uns sehr, [Aydin B. Yildirim](#) als neuen Assistenzprofessor begrüßen zu dürfen. Als Empfänger eines Starting Grants des Schweizerischen Nationalfonds wird [Dr. Yildirim](#) die Expertise des Instituts im Bereich der internationalen politischen Ökonomie weiter stärken. Sein Projekt RESHORE untersucht die politischen und ökonomischen Bedingungen, unter denen europäische Unternehmen im Kontext wachsender geopolitischer Spannungen Produktionsstandorte verlagern. Damit leistet es einen wichtigen Beitrag zum Verständnis der Anpassungsprozesse von Staaten und Unternehmen in einer zunehmend fragmentierten Weltwirtschaft. Insgesamt unterstreichen diese Entwicklungen den Anspruch des IPW, exzellente Forschung, hochwertige Lehre und wirksamen Wissenstransfer miteinander zu verbinden und einen zentralen Beitrag zur Analyse der drängenden politischen Herausforderungen unserer Zeit zu leisten.



Prof. Dr. James W. Davis



Prof. Dr. Tina M. Freyburg

Personelles

Direktion:

Prof. James W. Davis, PhD
 Prof. Tina M. Freyburg, PhD

Assoziierte Mitglieder:

Prof. Dr. Heinrich Hänggi (Titularprofessor in Politikwissenschaft)
 Prof. Dr. em. Christoph Heusgen (Honorarprofessor)

Administration:

Isabelle Leutenegger
 Anne Kristine Tischhauser

Forschungsgruppen

<u>Internationale Beziehungen</u>	<u>Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft</u>
Lehrstuhlinhaber : - James W. Davis Postdoktorand:innen : - Manali Kumar - Tobias Risse Doktorand:innen: - Jana-Christina von Dessien - Benjamin Bertrand - Konstantin Schendzielorz Studentische Hilfskräfte: - Luc Despotovic, Adrian Pandjaitan <u>Politisches Verhalten im Vergleich</u> SNSF Assistenzprofessorin: - Eri Bertsou Doktorand:innen: - Pradeep Krishnan - Amber Cloé Zenklusen	Lehrstuhlinhaberin: - Tina Freyburg Assoziierte Postdoktorandin: - Lisa Garbe (WZB Berlin) Postdoktorand:innen: - Anna Stünzi - Alexander Geisler - Ioannis Vergioglou Doktorand:innen: - Michael Asiedu - Nino Caduff - Danyl Denysenko - Leslie Fischer - Filippo Pasquali Studentische Hilfskräfte: - Solenn Armitage, Tomohiro Bisang, Sina Engl, Karen Engen, Sofiia Klymenko, Lionel Perruchoud, Maja Mandic, Lionel Perruchoud, Kaito Pross, Jorge Quesada Velazco, Ying Yang

Gastforschende



Janne Ingelbeen, PhD Student at the Department of Political Science, Ghent, Belgium

Jane Ingelbeen joined Prof. Dr. Eri Bertsou and her team at the IPW, where she engaged in the VAR-EXP project – an innovative project that explores expert political power in established democracies from the perspective of citizens.

Forschungsprojekte

Internationale Beziehungen (Forschungsgruppe Davis)

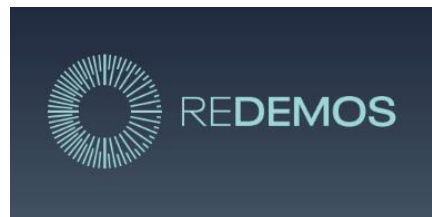
- “Diverting Terror in Its Tracks – Drone Strikes as Battlefield Trolley Dilemmas” (James W. Davis, Tobias Risse & Erik Lin-Greenberg, (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)
- “The Return of Great Power War?” (James W. Davis)
- “Understanding Divergent Intelligence Assessments Before the Ukraine War” (James W. Davis & Janice G. Stein, University of Toronto)
- “Nuclear Strategy and Arms Control” (James W. Davis)

Politisches Verhalten im Vergleich (Forschungsgruppe Bertsou)

- “Varieties of Expertise – Understanding public demand for independent experts in democratic politics” (Eri Bertsou) || Förderung: Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Eccellenza Professorial Grant

Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft (Forschungsgruppe Freyburg)

- “REDEMOS – Reconfiguring EU Democracy Support – Towards A Sustained Demos In The EU’S Eastern Neighborhood” (Tina Freyburg, Alexander Geisler, Ioannis Vergioglou) || Förderung: Horizon Europe (bis 31. Dezember 2025)
- “REFLEX – Institutional Foundations of Industrialization, Financialization and Globalization of the Swiss Economy, Evidence from 140 Years of the Commercial Registry” (Tina Freyburg, Anna Stünzi, Filippo Pasquali, and Danyl Denysenko) || Förderung: Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Sinergia
- “TOSCO – Telecommunications politics in authoritarian developing countries: Ownership and control in the African information and communications technology sector” (Tina Freyburg, Lisa Garbe, and varying co-authors)



Laufende Dissertationsprojekte

Internationale Beziehungen (Forschungsgruppe Davis)

- *Benjamin Bertrand*: "Strength in Unity? Drivers of Third State Participation in NATO and CSDP," Co-supervisor: Sten Rynning (University of Southern Denmark)
- *Konstantin Schendzielorz*: "The Making and Maintenance of Extended Nuclear Deterrence: A critical Discourse Analysis," Co-supervisor: Prof. Laura Considine, (School of Politics and International Studies) and Charlotte Epstein, (The University of Sydney)
- *Jana C. von Dessien*: "Contesting the New Normal of Disruptive Weapon Technologies: The Architecture of Non-State Resistance Against Governmental Norm Entrepreneurship Legitimizing Drones in US Counterterrorism ", Co-supervisor: Janina Dill (University of Oxford)

Politisches Verhalten im Vergleich (Forschungsgruppe Bertsou)

- *Pradeep Krishnan*: "Beliefs in conspiracy theories and preferences for expert involvement in politics":
Co-supervisor: Eri Bertsou (University of St.Gallen)
- *Amber Zenklusen*: "Epistemic Tensions in Democracy: Citizen Preferences for Expertise and Representation"
Co-supervisor: Eri Bertsou (University of St.Gallen)

Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft (Forschungsgruppe Freyburg)

- *Nino Caduff*: "The Political Economy of Foreign Direct Investment in Africa: Telecommunications Privatization and State-Backed Investments"
Co-supervisor: Marc van Essen (South Carolina)
- *Danyl Denysenko*: "The Role of Institutions in shaping entrepreneurship environments":
Co-supervisor: Massimo Anelli (Bocconi University)
- *Leslie Fischer*: "Legacy of violence and political dynamics in post-conflict societies":
Co-supervisor: Livia Schubiger (ETH Zurich)
- *Filippo Pasquali*: "Signal and Response: How Information Asymmetries Shape Business-Politics Interactions":
Co-supervisor: Malka Guillot (University of Liege)

Internationale Beziehungen (Forschungsgruppe Davis)

Diverting Terror in Its Tracks. Drone Strikes as Battlefield Trolley Dilemmas

James W. Davis, Tobias Risse und Erik Lin-Greenberg (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)



Previous studies have shown that the prevention of terrorist attacks increases support for drone warfare, while civilian victims decrease support. However, drone pilots oftentimes face a moral dilemma, being only able to prevent terrorist attacks at the cost of civilian lives. In an experimental setting, we study under which circumstances citizens favor which decision. In survey and lab experiments in four countries, we present participants with vignettes and videos in which a drone pilot has to decide whether or not to fire a missile at an individual believed to be preparing a car bomb attack and ask them whether or not the pilot should take the shot. To gain leverage over the dispositional and situational features that affect judgments over the use of lethal force in battlefield settings, we manipulate the intended target of the car bomb attack and the identities of any collateral fatalities. We thus extend the experimental study of trolley dilemmas to the field of international security by examining individuals' moral judgments that occur in battlefield settings.

Einstellungen zu Waffenexporten in europäischen Demokratien

Tobias Risse und Christoph Steinert

In einem gemeinsamen Forschungsprojekt untersuchen Tobias Risse und Christoph Steinert, welche Faktoren Einstellungen zu Waffenexporten in europäischen Demokratien beeinflussen. Dafür werden Umfragen mit Bundestagsabgeordneten, Abgeordneten im britischen Unterhaus, sowie repräsentativen Stichproben der deutschen und britischen Bevölkerung durchgeführt. Im Fokus steht insbesondere die Frage, ob und inwieweit es systematische Unterschiede in Einstellungen zu Waffenexporten zwischen Abgeordneten und der durchschnittlichen Bevölkerung in Deutschland und Grossbritannien gibt. Zudem wird untersucht, welche Faktoren Abwägungen zu Waffenexporten beeinflussen und welche Charakteristika von Empfängerländern zur Unterstützung oder Ablehnung von Rüstungsexporten führen. Das Forschungsprojekt leistet einen Beitrag zu unserem Verständnis von Einstellungen zu Waffenexporten in europäischen Demokratien und beleuchtet Diskrepanzen in Einstellungen zu aussenpolitischen Fragestellungen zwischen der Bevölkerung und Eliten.

European Nuclear Study Group (ENSG)

Die European Nuclear Study Group (ENSG) ist eine multinationale Initiative, die 2024 als gemeinsames Projekt der Munich Security Conference, des Centre for International Security an der Hertie School in Berlin sowie des Institute of Political Science an der Universität St. Gallen gegründet wurde. Sie vereint führende Verteidigungs- und Sicherheitsexpertinnen und -experten aus ganz Europa und dient als hochrangiges Forum für unabhängige Analysen nuklearer Abschreckung und strategischer Stabilität in einem sich wandelnden globalen Sicherheitsumfeld. Unter dem gemeinsamen Vorsitz von Tobias Bunde (Hertie School und Munich Security Conference), Claudia Major (German Marshall Fund) und dem Direktor des IPW, James W. Davis, steht die Gruppe für eine enge Zusammenarbeit zwischen wissenschaftlichen Institutionen und politknahen Organisationen, wobei das Institut für Politikwissenschaft der Universität St. Gallen als Ko-Sponsor und intellektueller Impulsgeber eine zentrale Rolle einnimmt.

Im Rahmen einer Reihe von Treffen im Jahr 2025, darunter eines in St. Gallen und eines in Soglio (Graubünden), konzentrierte sich die ENSG auf die Analyse der Auswirkungen einer sich wandelnden globalen nuklearen Ordnung sowie der daraus resultierenden Herausforderungen für die europäische Sicherheit. Ihre Arbeit bewertet systematisch fünf zentrale strategische Optionen, die derzeit politisch diskutiert werden: die fortgesetzte Abstützung auf die erweiterte nukleare Abschreckung der USA; eine stärkere Rolle britischer und französischer Nuklearstreitkräfte; die Entwicklung einer gemeinsamen europäischen Abschreckung; die Verfolgung neuer, eigenständiger nationaler Nuklearfähigkeiten; sowie verstärkte Investitionen in konventionelle Abschreckung ohne nukleare Komponente. Durch die sorgfältige Abwägung von Zielkonflikten, Umsetzbarkeit und Risiken bietet die Gruppe politischen Entscheidungsträgern einen strukturierten Orientierungsrahmen in einem zunehmend komplexen und unsicheren Abschreckungsumfeld.

Der bevorstehende Bericht der ENSG, der auf der 2026 Munich Security Conference vorgestellt wird, kommt zu einem klaren Ergebnis: Für Europa gibt es keine einfache oder risikofreie Option, um eine glaubwürdige Abschreckung bei möglicherweise abnehmender Unterstützung durch die USA aufrechtzuerhalten. Anstatt eine einzelne Lösung zu empfehlen, betont die Studie die Dringlichkeit einer offenen und fundierten Debatte und warnt davor, dass ein Ausweichen vor diesen Fragen Europa strategisch verwundbar machen könnte. In diesem Zusammenhang übernimmt die ENSG eine wichtige Agenda-setzende Funktion, indem sie dazu beiträgt, nukleare Abschreckung von einem politisch sensiblen Thema zu einer zentralen sicherheitspolitischen Priorität zu machen und die Notwendigkeit unterstreicht, dass europäische Entscheidungsträger sich aktiv und vorausschauend mit den strategischen Weichenstellungen für die zukünftige Sicherheit des Kontinents auseinandersetzen.

Co-Chairs:



Dr. Tobias Bunde is Director of Research & Policy at the Munich Security Conference and Professor of International Security at the Hertie School.



Dr. James W. Davis is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Institute of Political Science at the University of St. Gallen.



Dr. Claudia Major is Senior Vice President for Transatlantic Security at the German Marshall Fund of the United States and director of the GMF's Berlin office.



Politisches Verhalten im Vergleich (Forschungsgruppe Bertsoy)

Varieties of Expertise in Democratic Politics

Eri Bertsoy, Amber Zenklusen und Pradeep Krishnan

The SNF-funded “Varieties of Expertise” project tries to answer whether democratic politics can incorporate citizen demands for independent expertise in ways that boost legitimacy and trust? Democratic governments worldwide face the dilemma of how to deal with an ever-increasing call for technocratic expertise needed to govern effectively while remaining responsive to and representative of the citizens who elected them. In the past decade, the economic crisis brought this tension to the forefront of democratic politics, with multiple appointments of technocratic ministers and governments across democratic states and a simultaneous populist backlash against an apparent “out-of-touch” political establishment. More recently, the climate crisis and the global COVID19 pandemic highlighted the role of independent scientific expertise in guiding political decisions, but also the crucial role that citizens’ attitudes play in shaping policy effectiveness and trust in politics. Despite the pressing and complex issues that governments need to address, it is uncertain how democratic politics can include more independent expertise in a way that increases public support for political processes and decisions.

From the perspective of citizens, we are currently presented with the following empirical puzzle: on the one hand, citizen surveys show growing demands for independent experts over politicians in political decision-making and a recognition that complex global problems require experts to solve them. On the other hand, we observe mounting public skepticism towards technical knowledge and scientific expertise, paired with soaring anti-elite rhetoric stoked by populist actors across established democracies. How can we reconcile these conflicting observable phenomena and what solutions can we offer for reinforcing support for democratic politics?

The ‘Varieties of Expertise’ project addresses this puzzle through three key research questions: (I) What constitutes ‘politically legitimate’ use of expertise and who is considered an “independent expert” in the eyes of citizens? (II) Why do citizens demand more political power in the hands of independent experts? (III) How and where do citizens want to see political power in the hands of independent experts?

Who Governs AI? How AI Governance Models Shape Perceptions of Public Sector ADM

Governments everywhere are integrating AI into the public sector, aiming to increase its efficiency, effectiveness and pursue an evidence-driven approach to decision-making. Because public acceptance of these tools is vital to its implementation, scholars are increasingly exploring citizen attitudes toward public sector AI and debating the challenges it may pose to democratic principles. However, we still know little about whether the actors involved in administering AI in the public sector influence public perceptions of its legitimacy.

Today, many AI applications are developed and/or managed by private firms, which may create additional challenges to democratic decision-making. In a court case in the United States, for example, a plaintiff argued that an AI recidivism score unfairly discriminated against him based on his demographics. Not only did the plaintiff lack insight into the AI's parameters, but the state itself could not access the full algorithm, which was owned by a private company and protected under trade secrecy laws.

With the support of the HSG's GreenBox grant, Amber Zenklusen, Pradeep Krishnan and Prof. Dr. Eri Bertsou are studying whether different AI governance models—state-led, private-sector-led, or co-developed with citizen participation—affect public support for AI in the public sector. The team is conducting three vignette experiments (2 in the US and 1 in the UK). The study comes at a critical juncture as governments and publics debate how AI should be governed. We expect to share results mid-2025.

- **Science-related populism and conspiracy beliefs**
 - A collaborative effort with a team of researchers involved in the wider TISP study (see Media Features). This project explores whether populist attitudes surrounding scientific activity are linked to conspiracy theory beliefs.
- **The Role on Diversity in Expert Panels on Public Trust**
 - Experts are often distrusted to the extent they appear elite, homogenous, and out of touch with ordinary citizens. Using two vignette experiments, this study explores whether expert panels that embody more diversity increase public trust. Results are expected in mid-2025.
- **Understanding Conspiracy Theory Beliefs as a Political Response**
 - A short research note that urges scholars to pay more attention to environmental triggers of conspiracy theory beliefs. An early draft is available.
- **The Impact of Political Institutions on Conspiracy Theory Beliefs**
 - Using publicly available datasets and a vignette experiment, this project examines whether freedom of information and electoral integrity are associated with conspiracy theory beliefs within society. Early results are available and indicate manipulated elections and restrictions on the freedom of press increase conspiracist ideation among populations.
- **Ethnic Variation in Conspiracy Theory Beliefs**
 - Using survey data from US and the UK, this collaborative effort studies whether perceptions of socio-structural variables (e.g. wealth gaps, meritocracy) predict conspiracy beliefs more among marginalized ethnic minorities than White Americans and Brits. Results are mixed.
- **Dissatisfaction with Government and Public Support for Technocratic Climate Decision-making**
 - Using survey data this project explores why certain citizens support a more technocratic approach to climate change decision-making, whilst other, highly concerned citizens, advocate for “more” democracy. Results are expected mid-2025.

Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft (Forschungsgruppe Freyburg)

Die Forschungsgruppe war im Berichtsjahr in drei bedeutenden, interdisziplinären Forschungsprojekten involviert, die sich mit aktuellen gesellschaftlichen und politischen Herausforderungen befassen.

REDEMOS – Reconfiguring EU Democracy Support (Horizon Europe)

Tina Freyburg, Alexander Geisler und Ioannis Vergioglou

Das Horizon Europe-Projekt REDEMOS untersucht die Demokratieförderung der Europäischen Union in ihrer östlichen Nachbarschaft. Ziel des Projekts ist es, vor dem Hintergrund der zunehmenden politischen Unsicherheiten in Osteuropa die Rolle und Wirksamkeit der EU in der Stärkung demokratischer Strukturen neu zu bewerten. Im Rahmen eines breit aufgestellten internationalen Konsortiums analysiert REDEMOS die politischen, gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen in den Partnerländern und erarbeitet Empfehlungen für eine nachhaltige, an den lokalen Kontext angepasste Demokratieförderung.

REFLEX – Registry of Firms’ Life and Exit (SNSF Sinergia)

Danyl Denysenko, Tina Freyburg, Filippo Pasquali und Anna Stünzi

Das interdisziplinäre REFLEX-Projekt wird im Rahmen des Sinergia-Programms des Schweizerischen Nationalfonds (SNSF) gefördert. Es widmet sich der systematischen Untersuchung der institutionellen Grundlagen der Industrialisierung, Finanzialisierung und Globalisierung der Schweizer Wirtschaft über den Zeitraum von 1910 bis 2020. Mithilfe historischer Industriedaten wird analysiert, wie Unternehmen gegründet, entwickelt und aufgelöst wurden – und welche politischen, wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Faktoren diese Prozesse beeinflusst haben. Das Projekt zielt darauf ab, langfristige Dynamiken unternehmerischer Strukturen sichtbar zu machen und so zu einem besseren Verständnis wirtschaftlicher Transformationen beizutragen.

TOSCO – Telecommunications Ownership and Control (SNIS, Universität St.Gallen)

Tina Freyburg, Lisa Garbe und verschiedene Ko-Autor: innen

Im Projekt TOSCO steht die Frage im Zentrum, wie Eigentums- und Kontrollstrukturen im Telekommunikationssektor die Regulierung und politische Steuerung des Internets beeinflussen. Anhand eines eigens erhobenen, umfassenden Datensatzes zu Internetdiensteanbietern in Afrika untersucht das Projekt, inwieweit Eigentumsverhältnisse Auswirkungen auf die politische Partizipation, Informationsfreiheit und demokratische Kontrolle haben. TOSCO leistet damit einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Debatte um digitale Souveränität und die Rolle privatwirtschaftlicher Akteure in der Internet-Governance. Zusammen mit Seraphine Maerz und verschiedenen Studierenden konnte der Datensatz zeitlich aufdatiert werden und umfasst nun den gesamten Zeitraum, seit das Internet den afrikanischen Kontinent erreichte bis heute (2000-2023).

Alle drei Projekte zeichnen sich durch ihre starke internationale Ausrichtung, interdisziplinäre Zusammenarbeit sowie hohe gesellschaftliche Relevanz aus. Sie spiegeln das Engagement der Professur wider, aktuelle politische und wirtschaftliche Entwicklungen kritisch zu analysieren und zur Lösung globaler Herausforderungen beizutragen.

Lehre

Internationale Beziehungen (Lehrstuhl Davis)

James W. Davis

- International Politics and Market Economy (HS) (Zusammenarbeit mit Dominik Sachs)
- The Second Nuclear Age: Sorting Out What's New and What's Not (HS)

Christoph Heusgen

- Multilateralism and the Challenge to the Rules Based International Order (FS)

Heinrich S. Hänggi

- Asia Pacific Security (FS)
- Consultancy Project: Rebuilding Security in Europe (HS)

Benjamin Bertrand

- International Relations: Exercises (FS)
- International Politics and Market Economy: Exercises, Group 1 (HS)

Konstantin Schendzielorz

- International Relations: Exercises (FS)
- International Politics and Market Economy: Exercises, Group 2 (HS)

Politisches Verhalten im Vergleich (Forschungsgruppe Bertsou)

Eri Bertsou

- Artificial Intelligence and Democracy (HS)

Pradeep Krishnan

- Comparative Politics: Exercises, Group 1 & 2 (HS)

Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft (Lehrstuhl Freyburg)

Tina M. Freyburg

- Spring Project: Mit Umfrageexperimenten konkrete Handlungsempfehlungen entwickeln (FS)
- Effective Writing: Topic Sentences (FS)
- Technologien/Technologies: #FreeMyInternet – Illustrierte Kurzgeschichten zur Kommunikation aktueller Internetforschung (zusammen mit Valär Pia)
- Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft (HS) / Comparative Politics (HS)
- Proposal Colloquium (HS)

Leslie Fischer

- Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft: Übungen, Gruppe 1 & 2 (HS)
- Quantitative Methoden: Übungen, Gruppe 1 & 2 (HS)

Anna Stünzi

- Consultancy Project: Nature-related risks for the Swiss financial sector (FS)
- Climate. Now (HS)
- Governing Finance for Tackling Climate Change (HS)

Prof. Dr. Eri Bertsou | Artificial Intelligence

It's a wrap!! For the past three months I have been teaching a course on Artificial Intelligence and Democracy for the Master's in International Affairs at the School of Economics and Political Science (SEPS-HSG) - Universität St.Gallen. And it has been as challenging and intensive as it has been rewarding!

Students from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds consistently brought their A-game, engaging with the question of how AI will reshape our democracies. Throughout the course, we examined core domains where these transformations are already underway: voting and elections; the information environment and disinformation ; labour markets, jobs, and inequality; and the use of AI by the state, including in the judicial system and the public sector, among many others.

A particular highlight was welcoming two outstanding external speakers. Many thanks to Neha Thakkar, former Senior Policy Analyst at Meta, for an excellent session on social media and misinformation, and to Florian Schuetz from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) for a compelling concluding lecture on AI and cybersecurity. Framing AI not merely as an economic driver but as a geopolitical imperative offered a powerful lens through which to conclude the course.

As AI technologies continue to develop at a remarkable pace, how can we at universities keep up, and help provide students with the analytical toolkits needed to dissect the complex interaction between technological and socio-political transformations? If you are active in this space, what would you include in a syllabus for 2026?

Cybersecurity: Opportunities, Risks, and Current Challenges



Artificial Intelligence and Democracy
(7,372) ECTS: 4

Syllabus (Autumn Term 2025)

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping societies, economies, and political systems worldwide. This course explores the intersection of AI and democratic politics, examining how AI technologies are transforming elections, policy, governance, and public trust. We will address pressing questions about the democratic implications of AI, including its role in misinformation, influencing social cohesion, and exacerbating systemic inequalities. Structure and indications of the learning and teaching design. This seminar-style course is expected to take place in the form of weekly two-hour meetings as an in-person class. Teaching will consist of input presentations by the lecturer, input presentations by students and classroom discussion based on the mandatory readings/case studies and current affairs.

Schedule

- Session 1 (17 September) Introduction to AI and Democracy
- Session 2 (24 September) Is AI compatible with Democracy?
- Session 3 (1 October) Democratic Elections in the Age of AI
- Session 4 (8 October) Reflections on ZurichAI Festival
- Session 5 (15 October) Misinformation, Media, Deep fakes (external speaker)
- Session 6 (22 October) Trust and Social cohesion
- Session 7 (12 November) AI uses in Government
- Session 8 (19 November) The Future of Work and Inequality
- Session 9 (26 November) Courts and the Judicial System
- Session 10 (3 December) Climate Action and AI
- Session 11 (10 December) Strategic Foresight Scenarios (scenario analysis)
- Session 12 (17 December) Swiss AI strategy & Concluding Session (external speaker)

Prof. Dr. Tina Freyburg | Wenn aus Forschung Comics entstehen!

In diesem Frühjahrssemester unterrichteten Pia Valär und Tina Freyburg gemeinsam das Seminar Free My Internet – Comics zur Kommunikation zeitgenössischer Internetforschung an HSG. Das Ziel war ehrgeizig: die politischen, wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Dimensionen des Internets zu erforschen und diese Erkenntnisse dann in wissenschaftliche Comics zu übersetzen sowie die komplexen Debatten einem breiten Publikum zugänglich machen.

Das Ergebnis war fantastisch. Innerhalb weniger Wochen wechselten die Studierenden von der akademischen Literatur zur kreativen Wissenschaftskommunikation und produzierten illustrierte Geschichten, die erklären, wie das Internet Gesellschaft, Politik und Märkte prägt.

Ihre Comics sind klug, kritisch und kreativ, Sie zeigen, wie Storytelling neue Türen für den Dialog über die digitale Welt öffnen kann.

Das Seminar basiert auf einer Mini-Reihe illustrierter Kurzgeschichten, die die Dozenten gemeinsam mit Lisa Garbe am Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB) und Véronique Wavre entwickelten. Die Miniserie hat das Ziel, die breite Öffentlichkeit über die Architektur des Internets aufzuklären und das Bewusstsein dafür zu schärfen, wie man das Internet im Alltag nutzen kann.



Publikationen

Internationale Beziehungen (Forschungsgruppe Davis)

Risse, T. (2025). Interstate rivalry, major power status, and state support for arms control. *International Interactions*, 51(4), 537–567. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2025.2518394>

Risse, T. | (2025). Democracy and State Support for Arms Control. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 21(4), oraf026. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/oraf026>



Politisches Verhalten im Vergleich (Forschungsgruppe Bertsou)

Bertsou, E. (2026). Technocratic attitudes during the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe and the US. *West European Politics*, 49(2), 483–513. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2025.2463272>

Eri Bertsou, Pradeep Krishnan, and Amber Zenklusen: (2025). Trust in scientists and their role in society across 68 countries. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 9(4), 713–730. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-024-02090-5>

Eri Bertsou, Pradeep Krishnan, and Amber Zenklusen: (2025). Perceptions of science, science communication, and climate change attitudes in 68 countries – the TISP dataset. *Scientific data*, 12(1), 114. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-024-02090-5>

Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft (Forschungsgruppe Freyburg)

Garbe, L., Maerz, S. F., & Freyburg, T. (2026). Authoritarian collaboration and repression in the digital age: balancing foreign direct investment and control in internet infrastructure. *Democratization*, 33(1), 85–108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2024.2442377>

How dictators help each other control the internet. In a recently published study, political scientist Prof. Dr. Tina Freyburg examines how authoritarian regimes deal with a key challenge in the digital age: how to expand internet infrastructure without losing control over it.

[NEWS: How dictators help each other control the internet | unisg.ch](#)

Democratization Journal, Können autoritäre Regime digitalisieren, ohne die Kontrolle zu verlieren?

Das Internet ist längst kein neutraler Raum mehr: Es bietet wirtschaftliche Chancen, birgt aber Risiken für autoritäre Regime, da freie Kommunikation und unabhängige Informationsflüsse deren Kontrolle bedrohen. Eine Studie von Lisa Garbe, Seraphine Maerz und Tina Freyburg (*Democratization*, 2026) zeigt, dass autoritäre Staaten in Afrika gezielt auf Investoren aus ähnlich regierten Ländern setzen, um ihre digitale Kontrolle zu sichern: Internet ja, aber ohne politische Einbußen.

Die Analyse von 44 autoritären Staaten über mehr als zwei Jahrzehnte zeigt, dass je repressiver ein Regime agiert, desto mehr Internetanbieteranteile in der Hand autoritärer Investoren liegen. Diese behindern weniger die Repressionsabsichten, was Online-Überwachung, Zensur und gezielte Internetsperren begünstigt. Besonders wenn mindestens ein Anbieter mehrheitlich autokratischen Eigentümern gehört, steigt die Wahrscheinlichkeit digitaler Repression deutlich. Beispiele verdeutlichen dies: Während internationale Anbieter wie Orange oder MTN in Guinea staatliche Überwachung ablehnten, lieferten in Burundi autoritäre Investoren wie Viettel Kundendaten bereitwillig an die Regierung.

Die Studie hebt eine wenig beachtete Form internationaler Zusammenarbeit hervor: autoritäre Kooperation durch Investitionen, die grenzüberschreitend digitale Infrastruktur zur Machtsicherung nutzen. Damit zeigt sich: In autoritären Kontexten garantiert das Internet keine Öffnung, sondern wird zunehmend Teil strategischer Steuerungslogik autoritärer Regime.

Ganzer Bericht:

[Wie Autokratien im Digitalen kooperieren – und warum das Folgen für die Informationsfreiheit hat – DeFacto](#)

Geisler, A. M. (2026). The Ebb and Flow: Examining the Promises and Pitfalls of the 'Deliberative Wave' Metaphor. *Representation*, 62(1), 119–132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2025.2566818>

Gerwin, M., Szuca, P., Mroek, N. et al. (2025). Designing the process of random selection of citizens' assemblies. *Journal of Sortition*, 1(1): 48–59. <https://doi.org/10.53765/3050-0672.1.1.48>

Stünzi, Anna | (Januar 2025), Taylor & Francis, Climate Policy Paper
[Quantifying climate finance needs in the nationally determined contributions of developing countries](#)

Stünzi, Anna (November 2025), Science Direct, Wie schätzen Entwicklungsländer Ihren Klimafinanzierungsbedarf im Rahmen des Pariser Abkommens ein?
[How do developing countries estimate their climate finance needs under the Paris Agreement? - ScienceDirect](#)

Stünzi, Anna (Dezember 2025), ScienceDirect, Können massgeschneiderte Informationen die öffentliche Unterstützung für CO2-Bepreisung erhöhen?
[Tailored information and the public support for carbon pricing in Germany - ScienceDirect](#)



Ecological Economics 241 (2026) 108849

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journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/econecol

ELSEVIER

Analysis

Tailored information and the public support for carbon pricing in Germany

Antonia Schwarz^{a,*,1}, Anna Stünzi^b, Kathrin Kaestner^c, Michael Pahle^d,
Stephan Sommer^{c,d}

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I23
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Environmental policies
Policy acceptance
Policy communication
Survey experiment

ABSTRACT

Providing information about carbon pricing is widely considered to be key to increasing public support for it. A number of studies have analyzed such effects, but little attention has been paid to how changes to the design can enhance the effectiveness of information treatments. Typically, generic information with low affective appeal has been used. In contrast, this paper, drawing on recent research into the design of information provisions, employs a targeted and tailored approach to ensure high receptiveness. Utilizing novel German survey data, we examine whether video-based information tailored to individuals' carbon pricing concerns outperforms generic information. Our results confirm that targeted and tailored information significantly increases support, primarily for respondents concerned about costs. However, the effect of tailored information concerning fairness and effectiveness is statistically not different from that of the generic control video. Nevertheless, it reduces strong opposition, providing valuable insights for policy acceptance. These findings suggest that integrating targeted communication strategies into climate policy design may help build broader policy tolerance and stability, though further research is needed to confirm their effectiveness beyond the specific context of this study.

Vergioglou, Ioannis | (August 2025)

How political partisans see elections under authoritarian rule

Wie politische Anhänger Wahlen unter autoritärer Herrschaft wahrnehmen

Many countries that are not full democracies still hold elections. Commonly, those in power tilt the playing field in favour of the ruling party. A recent HSG study gives insight into how this “electoral authoritarianism” is viewed by the citizens who live there.

Viele nicht vollständig demokratische Staaten führen zwar Wahlen durch, verzerren diese jedoch zugunsten der Regierung („elektoraler Autoritarismus“). Eine aktuelle HSG-Studie untersucht, wie Bürgerinnen und Bürger solche Wahlen wahrnehmen.

HSG author Ioannis Vergioglou is a political scientist focused on public investment policy evaluation and optimization and a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute of Political Science (IPW-HSG). His focus is on European politics, public policy evaluation, and predictive modelling.

Ganzer Bericht:

[NEWS: How populations in authoritarian states perceive elections](#)



Auszeichnungen und Preise

The following students will receive the Ph.D. degree at the Ph.D. Graduation on 20 February 2026.

Die folgenden Studierenden erhalten ihren Ph.D. - Abschluss bei der Promotionsfeier am 20. Februar 2026.

! Congratulations !



Michael Asiedu



Title: Internet Shutdown before Authoritarian Courts in Africa

Thesis Committee: Prof. Ph.D. Tina Freyburg, University of St. Gallen
Prof. Tamir Moustafa, Simon Fraser University
Prof. Ken Opalo, Georgetown University

Zusammenfassung:

Diese Dissertation untersucht ein Paradoxon der afrikanischen Regierungsführung: Obwohl Gerichte in autoritären Regimen häufig der Exekutive untergeordnet sind, haben Zivilgesellschaftsorganisationen staatlich angeordnete Internetsperren wiederholt erfolgreich angefochten und zwischen 2011 und 2024 neun von vierzehn Fällen in zwölf afrikanischen Ländern gewonnen. Die Studie analysiert, wann Organisationen Klagen einreichen, unter welchen Bedingungen Richter zugunsten der Kläger entscheiden und wie Gerichte ihre Urteile begründen.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass der Erfolg strategischer Prozessführung vor allem von „weichen Kapazitäten“ abhängt. Organisationen mit demokratischen Führungsstrukturen, starken Netzwerken und Kooperationen mit *pro bono* Rechtsorganisationen klagen häufiger und wenden sich bei fehlender Offenheit nationaler Gerichte an regionale Instanzen wie den ECOWAS-Gerichtshof. Für den Ausgang der Verfahren sind individuelle Richtermerkmale wichtiger als nationale politische Rahmenbedingungen. Entscheidungen gegen Regierungen treten insbesondere dann auf, wenn Karriereanreize, eine starke Orientierung an verfassungsrechtlichen Prinzipien und institutionelle Traditionen richterlicher Unabhängigkeit zusammenwirken.

Die Dissertation zeigt damit, dass strategische Prozessführung in autoritären Kontexten Teil breiterer institutioneller Aushandlungsprozesse ist, in denen juristischer Diskurs, Timing und Netzwerke zentrale Rollen spielen.

Nina Zachlod



Title: Entrepreneurship in Adverse Contexts:
A Spatial Approach to Structural
Inequalities and Institutional Presence

Thesis Committee: Prof. Dr. Charlotta Sirén (Supervisor)
Prof. Ph.D. Dean Shepherd (Co-Supervisor)
Prof. Ph.D. Tina Freyburg, University of St. Gallen

Zusammenfassung:

Die Dissertation untersucht mithilfe räumlicher Ansätze die Auswirkungen struktureller Disparitäten und institutioneller Präsenz auf Entrepreneurship unter widrigen Umständen. Sie zeigt, wie räumliche Perspektiven zur Entrepreneurship-Forschung und zur Bewältigung globaler Herausforderungen («Grand Challenges») beitragen können und leistet theoretische Beiträge zur Strukturierungstheorie, Institutionentheorie sowie zur satellitengestützten Theoriebildung.

Die Dissertation umfasst drei kumulative Beiträge. Der erste Beitrag bietet eine systematische Übersicht der Literatur zu gefährdetem Unternehmertum und analysiert den Zusammenhang zwischen strukturellen Bedingungen des unternehmerischen Umfelds und der Ausbeutung gefährdeter Unternehmer. Der zweite Beitrag untersucht empirisch die Auswirkungen institutioneller und räumlicher Einbettung auf informelle Unternehmer unter widrigen Umständen. Der dritte Beitrag stellt Satellitendaten als Datenquelle vor und diskutiert deren Potenzial für die Grand-Challenge-Forschung.

Fördermittel und Preise



Alexander Geisler and Leslie Fischer were awarded the Green Box grant of the University of St. Gallen, funding a project on the public perception of women during the 2025 UEFA Women's Euro Championship, titled "Gendered Reactions to Women's Success." (no. 1031500).

Öffentliche Veranstaltungen

Prof. Dr. Eri Bertsou



Juni 2025 | Demokratie quo vadis?

As part of the event “Challenges to Democracy,” organized by the Joint Alumni Club of Zurich and Diane B. Bailey, the current state of democratic systems was discussed in depth. In light of ongoing global developments, it is more important than ever to engage critically with questions of democracy, exchange perspectives, and foster open and attentive dialogue.

A key reference point for the discussion was the dataset from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project, which provides comprehensive insights into global democratic trends. The data indicates a clear deterioration: while 51 percent of the world’s population lived in democracies in 2004, this figure has declined to just 28 percent today. Democracy has thus been in continuous global decline for the past 16 years.

At the same time, the analysis highlights an important distinction: it is not the idea of democracy itself that is being rejected, but rather the way democracy is experienced in practice. When political systems fail to meet citizens’ expectations and do not deliver tangible improvements in their daily lives, trust in institutions erodes. However, this trust does not disappear entirely; instead, it is often redirected toward populist actors who promise simple solutions to complex challenges.

Democracy should not be understood as a static system, but as a dynamic process that must adapt to societal change. Standards and expectations that were considered sufficient decades ago are often no longer adequate for today’s increasingly complex, diverse, and interconnected societies.

A key takeaway from the discussion is that democracy remains resilient only if it delivers tangible outcomes. Rebuilding trust therefore requires governance structures that effectively respond to citizens’ needs and improve their everyday lives.

This leads to several implications: democracy should not be abandoned, but rather continuously developed and adapted to evolving conditions. At the same time, caution is warranted toward simplistic solutions that seek to replace complex but necessary reform processes. Ultimately, democracy must be understood not as a periodic electoral exercise, but as an ongoing societal practice that requires the active engagement of all.



November 2025 | Sygnum Bank

Sygnum Bank hosted the event “Opportunities and tensions between democracy and the blockchain” at its Zurich office for The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) Alumni Association.

Mathias Imbach, Sygnum Bank Co-Founder and Group CEO, Eri Bertou, Prof. Dr. (Universität St.Gallen (HSG)), and Nicolò Di Dio, Sygnum Senior Legal Counsel and moderator, talked about the evolving relationship between democratic principles and blockchain technology.

“Blockchain delivers unparalleled transparency and trust, offering opportunities to strengthen democratic systems in an increasingly digital society,” says Nicolò Di Dio.

“At the same time, its disruptive potential raises fundamental questions around monetary sovereignty and the evolution of regulatory frameworks.”

The panel covered topics such as decentralization as a democratic ideal (e.g., DAOs, e-voting), transparency and governance, and the role of stablecoins and central banking.



Past Engagements



“Redefining Business Leadership in an Era of Democratic Fragility” Roundtable at Goals House, Davos WEF 2025

BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt and The Club of Rome

“2050: The World in 25 Years: Best-Case Vs Worst-Case Scenarios”

DIONZ at WEF2025



“Leaders of Tomorrow on Shifting Global Powers”, St. Gallen Symposium

ST. GALLEN SYMPOSIUM



Prof. Dr. James W. Davis

Eine Auswahl der öffentlichen Auftritte von Prof. Dr. James W. Davis:

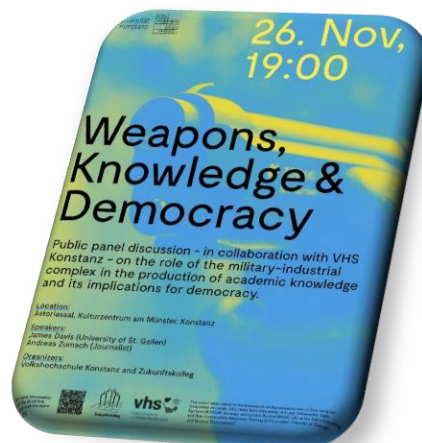
Davis, James | (April 2025), SRF «Eco Talk», **China vs. USA, Wer hält die Trümpfe in der Hand**

Der Zollstreit wird zum Kräftemessen zwischen den beiden grössten Volkswirtschaften der Welt. Wer hat die grössere Verhandlungsmacht im Handelskrieg? Über dieses Thema diskutiert Andi Lüscher mit HSG-Professor James Davis und der Sinologin Simona Grano von der Universität Zürich.



Davis, James | (November 2025), öffentlicher Auftritt an der Universität Konstanz,
Thema: Weapons, Knowledge and Democracy

[Programm Ringvorlesung](#) | [Ringvorlesung: Programm](#) | [Ringvorlesung Forensische Psychologie](#) | [Lehre](#) | [Arbeitsgruppe Forensische Psychologie](#) | [Arbeitsgruppen](#) | [Fachbereich Psychologie](#)



The Third Annual Conference in Honor of Robert Jervis



The Arnold A. Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies and the Institute of Global Politics at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs; the Institute of Economic and Social Research and Policy at Columbia University; the Institute of Political Science at the University of St. Gallen; and the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto present:

"Directions Forward for Psychology in International Relations"

The Third Annual Conference in Honor of Robert Jervis

Columbia University, International Affairs Building (IAB), Columbia University

Prof. Dr. Tina Freyburg

Public Lecture | (Februar 2025) Freyburg, Tina und Geisler, Alexander

The premise that "democracy cannot guarantee its own prerequisites" served as the starting point for that year's public lecture series of the Institute on resilience against democratic challenges, which [Alexander Geisler](#) co-organized together with [Tina Freyburg](#). Amidst a landscape defined by systemic competition from autocracies, waning partisan support, and the proliferation of AI-generated disinformation, the program evaluated whether democracies can adapt and respond. Moving beyond a mere diagnosis of these challenges, the contributing scholars adopted a solution-oriented perspective to analyze current counter strategies and their potential to bolster political and social stability.

Starting with the digital sphere, Sabrina Kessler (University of Zurich) addressed the challenges posed by AI-driven disinformation and deepfakes, outlining strategic responses to technologically mediated threats. The participatory and normative dimensions of stability were explored by Angelika Vetter (University of Stuttgart), who analyzed the critical role of political trust and support in maintaining democratic cohesion. Addressing external pressures, Julia Leininger (German Institute of Development and Sustainability) discussed frameworks for protecting democratic processes against autocratic interference and systemic "transformation." The series concluded with Tina Freyburg, who provided a comparative analysis of how the democratic self-understanding of political elites influences institutional strength. Alexander Geisler also opened the series and examined the potential of citizens' assemblies as a democratic innovation to enhance participatory legitimacy



Wissenstransfer

Internationale Beziehungen (Forschungsgruppe Davis)

Davis, James | (Januar 2025), LGT Big Picture, Handelskrieg

Davis James | (März 2025), The Wall Street Journal,
Trump prompts European Calls for a Homegrown Nuclear Umbrella
[Trump Prompts European Calls for a Homegrown Nuclear Umbrella - WSJ](#)

Davis, James | (April 2025), SRF Eco Talk, China vs. USA, Wer hält die Trümpfe in der Hand
[China vs. USA – Wer hält die Trümpfe in der Hand? - Eco Talk - Play SRF](#)

Davis, James | (Juni 2025), Swiss Textiles Summit und Generalversammlung,
Unternehmerisch handeln in bewegten Zeiten, Vortrag

Davis, James | (September 2025), Tagesschau ARD, zur Lage in den USA nach Attentat auf Kirk.
[James Davis, Prof. für internationale Politik Universität St. Gallen, zur Lage in den USA nach Attentat auf Kirk | tagesschau.de](#)



Davis, James | (September 2025), NZZ-Podium, Aufbruch und Abbruch – Trumps Zollpolitik und Ihre Folgen

<https://live.nzz.ch/de/events/nzz-podium-schweiz/aufbruch-und-abbruch-trumps-zollpolitik-und-ihre-folgen>

Davis, James | (Oktober 2025), UBS Center for Economics & Society, Vortrag,
Kann sich Deutschland neu erfinden?

Davis, James | (Oktober 2025), NZZ Academy, Pontresina, Living in a World of Trade Offs

Davis, James | (Oktober 2025), Aspen Finance Leaders Fellowship, Vortrag, München, Deutschland
A Critical View of Global Governance

Davis, James | (Oktober 2025), Wie gelang Trump den Friedensdeal im Nahostkonflikt?
Beitrag auf merkur.de

[Freilassung der Hamas-Geiseln und Waffenstillstand in Gaza: So gelang Trump der Friedensdeal](#)

Davis, James | (November 2025), öffentlicher Auftritt an der Universität Konstanz,
Weapons, Knowledge and Democracy

[Programm Ringvorlesung | Ringvorlesung: Programm | Ringvorlesung Forensische Psychologie | Lehre
| Arbeitsgruppe Forensische Psychologie | Arbeitsgruppen | Fachbereich Psychologie](#)

Davis, James | (Dezember 2025), ETH Domain Conference, Swiss Tech Convention Center (EPFL),
Lausanne

[Shaping the Future: ETH Domain Conference 2025 - ETH-Rat](#)



Von Dessien, Jana-Christina | (Februar 2025), "Germans may not be interested in war but war is interested in them." 9DASHLINE

<https://www.9dashline.com/article/germans-may-not-be-interested-in-war-but-war-is-interested-in-them>



Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft (Forschungsgruppe Freyburg)

Asiedu, Michael | (Dezember 2025)

What if our digital world is not just changing how we communicate, but fundamentally reshaping power, repression, and democracy itself?

Over the past years, Michael Asiedu, researcher at the Institute of Political Science (IPW-HSG), has contributed to this question through five substantive book reviews published in relevant journals. Together, they paint a compelling picture of how Hashtag#technology transforms the institutions and relationships that underpin political life.

Across these pieces, several themes stand out:

- (1) Hashtag#Digitalization is redistributing power between citizens and states, courts and lawmakers, workers and platforms, experts and algorithms.
- (2) Hashtag#Authoritarianism is adapting, using shutdowns, surveillance, and cyber controls to suppress challengers while learning to avoid backlash.
- (3) Even strong democratic institutions feel the pressure, as lawmakers push constitutional boundaries and Hashtag#courts strategically accommodate political signals.
- (4) Global inequalities are reproduced in digital Hashtag#labour markets, where African workers face opportunity and precarity in equal measure, under systems of algorithmic control.

Why book reviews matter:

Book reviews are more than summaries. They are intellectual interventions.

They situate new research in broader debates, identify conceptual blind spots, and open fresh avenues for inquiry. For emerging scholars, they are also a way to build scholarly voice, shape disciplinary conversations, and strengthen academic communities.

Here are the five reviews:

- (2025) Trust under threat: challenges in a digital society. Democratization, <https://lnkd.in/eZvtY77E>
- (2025) Putting courts under pressure: when lawmakers push constitutional boundaries. Democratization, https://lnkd.in/eZ6R3u_V
- (2025) Digital International Relations-Technology, Agency, and Order. Political Studies Review, <https://lnkd.in/ejwmwnDc>
- (2025) Repression in the Digital Age—Surveillance, Censorship, and the Dynamics of State Violence. Political Studies Review, <https://lnkd.in/efpHwBWE>
- (2025) The Digital Continent: Placing Africa in planetary networks of work. African Affairs, https://lnkd.in/eTz_AJBS



Fischer, Leslie, Pasquali, Filippo | (Dezember 2025)

Kann ein einzelnes Ereignis unsere Wahrnehmung eines Zustandes verändern, oder sind unsere Wahrnehmungen in seinem langfristigen Verhalten verankert?

Can a single event change how we perceive a state, or are our perceptions anchored in its long-term behavior?

- Research Questions: Unter what conditions do individuals revise their perceptions of a state?
- Core Argument:
 1. Individual's perception of a state is based on a socially constructed sense of collective perceptions
 2. Individuals are especially likely to revise their own perception of a state when they perceive this perception to be widely shared
- Empirical Strategy: Betting markets to measure collective perception of a state
 - Eurovision: Popularity contest among states
 - Case selection: States engaged in armed conflict, where collective judgments carry especially high stakes
- Main Finding: Adverse wartime events can improve the perception of a state when this perception appears to be collectively shared

Konferenzen und Workshops

Internationale Beziehungen (Forschungsgruppe Davis)

James W. Davis

- Munich Security Conference (MSC), München, Deutschland
- Jervis Conference, Columbia University, New York, USA
- Annual Meeting, American Political Science Association, Vancouver, Kanada

Tobias Risse

- Schweizerische Vereinigung für Politikwissenschaft (SVPW), Genf, Schweiz
- European Political Science Association (EPSA), Madrid, Spanien
- Annual Meeting, American Political Science Association (APSA), Vancouver, Kanada
- German Association of Peace and Conflict Studies (AFK), Empirical Peace and Conflict Research Workshop, Berlin, Deutschland

Konstantin Schendzielorz

- Schweizerische Vereinigung für Politikwissenschaft (SVPW), Genf, Schweiz
- Early Career Workshop Internationale Beziehungen: Deutsche Vereinigung für Politikwissenschaft, Tutzing, Deutschland
- Global Nuclear Order Working Group, Annual Conference 2025, online
- Annual Doctoral Conference, Central European University (CEU), Wien, Österreich
- European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), General Conference, Thessaloniki, Griechenland
- Österreichische Gesellschaft für Politikwissenschaft, Jahreskonferenz, Salzburg, Österreich

Jana-Christina von Dessen

- 9th Postgraduate Conference Society for Terrorism Research in St. Andrews, Schottland
- 18th EISA Pan-European Conference on International Relations (PEC), Bologna, Italien

Politisches Verhalten im Vergleich (Forschungsgruppe Bertsou)

Eri Bertsou

- Schweizerische Vereinigung für Politikwissenschaft (SVPW), St. Gallen, Schweiz
- European Political Science Association (EPSA), Madrid, Spanien
- Annual Meeting, American Political Science Association (APSA), Vancouver, Kanada

Pradeep Krishnan

- European Political Science Association (EPSA), Madrid, Spanien
- Workshop: The Politics of AI: Citizen Perceptions, Preferences, and Priorities, Nuffield College, Oxford, England

Amber Zenklusen

- Schweizerische Vereinigung für Politikwissenschaft (SVPW), Genf, Schweiz
- European Political Science Association (EPSA), Madrid, Spanien
- Workshop: The Politics of AI: Citizen Perceptions, Preferences, and Priorities, Nuffield College, Oxford, England

Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft (Forschungsgruppe Freyburg)

Michael Asiedu

- PSA 75th Annual International Conference, Birmingham, England

Danyl Denysenko

- REFLEX Konferenzen in Lugano und St. Gallen, Schweiz

Leslie Fischer

- Schweizerische Vereinigung für Politikwissenschaft (SVPW), St. Gallen, Schweiz
- ETH Zürich Conflict Colloquium, Zürich, Schweiz
- International Relations & Data Service Research Group Meeting, ETH Zurich, Schweiz
- European Political Science Association (EPSA), Madrid, Spanien
- Network of European Peace Scientists (NEPS), Barcelona, Spanien
- Peace Science International, Orlando, USA

Tina M. Freyburg

- Schweizerische Vereinigung für Politikwissenschaft (SVPW), Genf, Schweiz
- European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), Joint Sessions, Prag, Tschechien
- European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), General Conference, Thessaloniki, Griechenland
- REDEMOS Konferenzen in Dresden, Brüssel, St. Gallen
- REFLEX Konferenzen in Lugano und St. Gallen, Schweiz
- TUDiSC Konferenz, Dresden, Deutschland

Alexander Geisler

- Schweizerische Vereinigung für Politikwissenschaft (SVPW), Genf, Schweiz
- Tagung Politisches Vertrauen, Saarbrücken
- REDEMOS Konferenzen in Brüssel, Dresden und St. Gallen
- Annual Meeting, American Political Science Association (APSA), Vancouver, Kanada

Filippo Pasquali

- Schweizerische Vereinigung für Politikwissenschaft (SVPW), St. Gallen, Schweiz
- International Conference, Milano, Italien

Ioannis Vergioglou

- Schweizerische Vereinigung für Politikwissenschaft (SVPW), Genf, Schweiz
- REDEMOS Konferenzen in Brüssel und St. Gallen
- European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), General Conference, Thessaloniki, Griechenland

Tina Freyburg, Alexander Geisler, Ioannis Vergioglou (May 2025)

Europe in listening mode? How the EU's perception of its external image informs its practices of democracy promotion.

External Influences on Democratisation and Autocratisation: How (Non)Traditional Donor's Competition Shapes Political Regimes

Zusammenfassung:

Policy is formulated on what decision-makers think, not necessarily on what is. The foreign policy of the European Union (EU) is no different. Yet we know little about how EU officials think the EU and its external policies are perceived by their counterparts in the countries with which they work. Taking a particularly sensitive issue, democracy promotion, we examine the meta-perceptions that prevail within the EU institutions and their behavioral consequences in the European neighborhood to the east. In addition to consolidating our understanding of what constitutes EU democracy promotion and how to avoid potential policy failures due to misperception, we seek to make both a theoretical and a methodological contribution. Theoretically, we revive research on external perceptions from the 1950s and 1970s and combine it with insights from the 'practice turn' to explore how EU practices of democracy promotion are shaped by how EU staff believes their activities and motivations are perceived externally. Methodologically, we explore this question by using qualitatively derived EU images in a quantitative questionnaire survey of relevant EU officials, based on an improved version of Q methodology. Our findings will reveal how EU diplomats perceive their own image in the Eastern neighborhood and whether they actively seize opportunities to manage how they are perceived by their counterparts.



Europe in listening mode? How the EU's perception of its external image informs its practices of democracy promotion

Comparative Politics | Democracy | European Union | Foreign Policy | International Relations

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Workshop

External Influences on Democratisation and Autocratisation: How (Non)Traditional Donor's Competition Shapes Political Regimes

Joint Sessions of
Workshops, Charles
University, 20 – 23 May
2025

About

Academic Programme

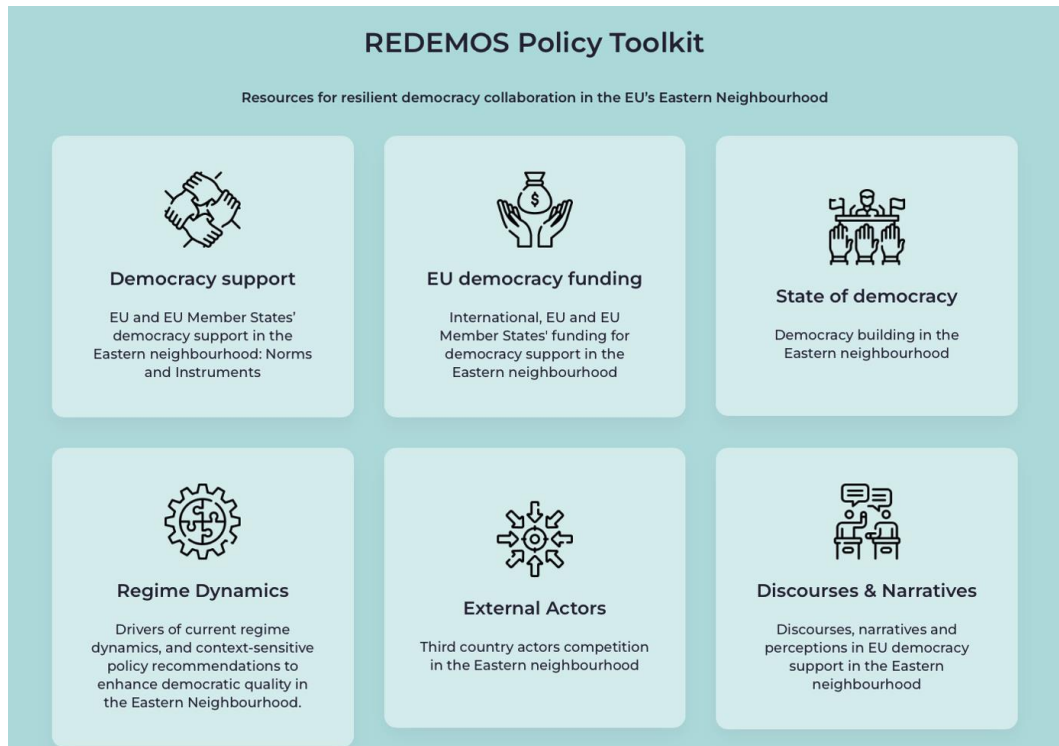
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Meet Our Host

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Shaping the Future of EU Democracy Support: The REDEMOS Policy Toolkit Validation Meeting

On 18 September, the REDEMOS consortium held its Policy Toolkit Validation Meeting at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) Brussels Office. The event marked an important milestone in the development of the REDEMOS Policy Toolkit, which will be submitted to the European Commission later this year.

The meeting brought together academics, policy experts, and civil society representatives to exchange perspectives on the European Union's democracy support in the eastern neighborhood. Discussions addressed evolving trends in democracy support funding, the need to consolidate EU aid in an era of shifting priorities, and the broader challenges and opportunities for democracy support in the context of increasing geopolitical competition.

Prof. Dr. Tina Freyburg participated as a speaker in the session on “Trends in Democracy Support Funding: Consolidating EU Aid in an Era of Shifting Priorities.” The panel, chaired by Dr Madalina Dobrescu (NTNU), also featured H.E. Daniela Morari, Ambassador of Moldova to the European Union, highlighting the importance of perspectives from partner countries in shaping future EU democracy support.

During the event, REDEMOS partners presented initial research findings and draft elements of the Policy Toolkit, inviting feedback to further refine its final version. The meeting formed part of the consortium’s ongoing effort to develop practical policy recommendations and strengthen dialogue on supporting resilient democratic development in the EU’s eastern neighborhood.



Fischer, Leslie | (Juni 2025)

How can large-scale wars empower women politically?

At this year’s Network of European Peace Scientists (NEPS) conference in Barcelona, our PhD researcher Leslie Fischer presented new research with Douglas Atkinson, Kevin Fahey, and Vanessa Tuttle on how wartime mobilization can foster women’s political representation.

Their study examines how World War II conscription in the United States created regional gender imbalances that pushed women’s social groups beyond inward-focused activities toward public-facing community engagement. This shift expanded their organizational capacity, laying the groundwork for women’s subsequent electoral mobilization and entry into political office.

Key takeaway: In areas with higher wartime conscription, women were significantly more likely to enter political office by 1980—suggesting that collective action during crises can lay the groundwork for long-term political empowerment.



European Peace Science Conference, NEPS, Barcelona, Spanien

Geisler, Alexander | (Februar 2025), University of St. Gallen

As part of the commitment to academic collaboration at the University of St. Gallen, Alexander Geisler had the opportunity to host an instructional session for the University of St. Gallen's International Week (IWV) exchange program. This annual initiative convenes high-achieving students from partner institutions across Asia and Europe to examine regional governance models and international relations.



Geisler, Alexander | (Dezember 2025), Brüssel, Belgien, REDEMOS Final Conference

In collaboration with the REDEMOS Horizon Europe Project partners and representatives from the European Commission participated in a high-level dialogue in Brussels focused on the reconfiguration of EU democracy support. The session served as a capstone for the project, synthesizing research findings to enhance the impact and resilience of European democratic initiatives in a shifting geopolitical climate. The session of the final conference was titled "Outside-in, inside-out: perceptions of EU democracy support in the EU's eastern neighborhood" and addressed the critical gap between EU policy intentions and local reception.

The conference featured an artist who created drawings live, showcasing the main insights.



The role of China in the political transition of the EU's eastern neighbourhood 

SETTING THE SCENE

CHINA HAS ECONOMIC AMBITIONS in THE REGION

GEOPOLITICAL COUNTERBALANCE TO RUSSIAN INFLUENCE

CHINA'S ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT POSES **CHALLENGE** TO EU NORMATIVE GOALS

MEDIA INFLUENCE + PARTNERSHIP WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

BEIJING-FRIENDLY NARRATIVES

KEY FINDINGS

NORMALISING THE SPREAD OF DUAL-USE SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES

CHINA HAS STRATEGIC INTEREST in THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

MAKING COUNTRIES SUBSCRIBE TO CHINA'S VISION OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER

UNDERMINING LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC **NORMS AND VALUES**

CHINA REMAINS AMBIVALENT ON RUSSIA'S AGGRESSIONS

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 EU MUST CONTINUE TO PRIORITISE ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS
- 2 EU SHOULD COMMUNICATE A UNIFIED STRATEGY ON CHINESE INVOLVEMENT
- 3 EU SHOULD PREVENT AND LIMIT DEPENDENCIES ON CHINESE SUPPLIERS
- 4 EU SHOULD FOSTER PUBLIC DEBATE ABOUT CHINA'S ROLE in THE REGION

Organisation von Konferenzen & Workshops

EDP Workshop, 14.-16. April 2025 St. Gallen

Workshop Recap: International Democracy Promotion at Times of Global Autocratisation
On April 14–15, the University of St.Gallen hosted a workshop marking the launch of the next phase of the External Democracy Promotion network. Over the next four years, the network will explore how intensifying global autocratisation is reshaping democracy promotion.

Participants engaged in rich, interdisciplinary debate on:

- The impact of autocratisation in recipient countries
- Democratic backsliding in donor states
- The influence of shifting global norms and non-democratic donors

A highlight was the keynote by SEPS-HSG Guest Professor Daniel Drezner (Tufts University), who explored the strategic logic—and limits—of the “Madman Theory” in global politics.

The event fostered strong academic exchange, reinforced the need for cross-disciplinary collaboration, and laid the groundwork for future research on democracy promotion in a changing global landscape.



REDEMOS Conference, 22.-24. Oktober 2025, St. Gallen

The 9th REDEMOS Stakeholder and Academic Conference took place from 22 to 24 October 2025 at the University of St.Gallen (HSG), Switzerland. The event convened members of the project consortium, invited researchers, 'International Affairs' students of the University of St.Gallen, and distinguished experts from academia and practice. The conference aimed to advance discussions on EU democracy support in the eastern neighbourhood, reflect on evolving conceptual frameworks and research findings, and strengthen the dialogue between academic research and policy-oriented perspectives. The programme combined internal working sessions with a public panel discussion, which served as the formal opening of the conference.

Opening and Public Panel Discussion (22 October 2025)

The conference commenced with a public panel discussion entitled "Learning from Switzerland: Promoting Democracy in Uncertain Times." In her welcoming remarks, Tina Freyburg (University of St.Gallen) highlighted the relevance of examining democratic resilience in a context marked by democratic backsliding, geopolitical instability, and declining public trust in political institutions. She emphasised the REDEMOS project's commitment to exploring innovative and participatory approaches to democracy support, particularly through its concept of "democracy collaboration."



The panel brought together a diverse group of speakers representing academic research, political practice, media, and international engagement. Madalina Dobrescu (PI REDEMOS, NTNU, second from the left) contributed a research-driven perspective grounded in the REDEMOS framework. Andreas Gross (former Swiss MP & delegate to the Council of Europe, second from the right) shared reflections drawn from his extensive experience in Swiss and European politics. Bruno Kaufmann (Global Democracy Correspondent, Swiss Broadcasting Company; Democracy International & Swiss Democracy Foundation, left) offered insights into democratic innovation and citizen participation, while Alexandre Lambert (School for International Training, SIT & Geneva Institute of Geopolitical Studies, GIGS, right) situated the discussion within a broader geopolitical context. The session was moderated by Henry Plitt (BA student, University of St.Gallen), who guided the conversation through a series of interconnected thematic blocks.



The discussion first addressed the challenges facing democracy in uncertain times. Panelists examined global trends such as democratic regression, the erosion of trust, hybrid threats, and disinformation. Democracy was portrayed not as a static institutional arrangement but as a system requiring constant adaptation and renewal.

The conversation then turned to lessons that can be drawn from the Swiss experience. Speakers underscored the significance of participatory mechanisms, including referenda and other forms of direct democratic engagement, as well as Switzerland's long-standing traditions of political compromise, dialogue, and power-sharing. These features were discussed as potential sources of inspiration for strengthening democratic resilience elsewhere, while also acknowledging the limits of institutional transferability.

A further segment focused on democracy promotion beyond national borders. Panelists reflected on the European Union's evolving strategies, noting the tensions between normative commitments and geopolitical constraints. Particular emphasis was placed on the need for greater local ownership, inclusiveness, and credibility in democracy support policies.

In the concluding reflections, panelists stressed that democratic resilience depends not only on institutional design but also on civic culture, participation, and trust. The session generated an engaged exchange with the audience and set an intellectually stimulating tone for the remainder of the conference.

Academic conference sessions (23 & 24 October 2025)

The second day of the conference was dedicated to academic panels examining domestic political conditions and EU democracy promotion in the eastern neighbourhood. The conference brought together scholars and experts from a range of European countries, including Switzerland, Norway, the United Kingdom, Germany, Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova. The interdisciplinary and international composition of participants contributed to rich discussions bridging comparative politics, European studies, and practitioner-oriented insights. The sessions were explicitly designed to foster in-depth scholarly exchange by bringing REDEMOS researchers into dialogue with expert colleagues invited across Swiss universities. This format created a space for critical reflection on the project's empirical findings and conceptual developments.

The morning panel addressed domestic political conditions and dynamics in the eastern neighbourhood. Presentations analysed whether EU and member state approaches to democracy promotion converge or diverge and examined how the European Union's perception of its own external image shapes its democracy support practices. The contributions stimulated a lively discussion, enriched by comments from Natasha Wunsch (University of Fribourg, CH) and Tetiana Fedosiuk, who offered analytical and policy-oriented perspectives that connected the presented research to broader debates on European governance and security.

The afternoon panel focused on EU democracy promotion and geopolitical adaptation. The presentations explored how domestic political factors affect the impact of EU democracy support and examined regime clusters and structural challenges to democratisation in the eastern neighbourhood. The exchange was further deepened by the interventions of Orkhan Gafarov (University of St.Gallen) and Ioannis Vergioglou.

Across both panels, discussions centred on how internal political dynamics shape the reception and effectiveness of external democracy support. Participants reflected on the tensions between normative commitments and geopolitical constraints, as well as on the challenges of maintaining coherence and credibility in EU democracy promotion. The sessions highlighted the growing complexity of democracy support in regions affected by conflict, authoritarian consolidation, and strategic competition.

The final day featured a panel entitled "Between Europe and Authoritarianism: Political Dynamics in Georgia." The presentations provided a nuanced assessment of contemporary developments in Georgia, focusing on public attitudes towards EU membership and patterns of democratic backsliding. The discussion, guided by comments from Levan Kakhishvili (ETH Zurich) and Alexander Geisler, emphasised the evolving relationship between political elites, institutions, and civil society. Particular attention was given to the tensions between societal aspirations for European integration and the challenges posed by institutional fragility and contested governance practices. This concluding panel fostered a reflective debate on the broader implications of Georgia's trajectory for the EU's eastern neighbourhood and for democracy promotion strategies more generally.

Conclusion

Across the three days, the conference underscored the centrality of democratic resilience in contemporary European debates. Participants emphasised that democracy promotion must increasingly account for geopolitical uncertainty, societal polarization, and declining institutional trust. The discussions highlighted the growing importance of participatory and deliberative dimensions of democracy, both within the EU and in its external engagement. The Swiss experience was repeatedly referenced as a valuable source of reflection, particularly regarding citizen participation, consensus-building, and institutional innovation.

Overall, the REDEMOS stakeholder and academic conference made a significant contribution to consolidating ongoing research within the REDEMOS project. It provided a platform for integrating empirical findings, refining conceptual approaches, and strengthening exchanges between academic and policy perspectives. The combination of a public panel discussion, academic sessions, and internal project meetings proved highly productive and reinforced the project's collaborative and interdisciplinary ethos.

Retreats am Institut für Politikwissenschaft

Winterretreat der Forschungsgruppe Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft (zusammen mit der Forschungsgruppe European Politics der ETH Zürich), 3.-6. Februar 2025 in Malbun, Liechtenstein.



Sommerretreat, 26.-27. Mai 2025 in Greuterhof, Islikon.



Year-End-Closing Team-Event

Mit dem Ende des Jahres vor der Tür kamen die Institute of Political Science (IPW-HSG) zusammen, um innezuhalten, sich zu verbinden und das intensive und bedeutungsvolle Jahr zu feiern.

Wir nahmen uns die Zeit, als Team zu reflektieren, unsere Höhen zu feiern, aber ebenso wichtig anzuerkennen, wie wir die schwierigeren Momente meisterten. Rückblickend brachte dieses Jahr sicherlich Höhen und Tiefen. Als internationales Team, das sich auf vergleichende und internationale Politik spezialisiert hat, fanden globale Entwicklungen unweigerlich ihren Weg sowohl in unsere berufliche Arbeit als auch in unser Privatleben. Das Engagement, die Widerstandsfähigkeit und das gegenseitige Vertrauen im Team waren wirklich bemerkenswert. Wir stellten uns Herausforderungen direkt, unterstützten uns gegenseitig und erreichten viele wunderbare Dinge. Einige dieser Erfolge sind bereits heute sichtbar, während andere im kommenden Jahr vollständig entfalten werden, was uns viel Worauf man sich freuen kann.

Der Höhepunkt unserer Jahresendfeierlichkeiten war ein Team-Cocktail-Workshop bei Zur Werkstatt - Eventlocation St.Gallen. In einer entspannten Atmosphäre voller Lachen und Gespräch war es eine wunderbare Möglichkeit, das Jahr gemeinsam abzuschließen. Anschließend genossen wir den festlichen Charme der Altstadt von St. Gallen, genossen Glühwein, großartige Gespräche und ein entspanntes Abendessen, das bis in die frühen Morgenstundenandauerte



Sustainability

The University of St. Gallen has committed to reducing its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. The **Comparative Politics team** wants to actively contribute to this goal. For that reason, we revised and extended our own sustainability policy. The impetus for this revision was that emissions from our research, and especially travel activities, should not only be offset but reduced wherever possible and that we want to build awareness among the entire team. Additionally, we wanted to approach the topic of sustainability in a more holistic manner and, for example, also address the travel activities of invited guests and our own retreats.

Our revised policy is structured in three areas: travel policy, reporting and events. As a research group with an international orientation, research exchange and fieldwork are pivotal to strengthening the quality and relevance of our work. However, related air travel implies significant carbon emissions, which is why we decided to limit individual flights and extend this rule to our academic guests. An individual limit gives equitable opportunities for junior researchers and lowers the administrative burden, while the banking possibility allows for some flexibility. Proactive planning and communication on the use of transportation means aims to encourage all team members to be selective and strategic when choosing transportation and use internal knowledge on affordable train travel to further transition towards a culture of more climate-aligned travelling. Another important adjustment is the gradual shift away from donations to offsetting schemes. Numerous studies have revealed the shortcomings of such schemes. We aim to test alternatives and will, for now, allocate half of our offsets to enhancing research-related international train travelling.

Summary of our environmental policy:

Team travel policy:

- No air travel if destination can be reached in < 8 hours by train.
- Early booking of traveling to get early bird discounts (especially for train tickets)
- Upgrades to first class for long journeys (>8h, excl. night trains).
- Max. 2 flights per person per year, but with a banking system: possibility to transfer flights to the next year or another team member if not used.
- Book direct flights to avoid emissions from multiple take-offs and landing.
- Exceptions to all measures above may be applied in case of special care obligations, emergencies, or disability reasons. Special career opportunities (e.g., job interviews, decisive talks, etc) and an extraordinary professional interest in participation, beyond the simple presentation of a paper may also allow for an exemption.
- For all emissions from transportation, we calculate the amount that would be necessary for traditional offsetting. Half of the amount is used to buy Gold Standard offsetting via *myclimate*, the other half is used for financing international train tickets.

Reporting:

- Share planned conference visits in the group meetings ahead of time.
- Each team member calculates their emissions from transport (air travel, ferries, and car journeys) and reports them together with the expenses.
- We report our carbon emissions from travel in the annual report.

Conferences and events:

- Team travel policies also count for conferences and events organized at HSG (and invited guests, respectively). Virtual connections should always be checked.
- For conferences, retreats, etc. we generally only offer vegan and vegetarian food.

Flights	Number (one way)	Carbon Emission (in t CO2)
International	18	9.829 t
National	0 (all by train)	0
Total		9.829

Beitrag zum Klimaschutz

13.01.2026

UNIVERSITÄT ST. GALLEN, INSTITUT FÜR
POLITIKWISSENSCHAFTEN

Berechnete Menge von 9.8 t CO₂
im Wert von CHF 246.00



Beitrag für die Klimabildung von CHF 9.00



Dieser Klimaschutzbeitrag hat Wirkung!

Aufgrund der berechneten Emissionen werden myclimate-Klimaschutzprojekte in Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika unterstützt. Die Projekte erfüllen höchste Standards (Gold Standard, Plan Vivo und VCS (inkl.CBB und/oder SD-Vista)) und tragen zu den SDGs der UN bei. So reduzieren myclimate Projekte nicht nur Treibhausgas-Emissionen, sondern tragen darüber hinaus zur sozialen, ökologischen und wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung in der Region bei.





How can universities turn ambitious climate goals into concrete actions that truly make a difference?

“I am delighted that our First Implementation Stage of the Net Zero Roadmap has officially been approved by the Rectorate of the University of St.Gallen.” – [Tina Freyburg](#), Director IPW-HSG

The project represents a key milestone in implementing HSG’s climate strategy. It aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across commuting, academic travel, infrastructure, and food services, while embedding sustainability into the daily culture of the university.

As part of the Project Steering Committee, IPW-HSG aims to contribute to shaping early measures such as institute-specific travel guidelines, expanded sustainable food options, and best-practice procurement standards. These steps lay the groundwork for meeting HSG’s climate targets by 2030.

Thanks to David V. Boivin for inviting us to the steering committee. We look forward to working together on this important matter.

You can learn more about the climate strategy of the University of St.Gallen at:

<https://lnkd.in/evr8dwNz>

[Responsibility and Sustainability at the University of St.Gallen | unisg.ch](https://www.unisg.ch/Responsibility-and-Sustainability-at-the-University-of-St.Gallen)

Impressum

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