



UNIVERSITÄT  
LEIPZIG

Research Academy Leipzig

**Graduate School Global and Area Studies**

## **Social cohesion in a transregional and global perspective**

18th International Summer School of the Graduate School Global and Area Studies

of the Research Academy Leipzig

Leipzig, 21 to 24 September 2020

Even if it is difficult under the current condition and during these uncertain times, we try to organize the annual summer school of the Graduate School as usual. We hope that the conditions will be safe in September and that we will be able to meet in Leipzig.

If necessary, we will plan the summer school as a virtual event due to those participants who are faced with travel restrictions or specific health risks. All changes will be announced as promptly as possible.

### **Research Context of the Summer School**

Over the past decade, the summer school of Leipzig's Graduate School Global and Area Studies has established itself as an important meeting place for the interdisciplinary discussion of transnationalization and transculturalism as well as new trends in the research of globalization in general. The 2020 edition, which is organized in close cooperation with the Research Centre for Global Dynamics (ReCentGlobe) and the Research Institute Social Cohesion, addresses the complex topic of social cohesion in a transregional and global perspective.

With its thematic focus, the summer school takes up the current public debate about the many facets of social cohesion and this possible risk of its (partial) dissolution when political polarization grows or external shocks stress institutions as well as trust.

The summer school addresses the needs of PhD candidates both coming from the Leipzig Graduate School Global and Area Studies and from the newly founded Research Institute Social Cohesion, which spans eleven academic institutions across Germany. It further provides an opportunity to engage in intense exchange with

fellow PhD candidates and postdocs from abroad on topics of common interest and to network across disciplinary as well as geographical boundaries. Thus, we heartily invite young researchers from all over the world whose research interests are related to the focus of this year's summer school.

### **Thematic Focus of the Summer School**

The German neologism "gesellschaftlicher Zusammenhalt", which only poorly translates into the well-established academic category "social cohesion", has become increasingly popular and adopted as a term since about 2013 and has seen a rise in use in political terminology since the so-called refugee crisis. While it is already interesting to follow the sociolinguistic development of the term, it is even more interesting to see which topics are addressed in the debate: some of them are classics of societal analysis – such as questions of social inequality, cultural recognition, or class and milieu building – and others are relatively new like the growing criticism towards a certain interpretation of globalization. The debate can be taken as an indicator of tectonic rearrangements within societies and in the world order. The more recent crisis related to the worldwide spread of the virus that can cause COVID-19, on the one hand, has somehow changed the focus of the previous debate (where right-wing populism was very much at the centre) and, on the other hand, relates explicitly to the former fear of a loss of social cohesion. While most often these debates only focus on a single society or on one part of the world, the specific perspective of our summer school invites transregional comparisons and the study of entanglements and mutual learning processes between world regions. Such a focus is evident both in the case of a crisis that explicitly relates to migration and in case of a worldwide "natural disaster in slow motion", as the Coronavirus crisis has been described most recently by German virologist Christian Drosten. These two cases, which are so closely related to each other, encourage comparative thoughts and investigations, and we hope that such current developments are thought-provoking enough, even for those working on completely different topics, to participate in a common debate and to relate ideas and findings to this general theme of social cohesion under stress by challenges that go far beyond the limits and borders of a single society.

The summer school would like to offer an arena for analysing the historical, global, and regional variance of social cohesion – or the risks it is exposed to – with the help of a broad spectrum of methods and approaches.

We would expect contributions that could argue on two levels. On the one hand, there might be diachronic comparisons of how social cohesion has been defined and described in the past. This includes a debate about instruments and indicators that have been developed and used to determine it. On the other hand, there might be comparisons of synchronous situations (today as well as in the past) to capture similarities, differences, and entanglements of elements and framework conditions for social cohesion in a transnational, transregional, or even global perspective.

## **Sequence of Events of the Summer School**

The summer school is organized into panels of 3–5 presentations each. Additionally, invited keynote speakers will introduce main aspects of the general theme. At the end of the summer school, a round table with reports from the panels will bring the major findings together and integrate them into a final discussion.

Panels will be organized by young researchers who are invited herewith to submit applications containing a 1-page description (300 words) of the panel's main goals and its relevance to the overall topic of the summer school, plus a list of possible speakers with an indication if they have already agreed or have to be contacted after the acceptance of the panel. The selection of the panel will be undertaken by a committee of the Graduate School where supervisors as well as PhD candidates and postdocs are represented.

Individual time slots will be assigned by the organizers of the summer school, but preferences of participants will be taken into consideration where possible. In addition, active participation in the discussions of the summer school is expected.

## **Application**

Early researchers interested in the topic are cordially invited to submit either a proposal for a panel or an individual paper by application to the summer school. The application should include:

- Personal details, as well as academic status, including relevant academic affiliation.
- An abstract of 300 to 500 words, together with an explanation of its connection to the ongoing dissertation/project as well as its relevance to the overall topic of the summer school.

via e-mail to:

Leipzig University, Graduate School Global and Area Studies

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Application deadline: **15 June 2020**

Authors of accepted papers will be informed no later than 10 July 2020. A maximum of 20 papers will be selected. In order to prepare for academic commentary, submission of the actual paper (10 pages) is expected by **1 September 2020**. The paper will be pre-circulated and should fit within a presentation between 15–20 minutes.

## **Organizational Issues**

The participation fee is €50. This fee covers all costs for conference material, refreshments during the breaks, lunch meals, as well as participation in the welcome reception and the cultural events that will be held during the summer school.

Upon request, reasonably priced accommodations in Leipzig will be arranged by the conference office.

With successful participation in the summer school, it will be possible to receive a certificate from the Graduate School Global and Area Studies. Further information can be found under: <https://home.uni-leipzig.de/~gsgas/>

**ECTS:** You can also earn ECTS credits for the summer school (3 ECTS for continuous participation in the summer school). The acceptance of credits is the responsibility of your home university.

**Childcare:** For all events, childcare will be provided. Registration is requested (by 1 September 2020) at the above-mentioned address.