

Theme One: “Responding to Contemporary Challenges in Germany”

Theme Leader: **Myra Marx Ferree** (Professor, Sociology, Gender and Women’s Studies)

Key Campus Faculty:

Mark Copelovitch (Associate Professor, Political Science and La Follette School of Public Affairs)

Felix Elwert (Associate Professor, Sociology; affiliate, Center for Demography and Ecology, and Center for Demography of Health and Aging)

Ivan Ermakoff (Professor of Sociology)

Chad Goldberg (Professor of Sociology; affiliate, Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies)

Nils Ringe (Associate Professor, Political Science, Director European Studies Alliance and Center for European Studies)

Timothy Smeeding (Professor, Economics and La Follette School of Public Affairs; affiliate, Center for Demography and Ecology, and Center for Demography of Health and Aging)

Germany faces a variety of “hot button” political challenges today, ranging from the resurgence of anti-Semitism across Europe, to population shifts due to fertility decline and immigration, to global competition in higher education. Moreover, as the member state with the strongest economy, Germany faces a particular challenge in balancing its national economic priorities with sustaining EU integration and Euro stability. In this theme we look at the nature of the social and economic challenges that face Germany today and the specificity of German history in shaping contemporary political choices. We also investigate mobilizations within legislatures (*Land*, federal and EU) and in civil society (in the media, in movements, and among public intellectuals). We draw on the diverse strengths of our senior faculty not only to flesh out the particular projects that fall into this theme but also to train and support graduate students and junior level researchers. These efforts reflect the three different social science perspectives represented in this theme.

The historical sociological perspective excavates historical materials to develop principles of social action that can account for legacies in contemporary arrangements and parallel problems across different historical or social contexts. In contrast with historians, sociologists are explicit about the connections they wish to draw to ongoing social relations in contemporary societies. Chad Goldberg and Ivan Ermakoff are historical sociologists concerned with German-Jewish relations, though in strikingly different ways. Goldberg taps into the roots of sociological thought by considering how Jewishness (being Jewish or not being Jewish) mattered for the theorists who are widely accepted to be central in defining what counts as a sociological question, such as Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Simmel. Ermakoff is concerned with genocide as a continuing historical problem and focuses on explaining the individual and collective decision-making processes that allowed for resistance or acquiescence in genocidal policies and practices, with the Holocaust as a central case. By considering historical roots of current conflicts over immigration/assimilation, participation in genocides and defenses of human rights, these theme members illuminate the implications of the tools available to German actors for managing them.

A demographic perspective on social challenges highlights the changes in population that states need to manage—immigration, falling birth rates, rising numbers of elderly citizens, etc. Felix Elwert, an affiliate of the UW-Madison Center for Demography and Ecology, advocates for the use of German data in such analyses, whether to focus on Germany today or to make theoretically illuminating comparative analyses. As Elwert has argued, the new availability of German register data allows for an important expansion of analysis beyond the most-studied Nordic states (which have been most willing to make anonymous register data available). Timothy Smeeding is working with a set of leading Wisconsin demographers on German data on family formation and inequality. His colleague Gert Wagner (TU Berlin) will be a key speaker on broader demographic trends and issues in Germany.

The political economy is the focus of other sociologists, for whom the workings of mechanisms of inequality in Germany are central questions. Such mechanisms produce relatively tighter or looser connections between individual behaviors and macro-level features of the economy, both of which can be identified and compared over time and between countries. Smeeding, as an economist interested in comparative poverty and policy in Europe, also is exploring the growth in German levels of inequality (despite much lower levels of CEO pay). Copelovitch looks at the intersections of fiscal policy with social policies, and the relations between German monetary policy and the overall outcomes that interventions are expected to produce. Ferree, the lead researcher on this theme, looks at the transformations in higher education systems in Germany and the US to understand how gender equality policies and discourses reflect core national assumptions. Nils Ringe's research is focused on intraparlimentary special caucuses and agreements intended to “work around” the obstacles created by partisan jockeying inside the German and EU legislatures.

In sum, the purpose of this theme is to explore what is and is not specific to German experience in its contemporary challenges and in the political responses developed in response to them. Below we outline the specific ongoing research of theme participants and the German experts whom they plan to invite to Madison.

Theme Leader **Myra Marx Ferree** focuses on gender equality politics and policies in relation to the transformation of university governance on neoliberal principles such as auditing, managerialism, and market competition in Germany and the US. The project is collaborative and involves several German researchers who have previously been invited to Madison to both speak on German issues to broad constituencies and also to engage in an incubator workshop for a forthcoming book (with Susanne Baer, German Constitutional Court/Humboldt University-Berlin; Paula-Irene Villa, Professor of Sociology at LMU; Karin Zimmermann, WZB). One article on the German case alone (by Ferree, Zimmermann and also Kathrin Zippel, a US-based German colleague) has been submitted for publication, and the rough draft of the book has been the subject of two incubator workshops (Munich 2012, Madison 2013).

Timothy Smeeding's papers in progress on this theme include one with Jim Raymo, Director of the Center for Demography and Ecology, on single mothers and true lone parents, using complex data sets (GSOEP, PSID, CNEF files). Jim Raymo and Marcy Carlson, another Wisconsin Professor of Sociology, are also working on another paper which includes Germany. Smeeding is also working on the growing levels of German income inequality across family types,

immigration status, and generations. **Felix Elwert** is conducting research on the early-life social and familial determinants of social disadvantage in the United States and Europe. A central theme of his research is the collateral consequence of parental conditions on child and early adult outcomes. For the academic year 2014-2015, he is the Karl W. Deutsch Guest Professor at the Wissenschaftszentrum für Sozialforschung Berlin, where he uses register data to explore the personal and familial consequences of teenage births for teen mothers and their families.

Mark Copelovitch is just back from a year on sabbatical at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin, where he researched the domestic politics of the euro crisis and banking union within Germany. He is currently organizing a group of scholars on both sides of the Atlantic who are putting together a special issue of *International Organization* (one of the key journals in political science/international relations) on the politics of the Euro Crisis. Following from his sabbatical, he is also working on a new book on capital flows, financial market structure, and financial crises, in which Germany is one of the case studies (along with the US, Canada, and the UK). **Nils Ringe**'s current research focuses on three aspects of European Union politics that have direct bearing on Germany and its large influence in the EU: mapping a social network of influential actors in the European Parliament (with a particular focus on rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs); the EP's so-called intergroups (voluntary organizations of legislators who share a common interest in an issue or cause); and the "politics of language" in the EU. All three projects demand consideration from German perspectives, given that Germany has the largest number of members in the EP, Germans tend to be disproportionately influential in the chamber, and the EU's embrace of austerity politics is often laid at Germany's doorstep.

Chad Goldberg spent the 2013-2014 academic year completing a 24,000-word book section identifying patterns in how classical German social theorists from the late 19th to early 20th centuries described the relationship between Jews and modern capitalism. The section offers an explanation for those patterns, which emphasizes the role of cultural schemas derived from Christian theology and specifies how those schemas came to influence German intellectuals. The chapter concludes that pre-modern ideas about the Jews formed part of the cultural toolkit with which classical German social thinkers constructed their understanding of modernity. He will continue this work as a visiting fellow at the Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg (HWK) in Delmenhorst, Germany, in Spring 2015. **Ivan Ermakoff** is engaged in a research project centered on the methodological challenges raised by the use of personal accounts and narratives for our understanding of momentous events. The focus is on sources and texts related to the experience of francophone and German-speaking citizens during the Second World War with a special emphasis on refugees from Germany and Austria: Jewish refugees escaping racial persecution and becoming residents in Belgium and France, opponents to Nazism and dictatorial regimes finding political asylum, members of political organizations seeking to elude the clutches of police services working for the Nazis, and individuals classified as Jewish being deported to death camps.

Activities

New Courses:

German Politics (Political Science 401, Spring 2015, Ringe)

Publications:

Book manuscript in progress.

Five articles in progress.

Theme One Alphabetical List of Guest Scholars:

Christine Achinger (German, University of Warwick)

Sina Arnold (Humboldt University Berlin)

Hubertus Buchstein (Political Science, Greifswald University)

Steffen Ganghof (Comparative Political Science, University of Potsdam)

Markus Gangl (Sociology, Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main)

Mark Hallerberg (Public Management and Political Economy, Hertie School of Governance)

Mareike Kleine (EU and International Politics, London School of Economics and Political Science)

Dirk Konieczka (Sociology, Technical University Braunschweig)

Michaela Kreyenfeld (Sociology, Hertie School of Governance)

Helma Lutz (Gender and Women's Studies, Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main)

Philip Manow (Economics, University of Bremen)

Dieter Pohl (History, University of Klagenfurt)

Ljiljana Radonic (Political Science, Austrian Academy of Sciences & University of Vienna)

Bettina Stangneth (Privatdozent, Hamburg)

Karin Stögner (University of Vienna & Institute of Conflict Research Vienna)

Michael Wildt (History, Humboldt University Berlin)

Konstantin Vössing (Political Science, Humboldt University Berlin)

Gert Wagner (Economics, TUB - Technical University of Berlin; Fellow, MPI for Human Development, Berlin; member, National Academy of Science and Engineering [acatech]; Chairman, German Social Advisory Council [Sozialbeirat])

Stefanie Walter (Political Science, University of Zurich)

Kathrin Zippel (Sociology, Northeastern University)