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Province Occurs in the Minds of Men

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1. Introduction

The term ‘province’ has not always had its slightly sleepy connotation. In the Roman Empire since the time of Augustus, a province was a (militarily conquered) territorial administrative unit outside Rome, and formally there was no difference between the provinces. But of course, the provinces had different potentials, so that administration of the “right” province could pave the way to Rome and higher office, while remote provinces meant irreversible decline.¹

In the Middle Ages, province then became synonymous with an ecclesiastical province as the administrative district of an archbishop.² From here, the term found its way back to its meaning as an administrative state unit.³ Namely in the Prussian Stein-Hardenberg reforms of 1815/1818, which created three regional levels of administration between the state superior administration and the municipalities: the provinces (from which, after 1945, several of the *Länder* (states) of the former occupation zones and the present-day Federal Republic were to emerge), the *Regierungsbezirke* (governmental administrative districts) and the *Landkreise* (shire counties).

With the growing importance of cities in the context of industrialisation, a mental association was added to their administrative and political significance. The province was not the metropolis, and since it was in the metropolises that the dynamism and power of modernity unfolded and not in the provinces, the term often took on a negative connotation that, depending on one’s view of rapid modernisation, ranged from a longing for rural idyll to contempt for the backwoods. Carl Amery describes the complex sociology of provinciality in his anthology *Die Provinz. Kritik einer Lebensform* (The Province: A Critique of a Way of Life) with the hypothesis of a triopoly of *urbs* – *province* – *village*:

The provincial man is an intermediate form, a cultural-anthropological amphibian. He lacks both the self-confidence of the villager, which arises from his limitations, and that of the city dweller, which arises from his insolence. And strangely enough, what the restless, city-addicted people dislike about the provinces, what they mock or curse, is by no means the village life as they understand it. On the contrary: romanticising the village is a projection of city life.⁴

Our guiding question is whether the provinces exist in an imaginary space of mental alienation, i.e. in the minds of those who look down on provincials from the supposedly standard-setting metropolis, or whether it is an empirically verifiable description.

1 See Eckehard Meyer-Zwiffelhofer: *Imperium Romanum. Geschichte der Römischen Provinzen* (History of the Roman Provinces), Munich 2009, p. 13f.

2 Even today, the Catholic German Bishops’ Conference is divided into seven ecclesiastical provinces, each headed by an archbishop as ‘metropolitan’.

3 See <https://www.wortbedeutung.info/Provinz/>, accessed on 30 March 2025.

4 Amery, Carl (ed.): *Die Provinz. Kritik einer Lebensform* (The Province: Critique of a Way of Life). Munich 1964.

The juxtaposition of city and country, metropolis^{5/6} and province, is now being clearly questioned for various reasons, and the largely negative connotation of the term province no longer seems to apply. On the one hand, there is the popularity of Juli Zeh's novels, which very aptly describe the contrast between the Berlin bubble and the neglected, backward rural life,⁷ or the new enthusiasm for rural life⁸, especially among young families who can no longer afford or no longer want to live in the big city, as a romanticised, positive vision of the province. In a variation on Goethe's term *Akynoblepsie*, the inability to perceive blue, Matthias Theodor Vogt, based on the metaphor "blue", which for Novalis stands for inner-worldly transcendence, has coined the term *Kynoblepsie*, the ability to perceive "blue", for this dimension of rural life that is only possible outside urban areas and, at the same time, as a task for cultural policy.⁹

- 5 Metropolis (μητρόπολις with /ε:/ [long open-mid front vowel with stress] from μήτηρ [mäter] meaning „mother“) in ancient Greek does not refer to the standard-setting polis (from μέτρον with /ε/ [stressed open-mid front vowel] meaning „standard“), but rather to a *mother city* from which colonies were settled. See Vogt, Matthias Theodor (2009): *Ubi Leones / Wo nichts als Löwen hausen. Begriff und Problem der Peripherizität*. In: Vogt, Matthias Theodor; Jan Sokol; Beate Ociepka; Detlef Pollack; Beata Mikołajczyk (eds.): *Die Periphere Mitte Europas*. Schriften des Collegium Pontes II. Verlag Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main etc. 2009 [online: https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Vogt_CP_2_Peripherie_090218-1.pdf], p. 48.
- 6 On the history of the term periphery, see Vogt (2009): *Ubi Leones*. This includes a reference to CEPAL (*Comisión Económica para América Latina, the UN Commission for Economic Development in Latin America*) and to Raúl Prebisch and Celso Furtado, who consciously positioned themselves on the periphery and through whom the term periphery entered global economic discourse.
- 7 This refers to Juli Zeh's novel *Über Menschen* (About People), published in 2021. Luchterhand Literaturverlag, Munich
- 8 According to a survey conducted in spring 2024, the circulation of the magazine 'Landlust' was approximately 543,055 copies. By way of comparison, the Süddeutsche Zeitung, the leading serious print media outlet, sold 245,280 copies. Its self-description states: "Landlust shows the beautiful sides of country life authentically and unpretentiously. Expert articles on gardening, living, country life and nature explore topics from the rural world in depth. Recipes and creative ideas offer inspiration that can be replicated every day. The large format with opulent, clear imagery and well-thought-out practical value make the magazine unmistakable." <https://aboshop.landlust.de/landlust-abo-startseite> [21.08.2025]
- 9 We might quote Vogt (2009): *Ubi Leones* (see footnote 7 above), pp. 43-44: "In Novalis' posthumously published novel fragment *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802), the hero sets out into the world to search for the origins of his longing. On his journey into the distance, he looks – in what is possibly a unique occurrence in literature – from a hilltop simultaneously towards the destination of his journey and back to his homeland. The periphery and the centre find themselves bound together in the stages of a biography.

The brighter it became, the more noticeable the new, unknown surroundings became to him; and when the deserted landscape was suddenly illuminated by the rising sun on a hill, old melodies from his inner self came to the surprised young man amid the gloomy changes of his thoughts. He saw himself on the threshold of the distance, which he had often gazed at in vain from the nearby mountains and which he had imagined in strange colours. He was about to plunge into its blue flood. The [blue] wonder flower stood before him, and he looked back at Thuringia, which he was now leaving behind, with a strange premonition that after long wanderings from the part of the world to which they were now travelling, he would return to his homeland, and that he was therefore travelling towards it. (Novalis [id est Georg Friedrich Philipp Freiherr von Hardenberg, 1772 -1801], *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802), edited by Jochen Hörisch. Frankfurt am Main 1982, p. 24).

The temporal view encompasses both the future and the past, whereby – and this is the crucial point in our context – the past is perceived as a future beyond the future. The spatial view encompasses both the blue distance of the mountains and the fatherland of Thuringia. By crossing the boundary between the two, Heinrich performs the initiation rite of passing over the "threshold" (Novalis). Ernst Bloch later writes in the final sentence of *The Principle of Hope*: "Hat [der Mensch] sich erfaßt (...), so entsteht in der Welt etwas, das allen in die Kindheit scheint und worin noch niemand war: Heimat." (Bloch, Ernst: *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*. Frankfurt am Main 1973, vol. 3, p. 1628). Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice und Paul Knight translate (in „The Principle of Hope“, MIT Press/Blackwell, 1986) as: „If [man] has grasped himself (...), there arises in the world something which seems to everyone to be childhood and in which no one has yet been: homeland." This translation is bad, (a) because it does not emphasize the metaphor of "hineinscheinen in etwas" (like a torch or candle shining into something; (b) because „Heimat“ is not „home“ but „homeland“. So we might translate: „If [man] has grasped himself (...), something comes into the world that illuminates childhood for all and into which no one has yet entered: homeland.“ Only now we see how close Bloch's image is to Novalis's image of the rising sun illuminating Thuringia, his beloved homeland in childhood days. But there is subtle difference:

With Novalis, it is *patria est outopos, ubi nemo umquam fuit* (The fatherland is that no man's land where no one has ever been). A sentence shaped by the experience of uprooting that was so constitutive of the 20th century. With Novalis, it is the other way around: The 20-year-old Heinrich leaves childhood and, through the upcoming „long wanderings“, constitutes for himself the fatherland as a homeland that will shine to him from childhood—and unlike in Bloch's conception, he has indeed been there.. *Patria est, ubi fueram et quo tendo* (My homeland is where I once was and where I am drawn to go).

Strictly speaking, with his gaze encompassing both the future and the past (as a future beyond the future), Novalis posits a curvature of space 114 years before the general theory of relativity; to be precise, he describes an Einstein-Rosen bridge (the Schwarzschild solution describes the conditions in the vicinity of a black hole and shows that inside the black hole there is a connection to another space-time region). And this curvature of individual space is perhaps the core of what we call culture, namely the connection between the where from? with the where to? and the how? Where from: we are past-oriented in that we are subject to a historical process, both ontogenetically and phylogenetically. Where to: we are future-oriented in

On the other hand, the growing election results of protest parties or anti-system parties such as *Alternative für Deutschland* or, most recently, the *Sarah Wagenknecht alliance*, especially in rural areas of eastern Germany, are symbolic of the diverse, unresolved problems of the rural province: inadequate transport links, poor health, education and cultural provision, and an overall feeling of having been forgotten by the urban elites, who are supposedly only concerned with gender-neutral language or the legalisation of cannabis.¹⁰ However, the attributions made to the provinces or rural areas can also be even more negative. Political scientist Lukas Haffert writes in a book published in 2022:

The revenge of the villages. The rural revolt. The uprising of places that don't count. The rebellion of the disenfranchised and left behind, the losers of globalisation who feel like strangers in their own country. These are some of the phrases used to describe the common core of various political shocks in recent years, from the election of Donald Trump to Brexit to the yellow vest protests in France. The attack on liberal democracy seems to be concentrated in rural areas, in places far from the big cities, where small factories, mining or forestry once provided modest prosperity and secure jobs and which, following the decline of these industries, are now sinking into post-industrial resentment.¹¹

In a book on democratic regression published in 2021, Armin Schäfer and Michael Zürn write about the causes of authoritarian populism and blame it on new lines of conflict that no longer run along the left-right axis but can be linked to the concepts of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. While cosmopolitanism, in the authors' view, is individualistic, universalistic and generalisable, communitarianism emphasises the role of community and identity. Here, too, we can sense a negative description of rural areas and the provinces.¹²

Rural areas and the provinces are not doing well, not only because of structural disadvantages, but also because rural regions are perceived as backward and authoritarian, without always considering the causes on the one hand and focusing on the potential of rural areas and the provinces for reinventing society and community on the other.¹³ The perception of the provinces very often depends on one's own life plan and perspective, and not only on an administrative-geographical definition.

But what is the province today and what tradition does it represent: a backward-looking place where tradition lives on, a refuge from late modernity and a place where we can retreat to our childhood, or a place of modern renewal where we can escape the massification of the big city and explore new paths through late modernity?¹⁴

In the following, I will first explore the concept of province, its historical and current meanings (II), before going on to describe the characteristics of the current rural area in Saxony and the state's policy approach to rural areas (III). Building on this, I will conclude by attempting to outline the conditions for the province as a laboratory of late modernity (IV).

that this process depends on the individual and social definition of the good life. We are present-oriented in that our actions can be understood as excerpts from a permanent active readjustment of this process. [...]

Perhaps culture could be metaphorically described as the ability to perceive blue, as cyanoblepsia, whereby blue is not only a popular motif in Romantic poetry, but also symbolises the distant, the divine, the "spiritual" (Wassily Kandinsky). Conversely, Goethe's insistence on the "right paths to the banal" (Benjamin) as *akyanoblepsia*.

Within the framework of this metaphor, cultural policy would be the facilitation of strategies to overcome *akyanoblepsia*, or, to put it positively: to understand the historicity and spatiality of one's own situation, to answer the guiding question of the good life individually, and to constantly readjust one's actions within the process thus defined. However, this is not a demand on cultural policy in the usual sense, i.e. of theatre policy, museum policy, etc. Rather, it is a demand or even an assessment criterion for good politics in general. One could perhaps speak of culturally grounded politics."

10 See Wolfgang Thierse: *Der abgehängte Osten und der unabhängige Westen – Zur Lage jenseits aller Klischees* (Introduction to a conversation with Christina Morina), Evangelische Akademie Tutzing e.V., 4 October 2024 (https://www.ev-akademie-tutzing.de/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Thierse_Der-abgehaengte-Osten-und-der-unabhaengige-Westen-%E2%80%93-Zur-Lage-jenseits-aller-Klischees.pdf, accessed on 16 June 2025).

11 Lukas Haffert: *Stadt, Land, Frust. Eine politische Vermessung* (City, Country, Frustration: A Politically Measuring Survey), Munich 2022, p. 7

12 See Armin Schäfer / Michael Zürn, *Die demokratische Regression. Die politischen Ursachen des autoritären Populismus* (The Democratic Regression: The Political Causes of Authoritarian Populism), Bonn 2021, p. 77f.

13 See Vogt, Matthias Theodor: *Einführung in die Kulturprovinz* (Introduction to the Cultural Province). In: Winterfeld, Klaus (ed.): *Kultur und Wirtschaft in Mittelsachsen* (Culture and Economy in Central Saxony). Cultural Space Conference Freiberg 25 October 2002, Leipzig 2003, pp. 24–30.

14 Vogt, Matthias Theodor and Olaf Zimmermann (eds.): *Bleakland Cultural Policy Counterstrategies* (*Verödung? Kulturpolitische Gegenstrategien*). Contributions to the conference on 22–23 November 2013 in Görlitz. Organisers: German Cultural Council and Institute for Cultural Infrastructure Saxony. Edition kulturelle Infrastruktur, Görlitz and Berlin 2013. [online: http://kultur.org/uploads/forschungen/merr/Vogt_und_Zimmermann_Veroedung_G%25C3%25B6rlitz_22-11-2013.pdf].

2. What is the province?

In addition to the historical connotations of province as an administrative or ecclesiastical-administrative term, province is above all the counterpart to the metropolis, which, in addition to its geographical meaning, also refers to a mental state. Following on from the latter, the province is thus the opposite of hectic late modernity, which also means that the term province does not have a solely negative connotation. Yes, the province is certainly more backward, and the big debates or glittering career prospects are less common in the province.

However, whether this also applies to the latest trends in cultural life is highly questionable. As early as 1953 and again in 1967, Torsten Hägerstrand explored the question of innovation cycles, whose origins he found primarily in extra-metropolitan areas.¹⁵ Peter Haggmann coined the term Beatles' pattern to describe this phenomenon: 'A musical style beginning in a provincial city (Liverpool) moves to the national capital (London), and then on to other capitals throughout the world.'¹⁶ The same applies to Japan.¹⁷ This effect can be studied in detail in theatre history: important inventions regularly originated in the provinces and found their way from there to Vienna, Berlin or Munich. Compare this with the self-referentiality along the lines of inner-metropolitan debates in the study by Matthias Theodor Vogt and his students in a moot court at the Görlitz Regional Court, in which the funding decisions of the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony were critically analysed along the dichotomy of large cities vs. rural districts.¹⁸ 'The dignity of Saxons depends on where they live,' as Matthias Theodor Vogt succinctly stated in the *Sächsische Zeitung*.

The province is therefore by no means just a place that has been left behind, as it may be perceived by some urban observers. In 2022, the magazine project 'Berliner Debatte' devoted an entire issue to the province, with the editors pointing, among other things, to the accompanying phenomena of the province, where the consequences of the pandemic seemed to be easier to cope with.¹⁹ At the same time, however, the provinces continue to be associated with a variety of negative characteristics: poorer life chances, weaker infrastructure and, last but not least, political backwardness, which is reflected in electoral successes and support for various populist parties and movements that are only found in isolated, deprived neighbourhoods in urban agglomerations.

However, this development is not set in stone and may only be a snapshot of the current situation. In the 2021 federal election, for example, there were significant differences between the results achieved by the Greens, with their traditionally urban electorate, and the Union and Alternative for Germany (AfD), which performed particularly well in rural areas, but this was not the case for the SPD and the FDP in 2021. No trends could be identified in terms of their electoral success in combination with rurality or urbanity.²⁰ Rural areas are therefore not automatically synonymous with populist voting

15 Hägerstrand, Torsten 1953: *Innovationsförloppet ur korologisk synpunkt*; idem 1967: *Innovation diffusion as a spatial process*.

16 Quoted from Vogt et al. (2012): *Brain Gain through Culture*, p. 10.

17 See Yoshimoto Mitsuhiro (Center for Arts and Culture, NLI Research Institute): *Kulturelle und wirtschaftliche Regeneration in mittelgroßen Städten der japanischen Provinz* (Cultural and economic regeneration in medium-sized cities in the Japanese province). In: Japanese-German Centre Berlin (2018): *Cultural policy as a regeneration strategy for demographic change in medium-sized cities. Germany, Central Europe and Japan in Dialogue* (Kulturpolitik als Regenerationsstrategie für den demografischen Wandel in mittelgroßen Städten. Deutschland, Mitteleuropa und Japan im Dialog). On 4 September 2014 at the Japanese-German Centre Berlin, from 5 to 7 September 2014 in Görlitz and on 8 September 2014 in Dresden. Publications of the Japanese-German Centre Berlin, Volume 64. Editors: Annegret Bergmann and Sekikawa Fujiko.

18 For the fictitious judgement, see: Hauke Hinrichs: *Verwaltungsgericht Görlitz 12 K 123456789/12. Urteil vom 28. April 2012 des Verwaltungsgerichtes Görlitz in der Verwaltungsrechtsache des Instituts für kulturelle Infrastruktur Sachsen gGmbH, Kläger, gegen die Kulturstiftung des Freistaates Sachsen, Beklagte, wegen Projektförderung* (Judgment of 28 April 2012 of the Administrative Court of Görlitz in the administrative case of the Institute for Cultural Infrastructure Saxony gGmbH, plaintiff, against the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony, defendant, regarding project funding). Published in: Vogt, Matthias Theodor Vogt, Katarzyna Plebańczyk, Massimo Squillante, Irena Alperyte (editors): *Brain Gain through Culture? Researching the Development of Middle Size Cities in Poland, Lithuania, Italy, Hungary, Germany, and France*. Proceedings of the International Study Week Görlitz 2012 and of the Students' Moot Court at the Regional Court of Görlitz. DOI 10.1696/KOL-2012. Görlitz 2012 [online: http://kultur.org/images/brain_gain_2012_130226.pdf].

19 See <https://berlinerdebatte.de/node/1350>

20 See Simon Richter/Stefanie John, *Stadt, Land, Wahlverhalten. Die politische Geographie der Bundestagswahl 2021*, böll.brief DE-MOKRATIE & GESELLSCHAFT #32, December 2022 (https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/2023-07/final_boll_brief_dg32_stadt_land_wahlverhalten.pdf).

behaviour. The 2025 federal election, on the other hand, should not be taken into account here, as the result was more likely a punishment for the traffic light coalition government. Whether stronger and more lasting trends can be derived from this is uncertain.

It is much more likely that the aftermath of the double transformation shock will continue to have an impact on eastern Germany – even 35 years after German reunification, as multiple crises and the feeling of being second-class citizens in a united Germany are creating a dangerous mix in eastern Germany. A 2020 study by the SPD-affiliated Friedrich Ebert Foundation distinguishes between shock regions and winner regions in its explanatory approach.²¹ In any case, the successes of populist parties such as the AfD or Sahra Wagenknecht's alliance are significantly greater in eastern Germany than in the west, as was recently demonstrated once again in the state elections in Brandenburg, Thuringia and Saxony in 2024 and in the federal elections in February 2025.²² However, it is more than questionable whether the aftermath of a double transformation shock and East-West German discord are solely responsible for this voting behaviour. It seems to me that another significant factor is the disregard and contempt for rural areas, which also plays a major role. This development has been foreseeable for years, but in times of neoliberal economic policy, tight public budgets and the conviction that urban metropolises would also have a positive impact on the provinces, it is precisely these provinces that have been forgotten. The provinces are not so much the affluent suburbs surrounding the conurbations as the rural areas or the periphery.

On the one hand, the close connection between the province and the metropolis must be emphasised. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht refers to the province as 'places of thought and passion', as he subtitles his essay from 2021. The province interacts with the metropolis like two communicating tubes. The metropolis needs the province as a counterpoint, but it hardly perceives its ambivalence:

In contrast to the metropolis, however, which experiences its periphery as an undifferentiated, homogeneous province, the province usually lies in the middle between a metropolis and those drastic villages that keep their confines closed.²³

On the other hand, this also gives the province an important social and political function as a mediator between the metropolis and the village and as a corrective and echo chamber for the metropolis.

In addition to the term 'province,' which has grown historically and evokes both negative and positive associations today, terms such as "periphery"²⁴ and 'rural area' are also used. Periphery already suggests marginality – both spatially and mentally-culturally, whereby processes of peripheralisation almost suggest a deliberate dwarfing towards insignificance in debates. In any case, the periphery refers to geographically and discursively marginalised spaces, and it seems unlikely that a positive connotation for the term can be found. Unlike the province, which in a positive sense can also represent a place of retreat – and possibly more than that – from the impositions of late modernity and urbanity, the periphery is synonymous with marginality, and periphery thus describes spatial inequalities that are also reflected in a lack of opportunities for political participation.²⁵ Other common characteristics of peripheral spaces are migration, dependence on the centre, loss of significance and a marginalisation in

21 See Matthias Brachert/Everhard Holtmann/Tobias Jaeck, *Einflüsse des Lebensumfelds auf politische Einstellungen und Wahlverhalten. Eine vergleichende Analyse der Landtagswahlen 2019 in drei ostdeutschen Bundesländern [read: Länder der Bundesrepublik]* (Influences of the living environment on political attitudes and voting behaviour. A comparative analysis of the 2019 state elections in three eastern German federal states), Berlin 2020.

22 See Christine Finn et al., *Die Ergebnisse der Landtagswahlen 2024 in Ostdeutschland als Herausforderung für Politik und Demokratie. Erkenntnisse aus einer Bevölkerungsbefragung in Thüringen, Sachsen und Brandenburg* (The results of the 2024 state elections in eastern Germany as a challenge for politics and democracy. Findings from a population survey in Thuringia, Saxony and Brandenburg), Policy Paper University of Jena, n.d., (<https://www.komrex.uni-jena.de/komrexmedia/5280/policy-paper.pdf>)

23 Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Provinz: Von Orten des Denkens und der Leidenschaft* (Province: Places of Thought and Passion), Springer 2021, p. 26.

24 See footnote 7 above.

25 See Manfred Kühn, Sabine Weck, *Peripherisierung – ein Erklärungsansatz zur Entstehung von Peripherien* (Peripheralisation – an explanatory approach to the emergence of peripheries), in: Matthias Bernt / Heike Liebmann (eds.), *Peripherisierung, Stigmatisierung, Abhängigkeit? Deutsche Mittelstädte und ihr Umgang mit Peripherisierungsprozessen* (Peripheralisation, stigmatisation, dependence? German medium-sized towns and their response to processes of peripheralization), Wiesbaden 2013, pp. 24–46, here pp. 25–27.

people's minds, whereby marginalisation is a mixture of external and self-attribution.²⁶ In view of this negative syndrome, it is permissible to ask whether the term should be used at all beyond a social science description, as it makes attributions that may be highly exaggerated and criminally ignore the potential of these spaces.

In contrast, rural space is a geographical term that encompasses the functionality of rural areas, their political and economic constitution, their social construction and practices of rurality, and does not automatically evoke negative connotations per se.²⁷ At the latest since the spatial turn towards the end of the 1980s, which reassigned space a new meaning in sociology, geography, history and cultural studies, a meaning it seemed to have lost in late modernity with the acceleration of transformation processes and the apparent disappearance of distances, rural areas have once again become a topic of discussion.²⁸ They are no longer just the hinterland of metropolitan areas or forgotten, peripheral spaces, but places where society is also constituted.

The loss of significance of (rural) space associated with globalisation is now rightly being questioned again. Markus Schroer emphasises that spaces today are more diverse and overlapping, and that it is not only physical space but especially social space that constitutes our society.²⁹

Geography, with its natural connection to space, has provided a variety of starting points in recent years for, on the one hand, not reducing rural areas to their economic function and, where applicable, their dependence on economically favourable areas and, on the other hand, rejecting concepts and trends such as periphery and periphery research. The transformation of society towards more sustainable development, greater participation and public services, while at the same time demographic change is taking place, especially in rural areas, cannot succeed without the inclusion of rural areas and the maintenance of these areas in their economic and social function. However, this requires not only the acceptance of rural areas as social spaces and the associated safeguarding of social functionality (village life, regional identity, stabilisation of population development), but also a change in the narrative about rural areas. The conceptualisation of rural areas as backward and narrow-minded provinces is diametrically opposed to the participation of the rural population in the inevitable transformation of rural areas.³⁰

An important framework condition for dealing with rural areas is the constitutional requirement in Article 72, paragraph 2 of the Basic Law, which refers to the 'establishment of equivalent living conditions throughout the federal territory'.³¹ However, this also falls within the scope of concurrent legislation, which means that the federal states of the Federal Republic of Germany are also called upon to act in this direction. However, rural areas in particular have been severely affected by selective migration in recent decades, with young, well-educated people in particular moving to urban areas. The second demographic transition, which describes processes of increased life expectancy, declining birth rates and a diversification of household structures towards single-person households, is therefore having an even greater impact on rural areas. Under these circumstances, it is very challenging to guarantee local services in areas such as education, health and shopping.³² Geographical research is therefore now also investigating processes

26 See *ibid.*, pp. 31–39.

27 See Ulrike Grabski-Kieron, Stefan Kordel, Christian Krajewski, Ingo Mose, Annett Steinführer (eds.), *Geographie ländlicher Räume* (Geography of Rural Spaces), Paderborn 2024.

28 See Markus Schroer, "Bringing space back in" – *Zur Relevanz des Raums als soziologischer Kategorie* (Bringing space back in – On the relevance of space as a sociological category), in: Jörg Döring, Tristan Thielmann (eds.), *Spatial Turn. Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften* (Spatial Turn. The spatial paradigm in cultural and social sciences), Bielefeld 2008, pp. 125–148, here especially pp. 127–129; and Jörg Döring, Tristan Thielmann, *Introduction: What do we read in space? The spatial turn and the secret knowledge of geographers*, in: Jörg Döring, Tristan Thielmann (eds.), *Spatial Turn. The spatial paradigm in the cultural and social sciences*, Bielefeld 2008, pp. 7–45.

29 See Markus Schroer, "Bringing space back in" – *On the relevance of space as a sociological category*, in: Jörg Döring / Tristan Thielmann (eds.), *Spatial Turn. Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften* (Spatial Turn. The spatial paradigm in cultural and social sciences), 2nd unchanged edition, Bielefeld 2009, pp. 125–148, here pp. 131, 135.

30 See the overview by Ulrike Grabski-Kieron / Florian Dünckmann, *Theoretische Grundlagen und Zugänge zum Themenfeld „Ländliche Räume“* (Theoretical foundations and approaches to the topic of 'rural areas'), in: Ulrike Grabski-Kieron / Stefan Kordel / Christian Krajewski / Annett Steinführer (eds.), *Geographie ländlicher Räume* (Geography of Rural Areas), 1st edition, Paderborn 2024, pp. 21–60, here esp. pp. 43, 47, 52–55.

31 Cf. 'Bear one another's burdens' (Galatians 6:2).

32 See Annett Steinführer / Stefan Kordel, *Ländliche Räume als Sozialräume* (Rural areas as social spaces), in: Ulrike Grabski-Kieron / Stefan Kordel / Christian Krajewski / Annett Steinführer (eds.), *Geographie ländlicher Räume* (Geography of rural areas), 1st edition, Paderborn 2024, pp. 87–147, here pp. 97–100, 116, 119.

that encourage people to stay, which depend on their own life plans on the one hand, but also, of course, on local structures on the other. In view of demographic change, staying in a region is often a conscious process that needs to be researched and supported by politicians through good framework conditions.³³

It is clear from the above that the strict contrast between metropolis and province should gradually become a thing of the past. However, this presupposes that the province, or perhaps better said, rural areas, are taken into account in the policy proposals of parliamentary parties and that the idealised claim to equal living conditions, which is enshrined in the Basic Law, is finally addressed. There is a need for integration between metropolitan areas and rural areas; intersections and transition zones could provide a feedback loop and regular exchange. Rural areas are not museums for postmodern city dwellers, but social spaces where society can be observed on a small scale and where new approaches to public services and cultural work can be explored.³⁴

It is essential to differentiate between different types of rural areas and to emphasise the micro-central function of medium-sized towns.³⁵ For example, their retail space per capita regularly exceeds that of metropolitan areas, as they are responsible for supplying the surrounding areas.³⁶ For this reason, the more objective term 'county area' has been proposed as a replacement for 'rural area'.³⁷

3. Provinces and rural areas in Saxony

Rural areas in Germany and Saxony have undergone massive changes in the 35 years since German reunification. In the 1960s, researchers tended to refer to rural areas in the singular, whereas today

33 See *ibid.*, p. 119.

34 See the concluding remarks by Arbogast Schmitt at the Collegium PONTES Görlitz-Zgorzelec-Zhořelec 2004:

Where as it was possible in the "dark" Middle Ages for a professor from Naples to teach in Paris, the professor from Paris in Krakow, the professor from Krakow in Cologne, that craftsmen from Italy worked in Poland and those from Poland in England, today there is great concern in many professions, even in the "universities", about preserving regional characteristics and preventing possible foreign infiltration.

It seems to me beyond doubt that this tendency is a fundamental cause of increasing provincialism in the thinking of our society, rooted precisely in "modern independence". And we should not overlook the fact that "provincialism" has as much a spatial meaning as a temporal one. Just as commonality with the spatially foreign disappears, so too does it disappear with the temporally distant. Even our own historical past, even the foundations on which our present essentially rests, such as the reception of antiquity repeated over and over again throughout the centuries, is regarded as something irrelevant, foreign and not belonging to us.

In this intellectual-historical situation, even if it may sound paradoxical, the provincial periphery between several cultures takes on great significance for the defence against widespread tendencies towards provincialisation and the restoration of lost commonalities. An institution such as the Collegium PONTES, in a city whose "peripheral" location in relation to a cultural area also makes it the centre of a common European cultural area between countries and regions, gives rise to justified hope for a supra-provincial reflection on what once constituted Europe's common identity.

Schmitt, Arbogast (2009): *Antike Bildung und moderne Wissenschaft. Zu den geistesgeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen der Spezialisierung und Provinzialisierung des Wissens in der Moderne* (Education in the Age of Antiquity and Modern Science. On the intellectual-historical prerequisites for the specialisation and provincialisation of knowledge in the "modern age"). In: Vogt et al. (2009): *Die periphere Mitte Europas* (The Peripheral Centre of Europe). Proceedings of the Collegium Pontes II. Verlag Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main etc. 2009. [online: https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Schmitt_CP_2_Peripherie_090218-1.pdf]

35 „Mittelstadt“ is indeed a keyword that has been insufficiently addressed in cultural policy research and practice to date. Incidentally, Mittelstadt has this in common with the metropolis: 'In academia, the concept of the metropolis has led a rather modest existence to date, in striking contrast to the numerous boom phases in social discourse.' (Heinz Reif: *Metropolen. Geschichte, Begriffe, Methoden* (Metropolises. History, concepts, methods). Technical University of Berlin, Transatlantic Graduate College, CMS Working Paper Series | No. 001-2006 [online at www.metropolitanstudies.de; 14 December 2013]. For individual aspects of the current discussion on the concept of the Mittelstadt, see Brigitta Schmidt-Lauber (ed.): *Mittelstadt. Urbanes Leben jenseits der Metropole* (Middle-sized Cities: Urban Life Beyond the Metropolis). Frankfurt am Main 2010, as well as the research project 'Mittelstädtische Urbanitäten. Ethnographische Stadtforschung in Wels [58,000 inhabitants] und Hildesheim [100,439 inhabitants in October 2013]' (Middle-sized Urbanities. Ethnographic Urban Research in Wels [58,000 inhabitants] and Hildesheim [100,439 inhabitants in October 2013]), which is dedicated to 'ethnographic research of two central European middle-sized cities from the perspective of everyday culture studies' (www.middletownurbanities.com) at the Institute for European Ethnology at the University of Vienna. 'from an everyday cultural studies perspective of ethnographic research into two medium-sized cities in Central Europe' (www.middletownurbanities.com). Quoted from Vogt, *Verödung? Kulturpolitische Gegenstrategien* (Bleakland? Cultural Policy Counterstrategies), p. 50, footnote 57.

36 See Japanese-German Centre Berlin (2018): *Kulturpolitik als Regenerationsstrategie für den demografischen Wandel in mittelgroßen Städten. Deutschland, Mitteleuropa und Japan im Dialog* (Cultural policy as a regeneration strategy for demographic change in medium-sized cities. Germany, Central Europe and Japan in dialogue). On 4 September 2014 at the Japanese-German Centre Berlin and from 5 to 7 September 2014 in Görlitz and on 8 September 2014 in Dresden. Publications of the Japanese-German Centre Berlin, Volume 64. Editors: Annegret Bergmann and Sekikawa Fujiko

37 <https://kultur.org/forschungen/gesellschaftlicher-zusammenhalt-im-landkreisraum/> [21.08.2025]

there is talk of a variety of very different areas, which also requires differentiation in the strategies and instruments for these rural areas. Some rural areas benefit from their proximity to metropolitan regions, while others are losing population significantly due to their greater distance from metropolitan regions. Structural change in Germany as a whole – and in eastern Germany with a delay and greater intensity from 1990 onwards – has reduced the importance of agriculture and forestry as sources of employment and thus the importance of these sectors for rural areas. Other areas of employment in the service, communications and leisure sectors have emerged to replace them.³⁸

According to the 2011 Federal Spatial Planning Report, rural areas³⁹ are differentiated according to their location (central vs. peripheral, with corresponding subdivisions) and their settlement structure (large cities, urban districts, rural districts with signs of densification, sparsely populated rural districts). This is intended to support strategies for strengthening rural areas.⁴⁰

The so-called Thünen typology, developed at the Thünen Institute for Rural Studies in Braunschweig, takes a different approach. Here, a distinction and typology of rural areas is proposed based on a total of five characteristics: settlement density, proportion of agricultural and forestry land, proportion of single-family and two-family houses, population in the vicinity of populated areas and distance from large centres. The index formed from this measures the degree of rurality at regional level in 361 district regions in Germany, 267 of which are classified as rural. Four types of rurality are represented: very rural/less favourable socio-economic situation; rather rural/less favourable socio-economic situation; very rural/favourable socio-economic situation and rather rural/favourable socio-economic situation.⁴¹

Rural areas can be found throughout Germany, with the two types of rurality with a less favourable socio-economic situation dominating in eastern Germany.

Given the continuing regional disparities, with structurally weak areas more prevalent in eastern Germany, it is therefore not surprising that an analysis from 2020 describes the development for Saxony as quite dramatic. Rural areas here refer to the entire area of Saxony outside the three major cities of Dresden, Leipzig and Chemnitz, although this somewhat imprecise definition can certainly be viewed critically in light of the typologies mentioned above. When it comes to structural change in rural areas, the authors note that although the population decline has been halted thanks to a rise in the birth rate, the cuts in the population have naturally also led to cuts in infrastructure. Schools and doctors' surgeries have been closed, public transport has been reduced, and many smaller shops and restaurants have shut down. The proportion of people employed in agriculture also fell to 1.3% or 27,600 employees in the Free State of Saxony in 2018, which is also changing the character of the villages.⁴²

A text by Matthias Donath printed in the same issue comes to a somewhat more positive conclusion with regard to the handling of cultural assets. Initially, the further deterioration of historic buildings was partially halted after reunification. Church buildings in particular were almost completely renovated, while the Free State of Saxony took over only 20 of the numerous castles and manor houses, about two percent of the total stock and thus significantly less than in other states of the Federal Republic, as Donath emphasises.⁴³ Donath's conclusion is therefore mixed:

“When it comes to cultural use and cultural infrastructure, the picture is contradictory. The number of museums has increased, music schools are being used more, but there are fewer choirs, libraries and cinemas. The orchestra and theatre landscape has largely been preserved.

38 See Ingo Mose, *Ländliche Räume* (rural spaces), ARL – Akademie für Raumforschung und Landesplanung (ed.), *Handwörterbuch der Stadt- und Raumentwicklung*, Hannover 2018, pp. 1323-1334, here pp. 1323-1326.

39 See the classification in Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (1998): *Development prospects for rural areas in Germany of 19 January 1989 in Berlin*. Bonn 1998, Appendix 1, p. 69.

40 See *ibid.*, pp. 1326-2328.

41 See Patrick Küpper, *Was sind eigentlich ländliche Räume? (What exactly are rural areas?)*, in: *Informationen zur politischen Bildung. Ländliche Räume*, issue 343, 2/2020, Bonn, pp. 4-7.

42 See Joachim Amm / Lars-Arne Dannenberg / Matthias Donath / Dirk Martin Mütze, *Die Verwandlung des Landes. Ländlicher Raum in Sachsen* (The transformation of the land. Rural areas in Saxony), in: *Sächsische Heimatblätter* · 1 | 2020, pp. 1-4.

43 See Matthias Donath, *Der Umgang mit Kulturgut im ländlichen Raum Sachsens seit 1989* (Dealing with cultural assets in rural areas of Saxony since 1989), in: *Sächsische Heimatblätter* · 1 | 2020, pp. 28-34.

This was achieved by investing significant public funds in these institutions. At the same time, however, these are institutions with a very high need for subsidies. It is legitimate to ask whether this prioritisation, which is evident in the distribution of funds for cultural areas, is fair to other areas of cultural activity.”⁴⁴

A Forsa survey commissioned by the State Office for the Environment, Agriculture and Geology in 2014 on rural living conditions in Saxony shows, somewhat surprisingly in view of these assessments, a high level of life satisfaction among the rural population, among other things with regard to nature and the different type of social contacts compared to urban areas. However, subjective deficits such as distance to work, poorer infrastructure and lower earning potential are also mentioned, but these do not detract from the overall positive conclusion.⁴⁵

However, the situation has changed dramatically in the meantime due to multiple crises (migration crisis, Covid pandemic, war in Ukraine) and the electoral successes of the AfD in particular, so that this positive assessment is no longer valid. The Deutschland Monitor, funded by the federal government and carried out by the universities of Mannheim, Jena and Halle-Wittenberg, noted fears about the future and uncertainty in its latest survey in 2024, particularly in structurally weak areas. Regional differences can jeopardise social cohesion. In this survey, 83% of respondents supported funding for structurally weak regions.⁴⁶

The Saxony state government has responded to the structural change in rural areas outlined above with a variety of strategies in recent years. The current strategy, ‘Living Diversity – Securing the Future’, which followed the ‘Rural Areas – Living Diversity’ strategy in force since 2012, aims to continue proven programmes but also to set new priorities, for example with regard to the employment of new teachers and police officers (financed by the Future Pact). In 142 pages and ten chapters, individual areas of life of Saxony’s citizens are addressed and investments are promised in quality of life and livelihoods, in digital infrastructure for digital work, in local education, in health care, in science and research, and in culture. At the same time, the strategy promotes families and civic engagement, social cohesion and equal opportunities in rural areas, and promises adequate funding for towns and municipalities. Through so-called LEADER areas, local stakeholders will decide for themselves how to spend their money on the basis of local development strategies.⁴⁷

Culture is also an important element in maintaining rural communities and is therefore given special support by the Free State of Saxony under the 1994 Cultural Space Act. Rural traditions are to be preserved and culture is to remain visible throughout the region. On the basis of the Saxon Cultural Area Act, 95 million euros are earmarked annually for rural cultural areas, whereby, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, local authorities are also expected to contribute to the development of cultural areas. In addition, funds are available to improve mobility in rural areas and for municipal theatres and orchestras. Overall, the aim is to improve access to cultural offerings.⁴⁸ The double budget just passed at the end of June 2025 is also more positive for cultural funding than feared. The planned cuts are less drastic, and some areas, like orchestras and Saxon cultural funding, are even getting more money. In other areas, like the Saxon Industrial Museum in Chemnitz, the cuts are pretty big, though.⁴⁹ [50] In addition to the state strategy for rural areas, the regional budgets implemented with the LEADER areas are an important instrument for

44 Ibid., p. 34.

45 See Sächsisches Landesamt für Umwelt, Landwirtschaft und Geologie (Saxon State Office for Environment, Agriculture and Geology) (ed.), *Ländliche Lebensverhältnisse in Sachsen* (Rural Living Conditions in Saxony), series, issue 1/2014

46 See Der Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Ostdeutschland (Federal Government Commissioner for Eastern Germany), *Wie wir in Deutschland gut leben können. Gleichwertige Lebensverhältnisse als Pfeiler unserer Demokratie* (How we can live well in Germany. Equal living conditions as a pillar of our democracy), 2 April 2025, <https://www.ostbeauftragte.de/ostb-de/aktuelles/gleichwertige-lebensverhaeltnisse-als-pfeiler-unserer-demokratie-2340280>

47 See Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt und Landwirtschaft (Saxon State Ministry for the Environment and Agriculture) (SMUL) (ed.), *Vielfalt leben – Zukunft sichern. Strategie der Sächsischen Staatsregierung für den ländlichen Raum* (Living diversity – securing the future. Strategy of the Saxon State Government for rural areas), Dresden 2018.

48 See *ibid.*, pp. 114–117.

49 See *Doppelhaushalt 2025/2026. Mehr Geld für die Kultur in Sachsen – aber Sorgen bleiben* (Double budget 2025/2026. More money for culture in Saxony – but concerns remain), in: MDR, 27 June 2025, <https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/sachsen/dresden/dresden-radebeul/mehr-geld-fuer-kultur-sachsen-kultur-news-100.html> (accessed on 6 June 2025).

promoting smaller projects in particular. In 2021, 29 local action groups in Saxony implemented 586 small projects with a total funding volume of 4.5 million euros. As a rule, this involves funding of up to 80%, with the average funding per project amounting to €7,660.⁵⁰

In addition to Saxony's state funds for cultural promotion, federal funds are also available, as the federal government has also recognised the need to promote rural areas. With the programme 'Aller.Land – shaping the future together. Strukturen stärken' (Aller.Land – shaping the future together. Strengthening structures), the federal government aims to "strengthen culture, participation and democracy in rural areas in the long term",⁵¹ as the integrative power of culture in an uncertain and increasingly heterogeneous society is now recognised. The federal government is providing a total of €69.4 million for this programme from 2023 to 2030, with €5.9 million being added by the respective regions as co-financing. Ninety-seven regions participated in the first phase in 2024, each receiving €40,000 to develop concepts. In the first half of the year, 30 of these regions were selected and can now implement their regional concepts by 2030. In a previous project, the Federal Ministry of Culture and Media (BKM) has already provided up to €20,000 in funding to cinemas, libraries, local history museums, cultural centres and cultural projects in communities from 2019 to 2025.⁵²

It is therefore clear that both the federal government and the Saxony state government have recognised the need to promote culture in rural areas for many years, not least in order to make local democracy more resilient. An exciting range of cultural activities close to home is one way of supporting and developing community and social capital.

In addition, rural areas could also be a testing ground for social debates and social cohesion. In urban areas, social cohesion takes place primarily through public discourse and opportunities that enable people to shape their own lives. However, given its more limited offerings, rural areas have other strengths, namely fewer barriers to social contact and smaller communities.

4. The province as a laboratory of late modernity? Proposals.

Perhaps, in addition to its administrative characteristics, the province is also a mental disposition. The province exists in the mind, and processes of exclusion are not only evident towards newcomers to rural areas, but also towards outsiders in urban discourse. What is more, perhaps the province is less closed in its discourse and in its constant state of emergence. In the province, there is no centre of debate, no geographical centrality, but rather a polycentric space with flat hierarchies, much more direct, even brutal, but also more open to new structures because, in addition to outdated and obsolete traditions of the old. This also makes the provinces a laboratory for modernity, where demographic, political and economic processes, i.e. the ageing of society, the redefinition of society in the 21st century with a new politics of citizen participation, and the negotiation of economic structures and infrastructures for the economy of the 21st century, can be observed and tested. There are no structures here to defend the old, no persistent forces that have become institutionalised in urban areas and make a new beginning so difficult because it is also associated with the loss of symbolic and institutional power. In the provinces, society can – or rather, could – be re-established. This requires a better infrastructure for encounters, and what could be better than culture? Transport routes and smart mobility solutions can be created relatively easily, albeit not cheaply, but without cultural meeting places, even better transport routes will not lead to the reconstitution of rural areas in the 21st century. However, this is precisely what is needed to re-establish an increasingly heterogeneous society.

Goethe points to the connection between prosperity and culture. In his 'Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life,' Johann Peter Eckermann notes on Thursday, 23 October 1828:⁵³

50 See Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Regionalentwicklung (SMR) (Saxon State Ministry for Regional Development) (ed.), *Regionalbudgets im ländlichen Raum. Ergebnisse des 3. Aufrufs 2021* (Regional budgets in rural areas. Results of the third call for proposals in 2021), Dresden 2023, p. 37.

51 The Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, Art and Cultural Promotion. *Culture in rural areas*, dated 18 June 2025, <https://kulturstaatsminister.de/kunst-und-kulturfoerderung/kultur-in-laendlichen-raeumen> (accessed on 6 July 2025).

52 See *ibid.*

53 Eckermann, Johann Peter: *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life*, Chapter 287, Thursday, 23 October 1828.

But if one thinks that the unity of Germany consists in the fact that the very large empire has a single large residence, and that this large residence is beneficial both for the development of individual great talents and for the welfare of the great mass of the people, then one is mistaken.

A state has been compared to a living body with many limbs, and so the residence of a state could be compared to the heart, from which life and well-being flow to the individual limbs near and far. But if the limbs are very far from the heart, the flow of life will be felt weakly and increasingly weakly. A witty Frenchman, I believe it was Dupin, drew a map of the cultural state of France and illustrated the greater or lesser enlightenment of the various departments with lighter or darker colours. There we find, especially in the southern provinces far from the capital, individual departments that are coloured completely black, as a sign of the great darkness that prevails there. But would that be the case if beautiful France had ten centres instead of one large centre from which light and life emanated?

What makes Germany great if not an admirable popular culture that has permeated all parts of the empire equally? [...] Suppose we had only the two capital cities of Vienna and Berlin in Germany for centuries, or even just one, then I would like to see what would become of German culture, and indeed of the widespread prosperity that goes hand in hand with culture!

Germany has over twenty universities spread throughout the empire and over a hundred public libraries equally widespread, as well as a large number of art collections and collections of objects from all realms of nature; for every prince has taken care to attract such beautiful and good things to his vicinity. There is an abundance of grammar schools and schools for technology and industry; indeed, there is hardly a German village that does not have its own school. But what is the situation in France with regard to this last point?

And then there are the many German theatres, numbering over seventy, which are by no means to be despised as vehicles and promoters of higher education. The appreciation of music and singing and their practice is more widespread in Germany than in any other country, and that is also something!

Decisive countermeasures must be taken to prevent rural areas from falling further behind. The strategy of the Saxony state government, 'Living diversity – securing the future', and the BKM initiative 'Aller. Land – shaping the future together. Strengthening structures' are starting points here. A few things seem central to this:

Firstly, it is important to continue supporting cultural spaces and to link cultural education and democracy education more closely than before. The BKM project has recognised this. A German-French-Polish position paper by the Genshagen Foundation calls for precisely this – the strengthening of culture in rural areas, as this is relevant to democracy and the system. According to the Genshagen paper, this support should be participatory in nature.⁵⁴

Secondly, political, economic and cultural elites must also engage in discourse in the provinces, take up the populist challenge and defend democracy. Here, too, local democracy projects should be strengthened, as is already happening in some cases – local democracy projects should be strengthened.

Thirdly, the periphery of rural areas must be consistently broken down through transregional and transnational cooperation. This can be done within the framework of Euroregions, through bilateral partnerships, in research projects and citizens' initiatives, again with a constant focus on strengthening democratic resilience. Much is already underway in this area, but these developments must be strengthened, as the problems faced by our neighbours are similar and all sides stand to gain from cooperation.

Fourthly, meeting places in small communities must be supported or established. Without such places, local communities cannot survive. It is important to strengthen voluntary work, as this organises and ultimately sustains local meeting places.⁵⁵

Fifthly, migration in rural areas should be made possible and strengthened in a sustainable manner, as this could cushion the impact of depopulation. However, this must be accompanied by measures to ensure that the advantages of rural areas, namely taking strangers by the hand and integrating them into the microcosm of the village, can also come to bear and reservations are broken down.⁵⁶

Let's get started!

54 See Genshagen Foundation: *German-French-Polish Position Paper. Strengthening Culture in Rural Areas!*, September 2023

55 See David Spenger: *Begegnungsorte und Ehrenamt* (Meeting places and voluntary work), in: Steinführer / Kordel, *Ländliche Räume als Sozialräume* (Rural areas as social spaces), op. cit., p. 146.

56 See Birgit Glorius, *Neue Heimat ländlicher Raum? Zum Umgang mit Einwanderung und »Fremdheit« in ländlichen Gemeinden in Deutschland* (Rural areas as a new home? Dealing with immigration and 'foreignness' in rural communities in Germany), in: Bernd Belina / Andreas Kallert / Michael Mießner / Matthias Naumann (eds.), *Ungleiche ländliche Räume. Widersprüche, Konzepte und Perspektiven* (Unequal Rural Areas: Contradictions, Concepts and Perspectives), Bielefeld 2022, pp. 339–356, here p. 348.



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Cultural Policy against the Grain 流れに逆らう文化政策

liber amicorum for Matthias Theodor Vogt in honour of
his 65th birthday, edited by his colleagues and students

Dieter Bingen, Köln; Stefan Garsztecki, Chemnitz; Goro Christoph Kimura, Tokyo; Luigi Ferrara, Neapel; Peter Lah, Rom; Beat Siebenhaar, Leipzig, in Verbindung mit Günter Beelitz, Düsseldorf; Agnieszka Bormann, Görlitz; Andreas Bracher, Wien; Jelena Budanceva, Riga; Adam Chmielewski, Breslau; Maria Davydchyk, Berlin; Jürgen Erfurt, Berlin; Princesse Esperance Fezeu, Bafoussam; Pierpaolo Forte, Benevent; Annemarie Franke, Görlitz; Erik Fritzsche, Dresden; Kazuo Fujino, Kobe; Miloš Havelka, Prag; Adrien Houguet, Taschkent; Zoltán Huszár, Pécs; Sebastian Lalla, Ulaanbaatar; Stefan Liebing, Hamburg; Luca Lombardi, Rom; Katarina Markovic, Boston; Jean Bertrand Miguoué, Yaoundé; Christoph Pan, Bozen; Oliver Reisner, Tiflis; Róza Zuzanna Różańska, Krakau; Mihály Sári, Pécs; Una Sedleniece, Riga; David Simo, Yaoundé; Anton Sterbling, Fürth; Paul Videsott, Bozen; Susanne Vill, Wien; Eduard Werner, Leipzig; Ivan Zadori, Pécs; Gabriele Zaidyte, Vilnius; Kamil Zágóršek, Liberec; Reiner Zimmermann, Dresden

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Dieter Bingen et al. (Editor): *Cultural Policy against the Grain* - liber amicorum for Matthias Theodor Vogt in honour of his 65th birthday, edited by his colleagues and students (Volume 2, English version), ISBN 978-3-96100-250-4 (online), Universitätsverlag Chemnitz. Chemnitz, Tokyo, Napoli, Roma, Leipzig 2025

Matthias Theodor Vogt, Görlitz
Photos von Andreas Zgraja, Görlitz

Documentation of the conference – 30 Years of IKS on 24 May 2024

Conference *Against the Grain – Cultural policy in history and in present-day Saxony*

30 years of the Saxon Cultural Area Act and its accompaniment in research and teaching by the Institute for Cultural Infrastructure Saxony

24 May 2024, 2 – 7 p.m.

Large lecture halls G I 1.01 and 0.01

Zittau/Görlitz University, Brückenstr. 1, D-02826 Görlitz

<https://kultur.org/veranstaltungen/tagung-24-mai-2024/>

Organisers:

Institute for Cultural Infrastructure Saxony, Upper Lusatia-Lower Silesia Cultural Area and Zittau/Görlitz University in cooperation with Chemnitz University of Technology and the Institute for Territorial Development of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship

Download Documentation (Photos: Andreas Zgraja, Görlitz)

https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Kulturpolitik24Mai2024Goerlitz_PhotosZgraja_2024-06-01k.pdf

Presse

Andreas Hermann: Gepfeffelter Gruß aus Görlitz

(Spicy greetings from Görlitz)

Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten. Dresden, 31. Mai 2024. S.11.

Photo: Andreas Hermann, faktenreich Dresden

<https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Hermann-Dresdner-Neueste-Nachrichten-31.05.2024->

[Seite-11.pdf](#)



Peter Chemnitz: Wissenschaftler verabschieden Professor Vogt

(Scientists bid farewell to Professor Vogt)

Görlitzer Nachrichten Sächsische Zeitung, 29. Mai 2024, S. 16

https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/SZ-Goerlitz-29Mai2024_Wissenschaftler-verabschieden_Professor-Vogt.pdf

(1) Invitation

by Dr. Stephan Meyer, Landrat des Landkreises Görlitz (shire county president) and Chairman of the Cultural Convention for the Upper Lusatia-Lower Silesia Cultural Area

Thirty years ago – on 1 August 1994 – the Saxon Cultural Area Act came into force.

In the same month, the Institute for Cultural Infrastructure Saxony was founded to support the Cultural Area Act in research and teaching. In order to attract the experts needed for cultural policy, the institute and the Zittau/Görlitz University shortly afterwards established the Görlitz degree programme ‘Culture and Management,’ which now has around 500 graduates who are successfully working all over the world.

We would like to celebrate this with you and Professor Matthias Theodor Vogt, the ‘father’ of the Act, on Friday, 24 May 2024, in Görlitz. After 27 years, he is retiring from his university position with a keynote speech on the future of cultural areas in Saxony. In cooperation with the Institute for Cultural Infrastructure Saxony and the Zittau/Görlitz University, we invite you to a symposium with keynote speeches from academia and practice, as well as a panel discussion.

We don’t just want to celebrate and engage in navel-gazing within Saxony, but also to receive external input on the history and present of cultural policy in order to reflect together on the next thirty years of cultural spaces in Saxony. We have invited speakers from the Council of Europe, Tokyo, Riga, Naples, Krakow, Marburg and, of course, Görlitz, who will present core elements of state, municipal and independent cultural policy ‘against the grain’ in keynote speeches and short presentations. Afterwards, we will discuss with the chair of the Culture Committee in the Saxon State Parliament, members of the Culture Senate and Culture Convention, and representatives of the art scene.

(2) Welcome



Rector of Zittau/Görlitz University, Alexander Kratzsch
https://youtu.be/6Imh0TNbyIM?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_je3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0



(3) Introduction

Landrat Stephan Meyer, Görlitz: *Outline of current problems and expectations of municipal cultural policy in Saxony by the Chairman of the Cultural Convention of the Upper Lusatia-Lower Silesia Cultural Area,*
https://youtu.be/cjROQsTqrCY?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_je3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0

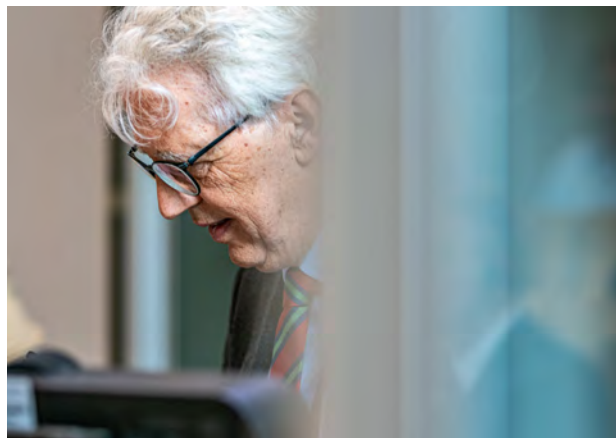
(4) Impulses: External suggestions for Saxony's cultural policy

Una Sedleniece, former State Secretary, Riga: *Memories of her time as a student in Görlitz from 1997 to 2001 in the first cohort of the UNESCO degree programme 'Culture and Management' in Görlitz at the Zittau/Görlitz University and the Institute for Cultural Infrastructure Saxony*
https://youtu.be/jKB-0Govtac?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0



Kimura Goro Christoph (Sophia-University, Tokyo): *Japan learns from Saxony*
https://youtube/3gVq1Btd5sc?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0

Gregor Vogt-Spira
 (Philipps University of Marburg):
Emperor Augustus and the invention of 'cultural policy'
https://youtube/00iVWcYxYT?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0



Róża Zuzanna Różańska (Jagiellonian University Krakow): *Royal cultural policy of the Baroque era*
https://youtu.be/o4rVJFW1Yp4?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0



Stefan Garsztecki (Chemnitz):

Province takes place in the mind

https://youtu.be/_XavYiqjEi0?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0



Beate Sibylle Pfeil
(Council of Europe expert):

Minorities in three classes.

Current language policy in Ukraine

https://youtu.be/ZPjNQLPoiPc?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0

[OrrW0](https://youtu.be/ZPjNQLPoiPc?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0)



Luigi Ferrara (University of Federico II Naples): The Saxon Cultural Areas Act as a model for Italian legislation?

https://youtu.be/yKympfBwEGo?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0

[jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0](https://youtu.be/yKympfBwEGo?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0)

(5) Coffee break in the auditorium





(6) Keynote speech

Matthias Theodor Vogt (IKS and HSZG):
On the future of cultural areas in Saxony
https://youtu.be/M5HIZcKotuc?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0



(7) Discussion: 30 years of cultural areas in Saxony



Moderator: Cultural Secretary Annemarie Franke, Cultural Area Oberlausitz-Niederschlesien
 Theresa Jacobs (Leipzig): Sorbian Institute Bautzen and Leipzig Dance Theatre
 Franz Sodann MdL: Deputy Chairman of the Committee for Science, Higher Education, Media, Culture and Tourism in the Saxon State Parliament
 Thomas Zenker (Zittau): Lord Mayor and member of the convention
 Kirstin Zinke (Dresden): Senator for Culture and Managing Director of the Saxony State Association for Socio-Culture
https://youtu.be/Zev0Hpg3fYk?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0





(8) Closing remarks

Benedikt Hummel, Mayor for Culture of the City of Görlitz
as representative of the graduates of 'Culture and Management'
https://youtu.be/t7EuD-oQ_a4?list=PLwU1_FuHyok3HB_jc3E7rV8vtbJhOrrW0



Many thanks to all the hard-working helpers who made this conference possible:

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Joanna Bär and Alexandra Grochowski (translators)

Johanna Metzner, student of culture and management, and her family from the ‘Bierblume Görlitz’
<https://www.bierblume-goerlitz.de/>

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INSTITUT FÜR
KULTURELLE INFRASTRUKTUR
SACHSEN

*30 Jahre
1994 – 2024*



Hochschule
Zittau/Görlitz



Freistaat
SACHSEN

Matthias Theodor Vogt, Görlitz
Photos von Andreas Zgraja, Görlitz

Documentation of the art night celebrating 30 years of IKS and the premiere of the film 'Görlitz Rhythms – A Dance of Cultures' at Benigna, Görlitz

<https://kultur.org/institut/30-years-iks/>



The Art Night took place at the 'Benigna' on Görlitz's Untermarkt, one of the city's most historically significant buildings. It is named after Benigna Horschel. On Pentecost Sunday 1464, she was impregnated by the mayor's son Georg Emmerich and then callously abandoned. The conflict between the Emmerich and Horschel families was to become a turning point in the city's history, far more exciting than the teenage drama Romeo and Juliet [https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Hoch_Benigna_Spannender-als-Romeo-und-Julia_in_Vogt-et-al-Benigna-2024-04-25.pdf].



In the fine tradition of debate among Görlitz students of 'Culture and Management' [https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Vogt_3Gruende-fuer-Goerlitz-als-Studiengangsort_Benigna-2024-04-25.pdf] with complex issues in the city and region (and often far beyond), the institute received an enquiry from Robert Lehleiter and Christian Weise. They wanted a concept for the use of the 'Benigna'. Supervised by Matthias Theodor Vogt and Maik Hosang, 12 female students and 1 male student explored this issue in a research seminar, in collaboration with council archivist Siegfried Hoche and a Bonn theatre group, supervised by René Harder.



The theory [download: https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Hoch_Benigna_Spannender-als-Romeo-und-Julia_in_Vogt-et-al-Benigna-2024-04-25.pdf] was put to the test at the art night on 24 May 2024.

Art Night

Photo documentation

[https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/IKS30y-Benigna24Mai2024_PhotosZgraja-k.pdf] with photos by Andreas Zgraja, Görlitz mail@andi.film.



Maestro Luca Lombardi and Miriam Meghnagi from Rome performed a work to mark the institute's 30th anniversary (world premiere and first joint performance of the couple).



Former Prime Minister Georg Milbradt from Dresden gave the laudatory speech.



Maria Davydchyk performed a Belarusian folk song.



Steffi Bärmann from Zittau recited in the Upper Lusatian dialect.



Elisabeth Domsgen from Görlitz recited a ballad by Bürger.



Honorary Consul Stefan Liebing from Hamburg commended the research and institute projects on Africa.



Princess Esperance from Bafoussam sang a Cameroonian song.



Joseline Amutuhair performed a Ugandan dance, accompanied on the drums by Tomas Ondrusek from Waldheim.



Hans-Peter Struppe from Görlitz and Cornelia Wosnitza from Dresden sang cheeky modern songs.



The art night ended with a song by 21 former UNESCO students of 'Culture and Management' (class of 1997), who offered their congratulations in Latvian, Polish, Sorbian, Czech and German.

Museum: Thirty Years of IKS

Some of the 30 years of work of the Institute for Cultural Infrastructure Saxony is documented at <https://kultur.org/>. To mark the institute's anniversary, the archives were opened and an exhibition was put together, supported by our student intern Jakob Bormann as curator.



Film Görlitz Rhythms – A Dance of Cultures

Premiere 24 May 2024, Benigna Görlitz

on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Institute for Cultural Infrastructure Saxony

Concept: Matthias Theodor Vogt, Görlitz

Camera and editing: Andreas Zgraja, Görlitz mail@andi.film

The film can be downloaded free of charge as Creative Commons ShareAlike CC BY-SA (1.0 2.0 2.5 3.0 4.0) and installed on your own website.

‘Without immigration, Görlitz is lost,’ said the then mayor Siegfried Deinege during research for the study ‘Arriving in the German world’ [<https://kultur.org/forschungen/merr/>]. However, immigration is a process in which preconceived assumptions – positive or negative stereotypes – play a decisive role in choosing a destination.

When Cameroonian mayor Roger Tafam promoted Görlitz in June 2023, he found that the city was so heavily disparaged as xenophobic on English-language social media that the parents of the young people he wanted to send to Görlitz for training vetoed the idea and none of them wanted to come.

The objective data tells a completely different story. No city in Saxony has a higher proportion of foreigners than Görlitz, not even Leipzig, and certainly not the state capital Dresden. Data from the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and the criminal investigation departments indicate peaceful coexistence (see Vogt 2023). If Görlitz entrepreneurs want to attract excellent workers in times of skilled labour shortages, they urgently need to counter the media's denigration with facts. The inglorious first-place finish of the Görlitz district in the European elections on 9 June 2024 has opened the door to further suspicions.

Roger Tafam suggested presenting parents with a film about the real Görlitz in English in YouTube format in order to respond to the allegations of ‘manifest xenophobia’ circulating on the internet. With the film **‘Görlitz Rhythms – A Dance of Cultures’** and in cooperation with the Municipal Hospital, the Maltese Hospital, the Zittau/Görlitz University and many civil society actors, the Institute implemented this idea together with Andi Zgraja, Görlitz (camera and editing).

The film is short and asks only one question: **What is so special about Görlitz?** The data is impressive and stimulates discussion.

To mark the institute's anniversary, we are making the film available to all Görlitz-based companies in two audio tracks: (a) with Leoš Janáček's 2nd String Quartet ‘Intimate Letters’ and (b) a brass recording. **Which music do you prefer? And which one do you think your contacts will like best?**

Film “Görlitz Rhythms – A Dance of Cultures”**Musik: Leoš Janáček (1854-1928): String**

[\[https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Goerlitz-Rhythms.IKS-30y.Janacek.2024-05-24_HD_neu_2.mp4\]](https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Goerlitz-Rhythms.IKS-30y.Janacek.2024-05-24_HD_neu_2.mp4)

Film “Görlitz Rhythms – A Dance of Cultures” Musik: Leoš Janáček (1854-1928): String Quartet No. 2, „Intimate Letters“, IV. Allegro – Andante – Adagio. With kind permission of Erica Brenner and Jessica Sherwood [6 December 2023) Alexi Kenney, violin 1 (Chamber Fest Cleveland Young Artist), David Bowlin, violin 2, Dimitri Murrath, viola, Julie Albers, cello Performed on June 24, 2016 Mixon Hall, Cleveland Institute of Music Cleveland, Ohio Chamber Fest Season 5 <http://chamberfestcleveland.com> Audio: Ian Dobie – Dobie Digital Productions, Editing: Erica Brenner <http://ericabrennerproductions.com>

Film “Görlitz Rhythms – A Dance of Cultures”**Musik: O Chanucah (Instrumental).****YouTube Audio-Bibliothek**

[\[https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Goerlitz-Rhythms.IKS-30y.Brass_2024-05-24_HD_neu_1.mp4?_=1\]](https://kultur.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Goerlitz-Rhythms.IKS-30y.Brass_2024-05-24_HD_neu_1.mp4?_=1)

Görlitz Rhythms: A Dance of Cultures

Uraufführung 24. Mai 2024, Benigna Görlitz
aus Anlaß der Dreißigjahrfeier des
Instituts für kulturelle Infrastruktur Sachsen

Konzeption: Matthias Theodor Vogt, Görlitz
Film: Andreas Zgraja, Görlitz

Görlitz Rhythms: A Dance of Cultures

Uraufführung 24. Mai 2024, Benigna Görlitz
aus Anlaß der Dreißigjahrfeier des
Instituts für kulturelle Infrastruktur Sachsen

Konzeption: Matthias Theodor Vogt, Görlitz
Film: Andreas Zgraja, Görlitz

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- Vogt, Matthias Theodor; Fritzsche, Erik; Meißelbach, Christoph (2016): *Ankommen in der deutschen Lebenswelt. Migranten-Enkulturation und regionale Resilienz in der Einen Welt*. Geleitwort von Rita Süßmuth und Nachwort von Olaf Zimmermann. Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag 2016, 526 S., ISBN: 978-3-8305-3716-8.
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- Vogt, Matthias Theodor (2021f): *Elemente einer Sozioökonomie der Frauen in Kamerun. Text und fünfzig kommentierte Graphiken*. In: Vogt et al: *Katalog Kamerun mit den Augen von tausend Frauen, Görlitz 2021*, S. 127-244. | *Elements of a socio-economy of women in Cameroon. Text and fifty annotated graphs*. In: Vogt et al: *Katalog Kamerun mit den Augen von tausend Frauen, Görlitz 2021*, S. 245-356.
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Bafoussam (Cameroon)

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of the Donnarregina Foundation for Contemporary Arts, which oversees the Museo Madre in Naples. He has authored approximately seventy scientific publications and is a member of the Editorial Board for the journal *P.A. Persona e Amministrazione: Ricerche Giuridiche sull'Amministrazione e l'Economia*, as well as for Brill Research Perspectives in Art and Law. He is also part of the Scientific Committee for the series *Diritto Comparato dell'Arte* and is affiliated with CIRTAM, the Interdepartmental Research Center from Late Antiquity to Modern times at the Federico II University of Naples.

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Prof. Dr. Kazuo Fujino (Kobe) 藤野一夫

Professor Emeritus of Performing Arts, Cultural Policy, and Arts Management at the Graduate School of Intercultural Studies, Kobe University, and Professor Emeritus of the Hyogo Professional College of Arts and Tourism, Toooyka. His area of specialization is the relationship between art and society, mainly in the performing arts of Germany and Japan. He has published numerous books and articles on Richard Wagner. He was a researcher at the Collegium PONTES Görlitz-Zgorzelec-Zhořelec. He was a president of the Japan Association for Cultural Policy Research (2022-2025) and has been involved in many cultural policy initiatives on national and local level. Among his recent publications are *Cultural Policy of Basic Municipalities—Why Art is Needed in Cities* (2019) and *Lecture on Cultural Policy for Everyone—Creating Cultural Commons* (2022).

藤野一夫(神戸):神戸大学大学院国際文化学研究科名誉教授、兵庫県立芸術文化観光専門職大学副学長を経て名誉教授。専門は文化政策/アートマネジメント/音楽文化論/ドイツ思想史。特にリヒャルト・ワーグナーに関する数多くの著作を発表。コレギウム・ポンテスのシニアフェローも務めた。日本文化政策学会会長(2022-2025)を歴任し、国と地方自治体の数多くの文化審議会の座長、文化振興財団等の理事を務める。最近の著書に『基礎自治体の文化政策～まちにアートが必要なわけ』(2019)、『市民がつくる社会文化～ドイツの理念・運動・政策』(2021)、『みんなの文化政策講義～文化的コモンズをつくるために』(2022)などがある。

Prof. Dr. Stefan Garsztecki (Chemnitz)

Political scientist. From 1983 to 1989 he studied political science (major subject), modern and contemporary history and cultural geography (minor subjects) at the University of Bonn (Magister Artium in political science). From 1989 to 1994 he held a doctoral scholarship from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. After completing his doctorate in political science in 1995 with Klaus Ziemer and Kurt Düwell at the University of Trier, he holds the Chair of Cultural and Area Studies at Chemnitz University of Technology since 2010.

Sebastian Gemkow (Dresden)

Minister of State for Science, Culture and Tourism of the Free State of Saxony since 2019. Studied law at the universities of Leipzig, Hamburg and Berlin, completed his legal training in Leipzig with the first and second state examinations. In 2007, he established himself as a lawyer in Leipzig, has been a member of the Saxon State Parliament since 2009 and President of the Parliamentary Forum for Central and Eastern Europe since 2010. In 2014, he became Honorary Consul of the Republic of Estonia for Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. From 2014 to 2019, he was Saxon State Minister of Justice.

Prof. PhDr Miloš Havelka CSc (Prag)

Professor at the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University. His main areas of interest are questions of historical sociology of knowledge, theories of historiography and sociology, and the history of modern Czech thought. In 2002 and 2004/05, he was a visiting professor at the Institute for European Studies at Chemnitz University of Technology. In addition to numerous studies in domestic and foreign journals, he has published, among other things, the annotated two-volume anthology *Der Streit um die Bedeutung der tschechischen Geschichte* (The Dispute over the Meaning of Czech History), a collection of studies on historical sociology of knowledge *Ideen – Geschichte – Gesellschaft* (Ideas – History – Society), a collection of his polemical and critical texts *Geschichte und Kritik* (History and Criticism), and the anthology *Glaube, Kultur und Gesellschaft* (Faith, Culture, and Society). He is co-editor of the monograph series *Religious Cultures in Modern Europe*, published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Prof. Dr. Goro Christoph Kimura (Tokyo) 木村 護郎 クリストフ (東京)

graduated from Hitotsubashi University in Tokyo in 2002 with a dissertation entitled *Perspectives on human intervention for the preservation and revitalisation of minority languages*. He has been employed at Sophia University in Tokyo since 2004. He has been an associate professor since 2007 and a full professor at Sophia University since 2012 and is currently Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Studies. He has worked as a visiting professor at the Slavic-Eurasian Research Centre of Hokkaido University in Sapporo and as a visiting scholar at the Sorbian Institute (Bautzen), the European University Viadrina, the University of Leipzig and the Collegium PONTES Görlitz-Zgorzelec-Zhořelec. Kimura has been a board member and managing director of the Japan Society for the Study of Slavic Languages and Literatures since 2022.

2002年に東京の単一橋大学を卒業し、博士論文「少数言語の保存と再生における人間の介入に関する展望」で学位を取得しました。2004年から東京のソフィア大学に勤務し、2007年から准教授、2012年から教授を務め、現在は外国語学部の学部長です。北海道大学(札幌)のスラヴ・ユーラシア研究センターで客員教授、ソルビアン研究所(バウツェン)、ヨーロッパ大学ヴィアドリーナ、ライプツィヒ大学で客員研究員として勤務。彼は、ポンテス・ゴリツィー・ズゴジェレツ・ゾルジェレツ・カレッジウムの研究員でした。2022年から日本スラヴ語文学研究会の理事兼事務局長を務めている。

Prof. Dr. Peter Lah (Rom)

Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Pontifical Gregorian University. Ph.D. in Communication Studies, Northwestern University, 2004. 1992–1995 Theology studies (Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule St. Georgen, Frankfurt am Main, Germany). Professor (professore ordinario) at the Pontifical Gregorian University where, since 2011, he has been teaching courses in media studies and journalism at the Faculty of Social Sciences. In recent years his interest expanded to questions of media literacy and organizational communication. Between 2008 and 2011 he held teaching and administrative positions at the Faculty of Media in Ljubljana and at Faculty of applied social sciences in Nova Gorica, Slovenia. From 2004 to 2007 he was assistant professor at Saint Louis University, Missouri. 2006–2008 and 2012 Chair of the expert commission on pluralism in the media (Ministry of culture, Republic of Slovenia). Peter Lah is member of the Society of Jesus. Having completed the novitiate in 1988, he was ordained priest in 1995. Recent publications: Lah, Peter (2022): *Social media and communication for peace*. In: Turco, Danilo (ed.), *Ethics of coexistence or ethics of conflict* (S. 47–70). G&B Press. Lah, Peter (ed.) (2021): *Navigating hyperspace. A comparative analysis of priests' use of Facebook*. Resource Publications. Lah, Peter (2020): *The scandal of secrecy*. *Gregorianum* 101(2): 405–425..

Prof. Dr. Luca Lombardi (Rom)

Luca Lombardi is one of his country's most internationally renowned composers. After graduating from the German School in Rome with Dr. Joseph Vogt, he studied in Rome, Vienna, Cologne, Utrecht and Berlin (with B.A. Zimmermann, K. Stockhausen and P. Dessau, among others). He received his doctorate in German studies from the University of Rome. From 1973 to 1994, he was professor of composition at the conservatories in Pesaro and Milan, and has been a freelance composer ever since. He

has composed around 180 works, including five operas. A selection of his writings has been published under the title *Construction of Freedom* (Baden-Baden, 2006). He is a member of the Academy of Arts in Berlin and the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts (Munich). He lives alternately on Lake Albano (Rome) and in Tel Aviv. www.lucalombardi.net.

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Studied industrial engineering and economics. In 2006, he completed his studies with a thesis on *Energy efficiency comparison in the manufacturing industry for Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic*. In 2007, he obtained the qualification of European Energy Manager (IHK Bildungszentrum). He received his doctorate in 2011 with a thesis on *Decision-making model for value chain-oriented emission reduction in transition countries*. He worked at SEC Energie-Contracting, at Nokia in Espoo, Finland, and was a guest lecturer at the German-Kazakh University in Almaty. He joined the Junge Union in 1998 and has been politically active ever since, currently as deputy CDU district chairman in the district of Görlitz. From 2009 to 2022, he was a member of the Saxon State Parliament, chairman of the Committee for Science and Higher Education, and parliamentary secretary of the CDU parliamentary group. Since September 2022 he is *Landrat* of the shire county Görlitz.

Dr. Beate Sibylle Pfeil (Freiburg)

Lawyer and independent researcher specialising in issues relating to national minorities in Europe. She has made a name for herself in her field through numerous lectures and seminal publications. From 1996 to 1999, she was a research assistant and from 1999 to 2016 deputy scientific director of the South Tyrolean Institute for Ethnic Groups in Bolzano, Italy. From 2017 to 2023, she was a Council of Europe expert responsible for the so-called Language Charter, and from 2017 to 2022, she was vice-chair of the European Centre for Minority Issues in Flensburg. Co-founder and co-editor of the *European Journal for Minority Issues*.

Prof. Dr. Oliver Reisner, (Tbilissi)

Since 2016, Oliver Reisner has been Jean Monnet Professor of European and Caucasian Studies at Ilia State University, teaching bachelor's, master's and doctoral students with a focus on European Studies and Caucasian Studies. In 2000, he received his doctorate from Georg August University in Göttingen, Germany, in Eastern European History, Slavic Studies, and Medieval and Modern History. From 2000 to 2003, he developed and coordinated a master's programme in Central Asia/Caucasus at the Institute for Central Asian Studies at Humboldt University in Berlin. From 2003 to 2005, he worked as a programme manager for human rights at World Vision Georgia, implementing a project on civil integration in the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions of Georgia. From 2005 to 2015, he was a project manager at the EU Delegation to Georgia, responsible for democratisation, minorities, education, youth, labour and social affairs. Main research topics: 1) Nation building and identity in the Caucasus in the 19th and 20th centuries; 2) Memory studies on dealing with the Soviet past in Georgia and the Caucasus; 3) History of Caucasian studies as a regional science; and 4) The role of religion in Georgia.

Dr.-Ing. Matthias Rößler (Dresden)

President of the Saxon State Parliament from 2009 to 2024. Graduate engineer in mechanical engineering, 1979 to 1985 research assistant at the University of Transport with teaching assignment (doctorate in 1985), 1985 to 1990 development engineer and head of a research team at the Lokomotivbau – Elektronische Werke Hennigsdorf combine. 1989 to 1990 Member of the GDR Executive Committee of the 'Demokratischer Aufbruch' (Democratic Awakening), member of the Dresden District Round Table and the Coordination Committee for the Re-establishment of the Free State of Saxony. 1990–2024 Member of the state parliament. 1994 to 2002 Minister of State for Culture, 2002 to November 2004 Minister of State for Science and the Arts.

Dr. Róża Różańska (Krakau)

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Deputy Director of the Latvian National Museum of Art (since 2015). She studied “Culture and Management” at the University of Applied Sciences Zittau/Görlitz and the Institute of Cultural Infrastructure Saxony (1997-2002) as well as international cultural relations (1992-1996) and museology at the Latvian Academy of Culture (2006-2010). Chairwoman of the Expert Committee for Cultural Heritage and member of the Board of Trustees of the State Cultural Capital Foundation (2023–2025). Head of the Baltic Summer School of Museology (since 2022) and Chair of the Board of the Baltic Society for the Promotion of Museology (since 2013). Head of the Latvian Museum Council (2020–2022). Worked in several Latvian museums, in the State Authority on Museums (2002–2005), in the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia (2005–2011), including as Deputy State Secretary for Cultural Policy (2006–2007).

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Beat Siebenhaar is a linguist and dialectologist specialising in the study of linguistic varieties, language in the new media, prosody and dialectology. He studied German, philosophy and literary criticism at the University of Zurich from 1983 to 1991 and received his doctorate in German linguistics in 1999 with a dissertation entitled *Sprachvariation, Sprachwandel und Einstellung. Der Dialekt der Stadt Aarau in der Labilitätszone zwischen Zürcher und Berner Mundartraum*. He holds the Chair of German Linguistics (specialising in linguistics of varieties) at the University of Leipzig since 2008. Before that, he worked at the University of Zurich, the University of Bern and the University of Lausanne, among others. Siebenhaar has been Dean of the Faculty of Philology at the University of Leipzig since October 2016 till October 2025.

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Co-founder of the dissident Romanian-German writers' group 'Aktionsgruppe Banat' (1972-1975). Studied social sciences at the University of Mannheim, doctorate and habilitation at the University of the Federal Armed Forces in Hamburg. Lecturer at the University of the Federal Armed Forces in Hamburg, the University of Heidelberg, the University of Bonn and, until 2019, at the Saxon Police University (FH). Numerous academic and literary publications. Latest publications: *Ungewissheiten heimwärts fliehender Krähen* (Uncertainties of crows fleeing home): Recent poems, short prose and stories. Ludwigsburg 2025; *Ist die Europäische Union eine Wertegemeinschaft?* (Is the European Union a community of values?) In: *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie*, vol. 60, no. 1, Wiesbaden 2024.

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マティアス=テオドル・フォークト (ゲルリッツ)

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Dr. phil. Reiner Zimmermann (Dresden)

Former head of department, born in Neustadt/Orla, Thuringia. 1960–1965 Studied musicology, art history, and theater studies in Leipzig, editor at the music publishing house Editions Peters Leipzig/Dresden 1966–1985, music theater dramaturge at the Dresden Music Festival 1986–1991, 1991 to 2003 Head of the Art Department at the Saxon State Ministry of Science and the Arts. Publications include *Mehr Sein als Scheinen. Kulturpolitik in Sachsen nach 1990* (Donatus-Verlag, Niederjahna/Käbschütztal, 2022). Editor of musical works by Mendelssohn, Fauré, Debussy, Meyerbeer, and others; editor of the musical

writings of Camille Saint-Saens and the autobiography of Jules Massenet. Author of *Giacomo Meyerbeer - Biografie nach Dokumenten* (Giacomo Meyerbeer - Biography Based on Documents), 1991. Since 2009, editor-in-chief of the *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Dresden* (Monuments of Music in Dresden). See also *Viele Stimmen. Festschrift für Reiner Zimmermann zum 75. Geburtstag am 27. November 2016*, published by his friends.



TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT
IN DER KULTURHAUPTSTADT EUROPAS
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To listen, to reflect, to act Cultural Policy against the Grain

What are the premises of today's cultural policy? What insights can the past, present and theory offer for a contemporary cultural policy? How can art counteract agoraphobia, digital isolation and populist temptations? How can local authorities give their citizens ample space to develop civil society solidarity 'for the good of the city. For only when the city is well will you be well.' (It should be noted that Jeremiah 29:7 addresses immigrants who are to become citizens in foreign Babylon. Does our cultural policy also achieve this?) Are the arts not precisely the place where we can first listen to the other before we think together and then act together?

It is the historical achievement of Matthias Theodor Vogt, in the Free State of Saxony, which was re-established in 1990, to not only conceive the Saxon Cultural Area Act between 1991 and 1995 in a unique process of analysis and dialogue with the state, municipal and civil society levels, but also to have it enshrined in law and, last but not least, to have it implemented with little friction. It was therefore only natural that, on the thirtieth anniversary of the law's entry into force, the cultural areas of Saxony invited Matthias Theodor Vogt's colleagues and students to a conference entitled 'Kulturpolitik gegen den Strich' (Cultural Policy Against the Grain). We are hereby presenting the results of this conference in a commemorative publication to mark his 65th birthday.

What can art do better and differently than the digital world? What political, structural, economic, and, last but not least, intellectual conditions are necessary for art to develop its own life for the benefit of humanity? The cover image shows Haus Klingewalde, Görlitz, home of the Institute for Cultural Infrastructure Saxony since 1998. The watercolour by Lynne Beal, Cologne, relates to a conversation with Matthias Theodor Vogt about the vanishing point in Alberti: *De pictura* | *De pictura* (1435 – 1436). According to Corinna Laude, in the *centricus punctus* of Alberti's intromission theory, 'the orthogonal vanishing lines, the depth lines of the representation, converge "quasi persino in infinito" (as it were out into infinity), it lies in infinity – and thus, according to contemporary understanding, in God'. Which "vanishing points" does today's post-secular society use?

How can political science in Chemnitz interact in a multidisciplinary, cross-continental manner, always with reference to human beings themselves, with cultural studies in Tokyo and linguistics in Leipzig, with legal studies in Naples and social sciences in Rome? This volume shows that cultural policy studies require a fact-based holistic approach and that this may be achieved by working together.

Cultural Policy against the Grain (Volume 2, English version)

liber amicorum for Matthias Theodor Vogt in honor of
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