

Focusing Research

The Focus Areas at Freie Universität Berlin

Center for Area Studies (CAS)



Focus Area

Center for Area Studies



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Focus Areas of Freie Universität Berlin

One special feature of the excellent, broad-based research performed at Freie Universität Berlin is the university's targeted formation of research alliances called Focus Areas.

Within the Focus Areas, scholars and scientists from different subjects, disciplines, and institutions at Freie Universität work together over a longer period on complex research topics related to subjects of great importance to society.

The Focus Areas help to strengthen the areas of emphasis within the university's research activities and further develop these areas in cooperation with social, political, and economic players.

The Focus Areas can be arranged differently, depending on the specific disciplines, the issues currently being studied, and the individuals involved. The options range from platforms fostering the discussion of ideas, with multifaceted courses and events – such as the Transregional Studies Salon series within the Center for Area Studies (CAS), one of the Focus Areas – to compact alliances dedicated to studying one key area of focus in current research activities, such as nanotechnology in the NanoScale Focus Area.

Goals of the Focus Areas

- ▶ Taking up research trends and exploring them in interdisciplinary alliances
- ▶ Pooling skills and expertise to answer current research questions
- ▶ Initiation of new projects and solicitation of funding

The Concept of the Focus Areas is Based on Three Key Principles

- ▶ Excellence in research across disciplines – for society, the political sphere, and the economy
- ▶ Networking and cooperative arrangements – regional, national, and worldwide
- ▶ Support for junior scholars and scientists – well structured, thorough, and comprehensive



The Center for Area Studies (CAS) has been one of the Focus Areas of Freie Universität Berlin since 2006.

Photo: S. Coşkun

Structure and Organization of the Focus Areas

The Focus Areas are platforms for the development of research ideas growing out of interdisciplinary and interdepartmental initiatives. They represent the very highest level of quality in research activities – guaranteed through ongoing evaluations. Each Focus Area has a spokesperson, who represents that Focus Area within the university and beyond.

The three strategic centers of Freie Universität provide crucial support to the Focus Areas:

- ▶ **The Center for Cluster Development (CCD)** – which will continue as the Center for Research Strategy (CRS) within the scope of the university's new institutional strategy – supports and monitors the initial development, management, and evolution of the Focus Areas.
- ▶ **The Center for International Cooperation (CIC)** supports the Focus Areas with regard to worldwide cooperative arrangements and international visibility.
- ▶ **Dahlem Research School (DRS)** offers advice and assistance for the Focus Areas with regard to measures in support of junior researchers.



Understanding the globalized world: Jointly with experts from universities and research institutes worldwide, CAS scholars conduct research projects exploring salient questions in area studies research as well as their historical roots. Photo: M. Mazhar

The Henry Ford Building at Freie Universität, lecture hall building and conference center. Photo: B. Wannemacher



The Center for Area Studies: an Overview

The current debates surrounding the global economic crisis, recent developments in international politics, or the political importance of religions all show one thing: The modern world is characterized by processes of exchange and interdependencies between various regions, and it cannot be understood without knowledge of these connections. The Center for Area Studies at Freie Universität is dedicated to analyzing and comparing these interdependencies and their effects on politics, societies, the economy, and culture.



With a broad spectrum in terms of both content and methodology, CAS helps ensure a better understanding of today's post-globalization world. Research at CAS focuses not only on processes and phenomena in effect within certain regions, but also considers connections that transcend territorial, political, and cultural boundaries. Sweeping social and political changes are studied alongside historical background information, processes of interlinking, and the emergence of new political, cultural, or social spaces. North America, Latin America, Western and Eastern Europe, East Asia, the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa are regions on which Freie Universität has focused in both research and teaching activities ever since it was founded. Today, the university has broadened its focus to include other regions of the globe, such as North Africa.

Goals of CAS

- ▶ The Center for Area Studies links together the area-specific expertise in the humanities and social sciences that is present at Freie Universität.
- ▶ CAS serves as a platform for the development of research projects and research alliances to investigate transregional and transcultural processes and phenomena.
- ▶ CAS engages in promoting research trends within transregional and transcultural studies and sparking methodological and theoretical discussions within the broader field of area studies.
- ▶ CAS supports the development of national and international cooperative research initiatives in the field of area studies.
- ▶ CAS promotes the exchange of information and ideas in area studies at Freie Universität with non-university institutions from academia and the research sector, the political sphere, the business sector, and the broader areas of culture and civil society.

“The research and networking concept behind the Center for Area Studies transcends the division, often common at universities, between area studies and research oriented toward specific disciplines. Linking area studies and specific disciplines increases understanding of global challenges and fosters a new discourse on questions transcending individual regions.”

**Professor Verena Blechinger-Talcott,
Director of CAS**

Photo: private collection

Research at CAS

The academic task of the Center for Area Studies is to engage in interdisciplinary study of phenomena and processes that are specific to individual regions as well as those that transcend individual geographic regions and cultures. Scholars from the following departments at Freie Universität are involved in CAS: History and Cultural Studies, Political and Social Sciences, Philosophy and Humanities, Business and Economics, Earth Sciences, and Law. Together, they investigate three central thematic areas:

1. Dimensions of space
2. Transcultural and transregional interconnections
3. Region-specific dynamics

The entire field of area studies is marked by a particular type of tension, as many specific disciplines are based on theories originating in a Eurocentric perspective. Scholars of area studies question the universal applicability of these kinds of theoretical paradigms, holding them up against academic traditions and research debates from other regions. CAS promotes this kind of transcultural, interdisciplinary theoretical dialogue with the aim of allowing individual disciplines and area-specific studies to achieve mutual enrichment in terms of methodology.

Disciplines at CAS

The Center for Area Studies combines research in area studies with discipline-based scholarship relevant not just for understanding important processes and phenomena in the world's various regions, but also to leverage area-specific knowledge for developing disciplinary discourses.



Regions and areas are in flux as geopolitical models of the world change. Researchers at CAS study both current global players and early civilizations such as those found in Mesoamerica. Pictured here is an excavation of a pre-colonial site in Mexico.

Photo: M. Braig



At Freie Universität, researchers concerned with the world's regions and cultures stimulate new developments in research in both area studies and relevant disciplines through a global process of dialogue and cooperation. One area of research is the study of religious phenomena. This photo shows the annual ceremony of ritual purification (ghusl) in Sehwan sharif, in Pakistan's Sindh province.

Photo: O. Kasmani



CAS pools the specialized knowledge and regional expertise of scholars from more than 30 disciplines at Freie Universität. Photo: B. Wannenmacher

About 180 professors from more than 30 disciplines and numerous research alliances at Freie Universität do research within the Center for Area Studies. CAS links the study of specific regions – such as Japanese, French, or Islamic Studies – with various disciplines that consider these areas in light of their disciplines’ own specific backgrounds. The focus is on subjects within the social sciences and humanities: political science, sociology, social and cultural anthropology, history, art history, literature, and the study of religion. For example, experts on Latin America, sociologists, and political scientists are working together to study social inequalities in Brazil. Social and cultural anthropologists do field research, investigating local responses to epidemics and natural disasters, some of them with a global impact, and also work with experts from the field of international development aid as they do so.

CAS: Facts and Figures

Term of funding	October 1, 2009 – September 30, 2012
Funding volume under the university’s future concept	€ 310,000
Number of disciplines involved	more than 30
Scholars involved	about 180 professors
Doctoral candidates	about 200
Freie Universität departments involved	History and Cultural Studies, Political and Social Sciences, Philosophy and Humanities, Business and Economics, Earth Sciences, Law, and three central institutes: the Institute for East European Studies, the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, and the Institute for Latin American Studies
Regional cooperation partners	20 cooperative research initiatives
International cooperation partners	160 cooperative research initiatives

Junior Professor at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies

Dr. Michaela Hampf, Junior Professor

“The history of knowledge cannot be studied adequately within narrow disciplinary, cultural, or national boundaries. Scholars should demonstrate a solid foundation within a certain discipline and fully master their own craft, but at the same time should also broaden their view of the interconnectedness of the post-globalization world. Within CAS, thinking outside the box is a matter of course. Our dealings with each other work extremely well.”

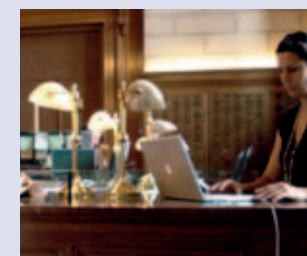
To Michaela Hampf, a professor of North American history, research on global topics is only meaningful if richly sourced research in individual disciplines and specific fields in area studies is combined. There are many areas of overlap, she says, so language barriers and specific disciplinary cultures need to be overcome. In this spirit, Hampf, a historian at the John F. Kennedy Institute, works frequently with colleagues from the Institute for Latin American Studies at Freie Universität.

Hampf studied history and English language and literature along with the history, language, literature, and culture of North America at the University of Hamburg. From 2000 to 2002, she was part of an interdisciplinary research project funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) at the University of Bremen on the armed forces of Russia, Germany, and the United States as sites of gender construction. During her doctoral studies at the University of Bern, which she completed in 2005, she investigated the role of female soldiers during World War II. Hampf worked in community radio station and, after stints teaching at the University of Cologne and the University of Bonn, came to Freie Universität in 2005 to take a position in the history department at the John F. Kennedy Institute. At the Institute, Hampf, has been a junior professor of North American history since 2007. Within DFG Research Unit 955, “Agents of Cultural Globalisation, 1860–1930,” she studied the “wiring of the world” from 2008 to 2011, taking the transatlantic telegraph cable as an example and investigating the origins and emergence of a global communication network. Her main areas of focus are the cultural and social history of North America, international history around the Atlantic rim, the history of the human body and gender, and media history of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Her goal: tracing the transnational history of “eugenics” and “racial hygiene” and the international connections and transfer processes involved in these concepts.



Junior Professor Michaela Hampf Photo: B. Wannenmacher



For her research on the telegraph connection between Europe and the United States and the origins and emergence of a global communications network, the historian and North America expert also did research in New York and Washington, D.C. – here, at the Library of Congress.

Photo: private collection

Current Fields of Research at CAS

The research conducted within CAS focuses on three thematic areas: dimensions of space, transcultural and transregional interconnections, and region-specific dynamics. This research benefits from the link between regional and disciplinary expertise present at CAS.

Dimensions of Space

Regions and spaces – hubs of economic activity, for instance, or centers of political power – are in flux, and geopolitical models of the world are changing. New, network-oriented and alternative explanatory approaches are becoming more important in researchers’ quest to understand the globalized world. Scholars at CAS contribute to these efforts with their research findings.

One area of focus in this field is research on “transnationalism”: In the fields of political science, sociology, social and cultural anthropology, and history, research questions today are considered less in the context of specific nation-states. Instead, researchers study how specific spaces emerge, beyond national borders, through political, religious, and cultural practices – such as in the Arab world or the Asia-Pacific region. Newly evolving spaces of this kind are a topic of particular focus in migration studies: As globalization progresses, entirely new forms of migration of labor, knowledge, and culture have emerged. Within the area studies pursued at CAS, researchers investigate the root causes of these developments along with their effects on the regions involved and on the migrants themselves. Sociologists and historians consider the significance of cultural differences or aspects of multicultural coexistence in urban centers.

Transcultural and Transregional Interconnections

This research area focuses on processes of exchange, interactions, and interdependencies between defined cultural regions. In this area, two main academic concepts shape research activities at CAS. First, the concept of transculturality: Cultures are no longer viewed as self-contained organic units, but as heterogeneous ensembles whose boundaries have historically been both variable and permeable. The concept of transculturality transcends essentialist views of culture.

The second main concept in this field, transregionality, is based on an open understanding of the term “region,” encompassing its various aspects as a social, political, and discursive construct: Spurred by glo-

balization, new forms of networking and interaction are emerging, forms that play out even beyond the geographic boundaries of particular regions.

Topics of interest in this research area include flows of knowledge, new ideas, and experience between different spatial units. It is important to know the communication mechanisms that set these processes in motion, ultimately bringing about change – in society and politics as well as in the arts or religion. How do ideas circulate, how do communities of knowledge form, and how do legal systems and concepts move from one country to another? How does communication take place between people and regions – is it organized along strict hierarchical lines, or freely accessible? These are just some of the questions in this thematic area that have attracted the attention of scholars at CAS.

Region-specific Dynamics

In addition to transcultural and transregional interconnections in a post-globalization world, another area of focus at the Center for Area Studies is the study of dynamics and phenomena specific to individual regions. With their solid regional, historical, cultural, and linguistic skills, the scholars involved in area studies at Freie Universität have made significant contributions to revisiting supposedly universalist theories, spreading local knowledge, and developing criticism of Eurocentric perspectives in recent years. Empirical findings from research in area studies thus also contribute to the further development and evolution of existing models and concepts in specific disciplines.

This research throws the specific contours of each region into sharper relief and forms the basis for investigation of transcultural and transregional processes: Combining region-specific findings makes it possible to study transregional phenomena and new dynamics emerging from globalization processes in the first place.

For example, a deep understanding of family and kin relationships and local mobility patterns is an important prerequisite in certain regions of Africa when it comes to understanding the motivations and dynamics of migration in a transnational context. A nuanced understanding of how social entrepreneurship and business leadership has changed in East Asia provides insights both for understanding capitalism in the 21st century and lessons relevant for policy makers, businesses, and civil society organizations concerned with economic processes in this dynamic region and worldwide.



As globalization progresses, new forms of migration of labor, knowledge, and culture have emerged. Topics of study at CAS include aspects of multicultural coexistence in cities. Shown here is a 19th-century European pharmacy in Mexico.

Photo: M. Braig



Changes in societies and cultures are also an area of focus. For example, scholars study how current developments in global politics are reflected locally – in the arts or in everyday items, such as in the case of this kanga, a traditional Tanzanian cloth and article of clothing. Photo: H. Dilger



Researchers gather empirical data in various regions of the world – here, during a project on informal markets in Japan. Photo: V. Blechinger-Talcott



The scholars’ expertise on specific areas, including their history, cultures, and languages, contributes to achieving a new level of understanding of the social dynamics in effect in various regions of the world.

Photo: F. Coşkun

A Look at the Center's Research Activities

The many research projects pursued at CAS are all marked by the Center's culture of interdisciplinary cooperation among scholars. For a closer look at one example of this approach in action and the opportunities arising from collaborative research, we turn to one project of the many under way within the Focus Area.

History of Globalization

We have been living in a globalized world for a long time now – but how did that happen? The most common root causes cited are technological progress, global economic factors, and political decisions. Until now, little research has been performed on the cultural and social history factors that played a role in establishing a global network of people. Since 2008, the German Research Foundation (DFG) Research Unit 955, "Agents of Cultural Globalisation," has been considering people, institutions, and societies that were of particular importance between 1890 and 1940 – one of the major phases in the process of globalization.

The goal of their efforts is to examine the "Westernization" of the world, not only from a European perspective, but also from the viewpoint of other regions of the world, such as Latin America, Africa, and Asia. This approach aims to reconstruct a kind of world map of cultural interconnections and develop a multifaceted, more complex view of global history.

What role did relationships between non-European regions and the industrialized "West" play around 1900? How significant was colonialism in terms of determining cultural interchange, and how is this connected with global economic interconnectivity? What regional factors and relationships remained important in the societies affected by these trends, despite Westernization, and why?

Scholars from eight disciplines – History, African Studies, South Asian Studies, Chinese Studies, Islamic Studies, Japanese Studies, Latin American Studies, and North American Studies – are pursuing these questions. The historians and area scholars work together on a total of eleven projects, seven of which are hosted by Freie Universität, two by Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, one by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich, and one by the University of Hamburg.

This group of researchers is studying how experts and scholars, travelers, teachers, and even translators have acted as intermediaries in the process of cultural globalization, spreading ideas, ways of thought, and concepts. Another topic of study is the influence of institutions –

missions and delegations, international conferences, publishers and universities – and of social movements.

One such effort is spearheaded by Professor Sebastian Conrad, a historian at the Friedrich Meinecke Institute at Freie Universität and the spokesman for the research unit, in his project "Translating Asia." The project looks at regional exchange in East Asia around 1900, which did not simply disappear as a result of contact with the West: "Certain regional contacts were even established for the first time in response to the processes involved in globalization, for instance in the context of Japanese imperialism or pan-Asian movements." Another professor, Stefan Rinke of the Institute for Latin American Studies at Freie Universität, is studying the beginnings and effects of aviation in Latin America as a transnational phenomenon. Andreas Eckert, a professor of African studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, is examining the importance of colonization in terms of globalization, taking dockworkers on the coast of Cameroon as an example.

The research unit works closely with experts in the specific regions of study. Its work is also supplemented by cooperative initiatives with the University of Edinburgh, the European University Institute, in Florence, and Hanyang University in Seoul.



Professor Sebastian Conrad, a historian at the Friedrich Meinecke Institute at Freie Universität, is the coordinator of German Research Foundation (DFG) Research Unit 955, "Agents of Cultural Globalisation." He studies the regional exchange of information and ideas in East Asia around 1900.

Photo: private collection



Technological advances, economic factors, and political decisions are considered driving factors behind globalization. However, to date, research on the role of cultural and social aspects in the process of globalization has been scanty. A research group has been studying these topics under the auspices of Freie Universität since 2008. Photo: perreira/www.flickr.com



**Junior Research Group Leader
at the Otto Suhr Institute of Political Science**

Dr. May-Britt U. Stumbaum

“This Focus Area is an academic think tank: We share our knowledge, form synergies, and develop new ideas. This gives rise to effective interdisciplinary research in the area studies. Our knowledge is our currency, and CAS is like a marketplace where we trade with other experts and present our own wares. In this way, we are constantly gaining new drive and impetus for our projects.”

During a school exchange in England, May-Britt Stumbaum, then 16, became aware that people are viewed differently abroad than at home. How do people from different regions and countries perceive their neighbors, and how do political strategies arise as a result? Questions like these led Stumbaum, a Berlin native, to study political science at the Otto Suhr Institute (OSI) at Freie Universität and the London School of Economics. She completed her doctorate at OSI in 2008, studying the European Union’s foreign and security policy toward China, while doing research at policy-oriented think tanks in Berlin, Brussels, Paris, Uppsala, and Stockholm. Stumbaum started out as an assistant at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Institute for Advanced Study) and the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB) and then went on to head the Asia department at Berlin Partner, a company that promotes business development in Berlin. After returning to the research sector, she was in charge of the European Foreign and Security Policy Forum at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), traveled to the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University as a Fritz Thyssen Fellow, and worked as a Senior Research Fellow at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

Since 2010, May-Britt Stumbaum has led the Junior Research Group “Asian Perceptions of the EU,” which is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), at OSI. The team is analysing why the European Union, which views itself as a “civilian power,” is perceived differently by elites in China and India than by Europeans themselves, and what influences and factors arise from this difference in perceptions.

Her goal: after having set up the research group, to return to research herself and pass along her knowledge to others.



Dr. May-Britt U. Stumbaum

left: With her junior research group at the Otto Suhr Institute, made up of international scholars, Dr. May-Britt Stumbaum studies how people in China or India perceive Europe. There are hardly any empirical data available on this topic so far. Stumbaum, a political scientist and expert on Asia, hopes to change that with her team and their Internet platform, The Networked Think Tank (www.asianperceptions.eu).

Photos: B. Wannemacher

Regional, National, and Global Networks

The CAS Focus Area is a platform for regional and international interdisciplinary collaborative research projects. It promotes cooperation among those working in area studies both within Freie Universität and throughout the Berlin-Brandenburg region and highlights their activities internationally.



The field of area studies is represented more densely in Berlin than anywhere else. As a result, the scholarly networks existing in this area are extensive and well developed: Researchers at CAS work with cooperation partners affiliated with the higher education sector and beyond – within the region, throughout Germany, and abroad. Freie Universität hosts eleven major research alliances and five graduate schools focusing on specific regions.

Current Research at a Location with a Long History

This Focus Area builds on a broad historic foundation: As long ago as the 19th century, scholars in Berlin were studying different regions around the world – including East Asia and the Islamic world. Area studies has been an important field of research at Freie Universität ever since the university was founded: a chair for Islamic studies was established in 1948, followed later on by professorships in Arabic Studies and Turkic Studies. At the same time, the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology was established, focusing on Africa, Oceania, and, later, South Asia. The Institute for East European Studies was founded in 1951, followed in 1963 by the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies and in 1970 by the Institute for Latin American Studies. Freie Universität has pursued institutional research in Chinese Studies since 1953, in Japanese Studies since 1956 and in Korean Studies since 2004. In 2006, the Graduate School for North American Studies was founded at the John F. Kennedy Institute. In 2007, the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies was opened. Both graduate schools were awarded distinction in the Excellence Initiative sponsored by the German government. In 2010, the Brazilian Research Center was initiated at the Institute for Latin American Studies.

CAS, founded in November 2006, is one of the Focus Areas of Freie Universität. The Center draws on the site's history, pooling the skill and expertise represented in the disciplines involved in CAS and leveraging the dense network of relevant institutions with area-specific expertise – a set of circumstances found nowhere else in Germany – to achieve excellence in area studies.

As part of its internationalization strategy Freie Universität established a network of international liaison offices beginning in 2005. The network supports the scholars at Freie Universität and their international partners at the local level.

Regional Cooperation Partners

Within the wider Berlin-Brandenburg region, which is home to a large number of research institutions, the scholars at CAS work with more than 20 partner institutions both within the higher education sector and outside it, pursuing groundbreaking research issues – such as within the Berlin-based Forum Transregionale Studien. This forum was founded in 2009, based on the recommendations of the German Council of Science and Humanities (Wissenschaftsrat) and the Berlin Academic Commission (Berliner Wissenschaftskommission, BWK). The academic network

- 1 American Academy in Berlin
- 2 Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities
- 3 German Archaeological Institute
- 4 German Council on Foreign Relations
- 5 German Association for Eastern European Studies
- 6 German Institute for Economic Research
- 7 German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Berlin Office
- 8 Haus der Kulturen der Welt
- 9 Hertie School of Governance
- 10 Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
- 11 Max Planck Institute for Human Development
- 12 Max Planck Institute for the History of Science
- 13 Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation
- 14 German Institute for International and Security Affairs
- 15 Technische Universität Berlin
- 16 University of Potsdam
- 17 Institute for Advanced Study Berlin
- 18 Social Science Research Center Berlin
- 19 Center for Literary and Cultural Research Berlin
- 20 Zentrum Moderner Orient

Cooperation Partners of CAS in the Berlin-Brandenburg region





The Dahlem Museums, known all over the world for their collections on non-European art and cultures, are located right near Freie Universität, making this a particularly advantageous location for students and researchers.

Photo: B. Wannenmacher

promotes research projects in Berlin that link together systematic and region-specific issues and pursue them from a transregional perspective. The forum is supported by the three universities in Berlin and by research institutions and alliances not affiliated with the universities.

Applications for funding for interdisciplinary research projects are submitted based on the alliances in place, making this Focus Area a strong starting point for soliciting funding.

Another core cooperation partner is the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation (Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz) which is one of the world's major cultural organizations and includes in its network the State Museums of Berlin, the State Library, the Secret State Archives Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, the Ibero-American Institute, and the State Institute for Music Research. The Dahlem museums which are part of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation are located right near Freie Universität, including the Ethnological Museum, the Museum of Asian Art, and the Museum of European Cultures. Their collections on non-European art and culture are among the most important in the world – giving this location a particular advantage in terms of fostering cooperation among art historians, social and cultural anthropologists, and scholars of area studies.

Cooperation Partners throughout Germany

The members of this Focus Area cooperate on the national level within Germany with various partners at institutions within and outside the higher education sector, including the Ibero-American Institute of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, in Berlin, the German Archaeological Institute (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut), in Cairo, the Kunsthistorisches Institut (Institute of Art History) of the Max Planck Society, in Florence, and the German Historical Institute, in Washington, D.C.

International Cooperation Partners

Research at CAS takes place in a number of different countries, in cooperation with local institutions. The Center's scholars work with more than 160 partner institutions all over the world – in Europe, for instance, with the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London, the University of Cambridge, Leiden University, and VU University Amsterdam.

In Eastern Europe, the Center maintains cooperative relationships with the European University at St. Petersburg and Saint Petersburg State University, the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), and the University of Warsaw.

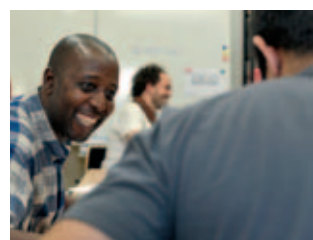
Among those cooperating with the Center in North America are Harvard University, Yale University, Stanford University and the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia at Vancouver as well as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York.

In Latin America, researchers at CAS work together with the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago, Chile, the University of São Paulo, and the Colegio de México in Mexico City. In Asia, the Center maintains cooperative relationships, among others, with the University of Tokyo, the National University of Singapore (NUS), a network of five research universities in Korea, Peking University, and Vietnam National University in Hanoi.

The institutions with which researchers from CAS partner in Australia include the University of New South Wales, Sydney. In Africa, CAS researchers work with South African universities in Cape Town, Pretoria, KwaZulu-Natal Province, and Stellenbosch.

These institutions represent only a brief snapshot of the multifaceted global network of CAS. The Focus Area also maintains an extensive exchange of students and researchers with its cooperation partners. The many international guests present at Freie Universität also allow the university to offer a richer variety of classes.

A network of international liaison offices supports researchers from CAS and its cooperation partners. Since 2005 the university has established seven offices worldwide, located in Beijing, Brussels, Cairo, Moscow, New Delhi, New York, and São Paulo. Photo: M. Mazhar



CAS works with more than 160 partner institutions worldwide. Each year, a large number of scholars working in area studies visit Freie Universität Berlin.

Photo: B. Wannenmacher

International Projects on Global Issues in Area Studies

The Center for Area Studies, founded in 2006, turns a spotlight on Freie Universität Berlin as a center of area studies, both based on specific disciplines and interlinked across disciplines.



At Freie Universität, researchers concerned with the world's regions and cultures stimulate new developments in research in both areas studies and relevant disciplines through a global process of dialogue and cooperation. Research is no longer conducted "on" regions but instead in close cooperation with scholars from top universities located in these regions. Research projects integrate specialists from relevant disciplines not only within the university but also throughout Europe and with partner universities in the Americas, Asia, Africa, the Arab world, and Australia. A few selected research projects illustrate this approach.

Network on Inequalities in Latin America

The *desigualdades* Research Network, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), is dedicated to research on social inequalities in Latin America. The project is headed by the Institute for Latin American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin and the Ibero-American Institute of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation.

International Research Training Group

The International Research Training Group "Between Spaces. Movements, Actors and Representations of Globalization" looks at movements of people between different regions of the world, and at the new spaces that these movements have created and continue to create, across both historical and current phases in the process of globalization. This research training group has been funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) since 2009 and is based at the Institute for Latin American Studies. It maintains cooperative relationships with the University of Potsdam, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and three academic institutions in Mexico City.

Collaborative Research Center on Governance

Within DFG-funded Collaborative Research Center 700, "Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood," political scientists, legal experts, historians, and political economists examine how, and under what conditions, governance takes place in regions where the state has no monopoly on the use of force. As researchers analyze current situations in Africa and Lat-

in America, possible connections with the colonial period and its effects are also considered. Further cooperation partners include the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), the Hertie School of Governance, the University of Potsdam, and the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB).

Graduate School of Islamic Cultures and Societies

The Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies is dedicated to the study of internal diversity, historical variability, and global interconnectedness of Islamic cultures and societies. Beyond the Middle East, the school's research also includes Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa as well as the Muslim diaspora in Europe and North America.

Graduate School on North American Societies

The doctoral program at the Graduate School of North American Studies is dedicated to interdisciplinary study of the social, economic, and cultural changes taking shape within North American societies at the dawn of the 21st century. It offers solid theoretical and methodological training in the areas of cultural studies and literature, history, political science, sociology, and economics.



Researchers at the Medical Anthropology Thematic Cluster at CAS study why concepts created in Europe to fight HIV/AIDS often fail to gain traction in Africa. Here, an information poster in Libreville, capital of the central African nation of Gabon.

Photo: H. Dilger



A newly established research center at Freie Universität is studying intellectual history in the Islamic world from new perspectives: Instead of approaching their subject from one of the classic disciplines, such as Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies, or Christian Orientalism, researchers at the Intellectual History in the Islamicate World Research Unit take an interdisciplinary approach. This photo shows a view of the Shrine of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari in Istanbul. Photo: F. Coşkun



CAS offers events in various formats on current topics and research findings in area studies, aimed at both audiences of specialists and the public at large.

Photo: CAS

Regional and International Events

Global issues are also the focus of the scholarly events organized by CAS in cooperation with regional institutions and with the involvement of scholars of international repute. The events range in format from those aimed at audiences of specialists to those intended for the broader public.

Transregional Studies Salon Series

In its Transregional Studies Salon Series, CAS offers a forum with well-known experts for interdisciplinary discussion of transregional and transcultural interconnections. The main focus is on current research findings and how area studies can contribute to solving global problems. Is it at all possible to grasp the importance of religious movements in Africa based on “Western” concepts of the public sphere and secularization? How are non-European cultures presented in European museums? Questions like these are discussed within the Transregional Studies Salon, alongside issues such as the economic, social, and environmental policy ramifications of the Fukushima nuclear disaster. The series is aimed at an audience of specialists from academia, the business sector, society at large, and the political sphere.

CAS Lecture Series

CAS regularly organizes public lecture series on current topics in area studies. These lectures introduce the broader audience at the university and in Berlin to relevant current research topics in the field of area studies and especially related to transregional phenomena. In 2011, for example, the topic was “Controversies surrounding Islam – perspectives in a critical approach to Islamic studies” (Islam kontrovers – Perspektiven einer kritischen Islamwissenschaft).

CAS Distinguished Speakers Series

In cooperation with other institutions, CAS invites distinguished international scholars to give lectures addressing cutting-edge research questions in area studies related to issues in political science, sociology, cultural studies, and medicine. In one lecture at Freie Universität, for example, Harvard professor Arthur Kleinman, a renowned psychiatrist, anthropologist, and one of the founders of the field of medical anthropology in the United States, examined the roles that social and cultural anthropology and cross-cultural psychiatry play in the study of migration and mental health.

right: Key topics of the research performed at CAS include mobility, economic development, and modernization processes in East Asia – such as here, in rural Japan – and other areas around the world.

Photo: V. Blechinger-Talcott





Postdoc at the Department of Art History

Dr. Melanie Klein

“I never wanted to sit in an ivory tower, so I have directed my efforts toward transparency in academia and research. CAS organizes public events that help us communicate about our areas of focus to outside audiences and expand our networks. We need to get to know the perspectives taken in other disciplines and other regions if we are to be able to flesh out accurate pictures of our topics, with as much detail as possible. I definitely want to include African experts in my projects. CAS helps me follow this approach.”

Melanie Klein studied art history and business administration at Heidelberg University, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and Freie Universität. At Christie’s Education, in London, she spent a year focusing on art history and the art trade. From 2003 to 2005, Klein was a member of the Research Training Group “Identity and Difference,” at the University of Trier, studying constructions of gender and interculturality. Klein has always pursued her many and varied interests both within the academic setting and beyond it, being involved in art and culture teaching activities and in public relations. She deepened her particular interest in the art and cultures of Africa by completing a doctoral program at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst (Academy of Visual Arts), in Leipzig, in 2008: She studied how artists expressed their resistance to the images of masculinity prescribed by the South African apartheid regime – and also spent a year doing research in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

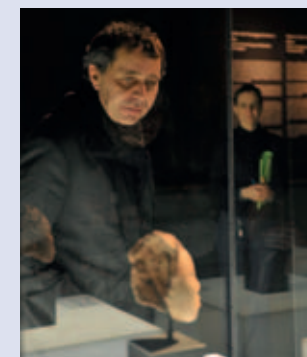
When the Department of Art History at Freie Universität established Germany’s first professorship in African art, in 2010, Klein applied right away. As part of the DFG Research Unit “Transkulturelle Verhandlungsräume von Kunst” (Transcultural Negotiation Spaces in Art), she studies the origin, emergence, and importance of notions of authenticity in modern and contemporary African art, set in the context of exchange with Europe and other regions of the world.

Her goal: to work together with partners from academia and the arts to develop new knowledge and make that knowledge accessible to the public at large.



Dr. Melanie Klein

left and below: Dr. Melanie Klein is fascinated by the diversity of the arts and cultures of Africa. Since 2010, she has been doing research on these topics within the Department of Art History at Freie Universität, which is home to Germany’s first chair in African art, held by Professor Tobias Wendl (below left with Klein). Both take advantage of their close proximity to the Ethnological Museum in Dahlem for their work, as here, during a seminar. Photos: B. Wannemacher



Support for Students and Early Career Researchers at CAS

The extensive cooperation between this Focus Area and the academic departments involved in the Center for Area Studies provides unparalleled opportunities for comprehensive training for early career scholars. CAS creates its own interdisciplinary study programs and is dedicated to bringing regional expertise, outstanding language skills, and theoretical and methodological knowledge together in the individual programs within the broader field of area studies. Within the Center for Area Studies, doctoral candidates are offered structured doctoral training programs with extensive supervision and support, and along with postdoctoral researchers, have the opportunity to participate in global interdisciplinary research networks.

Studying

Freie Universität offers a wide range of programs of study within the field of area studies, drawing a commensurate number of researchers who study various regions around the globe and eras in human history. Right from the start, students receive insight into current developments in area studies research and benefit, through courses and events offered at CAS, from numerous chances to study specific topics cross-regionally or to expand their knowledge of how other disciplines approach the region in which they are interested.

More than 30 Bachelor's Degree Programs with Specific Concentrations

The programs offered within the broader field of area studies include a large number of possible combinations, from Egyptology as a concentration within Studies in Ancient Civilisations or History and Cultures of the Middle East, or Japanese Studies within East Asian Studies, to Spanish Language and Literature with Latin American Studies or Social and Cultural Anthropology or African Art History.

More than 50 Modules in Combination Bachelor's Degree Programs

Byzantine Studies, Galician, Jewish History, Korean Studies, Modern Greek Language and Literature, Religion, and Languages and Literatures of the Christian Orient are just a few examples of the wealth of modules Freie Universität offers for students in combination bachelor's degree programs.

More than 30 Master's Degree Programs

The master's degree programs also cover a broad spectrum of research-based training, at the same time offering students an opportunity to develop advanced knowledge of specific interests early on – in fields such as Arabic Studies, Chinese Studies, Iranian Studies, Islamic Studies, North American Studies, East European Studies, Theatre Studies, or Turkic Studies, to name just a few examples.

Nine Continuing Education Master's Degree Programs

The subjects of these programs include children's rights around the world, intercultural learning, European and international commercial law, gender and diversity awareness, and Visual and Media Anthropology.

Seven Master's Degree Programs in Cooperation with Other Higher Education Institutions:

- ▶ Euromasters
- ▶ International Relations
- ▶ International Health
- ▶ Political Science – Affaires Internationales / Affaires Européennes
- ▶ Public Policy and Management
- ▶ Trans-Atlantic Masters
- ▶ Interdisciplinary Latin American Studies

Students are integrated into the networks of CAS right from the start. They benefit from the broad-based academic expertise represented here and receive insight into current research.



Various training programs in education (Lehramt) options are available in both bachelor's and master's degree programs.

Photo: B. Wannemacher



More than 30 bachelor's degree programs and an equal number of master's programs with specific regional focuses offer students a tremendous wealth of options. CAS also creates its own interdisciplinary study programs. Photo: B. Wannemacher

As of 2011, Freie Universität offers a four-year bachelor's degree program in Integrated Japanese Studies, supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The program includes a year studying at a partner university in Japan. Another four-year B.A. program in Korean Studies is currently in the preparatory stage.



Photo: B. Wannemacher



Dahlem Research School (DRS) launched a special funding program for international postdocs in 2011.

Photo: DRS

Doctoral Studies and Research Activities

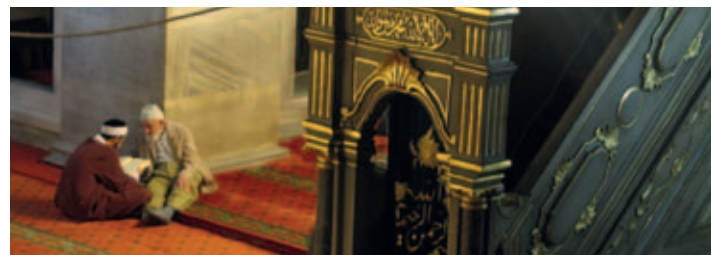
Doctoral Programs on the Regions of the World

Freie Universität offers several structured doctoral training programs with concentrations in area studies. They include two graduate schools dedicated to specific regions of the world, the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies, and the Graduate School of North American Studies, and the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies, which has a focus on world literatures. All three graduate schools have been commended for their excellence in the German government's Excellence Initiative.

Further structured doctoral programs in area studies are:

- ▶ Berlin Graduate School for Transnational Studies
- ▶ Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies
- ▶ Doctoral program in Latin American Studies from a Comparative, Transregional Perspective
- ▶ Doctoral program in History and Cultural Studies
- ▶ Caspian Region Environmental and Energy Studies
- ▶ Graduate School of Global Politics

These doctoral programs, which are offered variously in German, English, and/or Spanish, are conducted in cooperation with institutions and institutes that perform research in area studies at six academic departments. They are embedded into the structure of Dahlem Research School (DRS), with its training programs and additional course options. The programs also include the teaching of transferable skills, which includes knowledge transfer, scientific management, and foreign language skills. These programs offer their participating doctoral candidates in area studies, of which there are currently about 120, not only solid subject-specific knowledge based on current research, but also targeted support and intensive supervision. While completing the doctorate, the early career scholars involved also learn the skills they need for later positions of leadership in research, teaching, and relevant careers.



Focusing on Muslim cultures and societies: The Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies is one of the five graduate schools at Freie Universität that received distinction in 2007 in the Excellence Initiative jointly sponsored by the German federal and state governments. This photo shows worshippers at the Shrine of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari in Istanbul.

Photo: F. Coşkun

Research

The early career scholars involved in these programs benefit from the broad spectrum of research in area studies conducted at Freie Universität and beyond, throughout the wider Berlin-Brandenburg region, which is home to many academic and research institutions. They have access to outstanding libraries and archives and are integrated into national and international research programs. At the same time, there are many opportunities for them to participate in international academic networks.

Financing

To provide the best possible support to early career scholars in the field of area studies even after they have completed their doctoral programs, the Center for Area Studies is currently implementing a pilot project with three lines of funding. First, start-up financing and interim funding help support postdocs as they develop their own externally funded projects associated with Freie Universität. CAS also operates thematic workshops with prominent international experts, creating a stimulating environment in which selected junior scholars can make connections and develop further research projects. In addition, postdocs who have already applied for funding can receive interim grants and fellowships until the funding institution has decided on their projects.

Pointing the way forward: the POINT support program in the Focus Areas

In 2011, Dahlem Research School (DRS) launched a special aid program for postdocs: Postdoc International, or POINT. Each year, the program makes it possible for five outstanding researchers from other countries to spend a total of twelve months pursuing research projects in the Focus Areas at Freie Universität. Each POINT fellow's objective is to get his or her project ready to apply for aid and then to raise funding for the project.

The fellows are integrated into the research networks existing within the Focus Areas. They participate in an individualized weeklong orientation program and in the DRS qualification program and receive access to the mentoring and career development programs offered by DRS.

For further information, please contact fellowship-drs@fu-berlin.de



Excellent working conditions: With about 790,000 media units, the library at the John F. Kennedy Institute is Europe's largest library specializing in North American Studies.

Photo: B. Wannemacher



Doctoral Candidate at the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies (BGMCS)

Omar Kasmani

"I am impressed by the open-minded, cosmopolitan working atmosphere at the graduate school and within CAS as a whole. I feel very welcome here. I can do my research independently, with excellent support in the form of various seminars and subject-specific support and supervision. Because interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and information is an inherent part of the structure here, we are constantly reminded of the importance of associated disciplines and the approaches they use, and we come to view our own topics from different perspectives as well. That has greatly enriched my research right from the start."

Omar Kasmani pursues his many different interests in several areas at once – as a social and cultural anthropologist and a creative artist. He studied architecture at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture (IVS), in Karachi, Pakistan, from 1997 to 2001 and worked as an architect from 2002 to 2006. During that period he also handled writing projects for film and theatre in Pakistan and worked part-time in radio and as a design instructor.

Kasmani is especially fascinated by the thematic connections between religion, Islam, and gender issues. He moved to the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations at Aga Khan University, in London, in 2006 and completed the master's degree program in Muslim Cultures there in 2009. Since 2010, he has been a doctoral candidate in the discipline of social and cultural anthropology, studying pilgrimages to a particular shrine in Pakistan, which is a ritual site for Hindus and Muslims alike in the South Asian context. Kasmani is investigating the shrine's significance to the faithful and is also studying the biographies and practices of fakirs – including not only men, but also women and trans* individuals.

His goals: to make a contribution to research in the social sciences on Pakistan, embark on an academic career, and teach at the university.



Omar Kasmani

Photo: B. Wannemacher

left and below: Omar Kasmani is fascinated by the thematic connections surrounding religion, Islam, and gender issues, which is the focus of his research on the Shahbāz Qalandar shrine, in the city of Sehwan Sharif, in southeastern Pakistan. Here, he is shown as he interviews a worshiper in his native language, Urdu. Later translates the texts into English.

Photos: M. Mazhar



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