

MATTHIAS LEANZA

University of Basel
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2025-present

SNSF Starting Grant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Basel

2017-2024

Senior Researcher, Department of Sociology, University of Basel

2016-2017

Research Associate, Department of Sociology, University of Basel

2011-2016

Research Associate, Department of Sociology, University of Freiburg

2009-2011

Research Associate, Department of Sociology, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg

EDUCATION

2025

Habilitation in Sociology, University of Basel

(granting eligibility for professorial appointments)

2016

PhD in Sociology (summa cum laude), University of Freiburg

2009

Diplom in Sociology, Bielefeld University

(equivalent to a combined B.A./M.A.)

2010-2011

Certificate in Higher Education Teaching, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg

2006-2007

Visiting Student, University of Bologna

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

Leanza, Matthias. 2026. *A Nation Forged by Empire: The Hidden Legacy of German Colonialism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 350 pp. Forthcoming.

Leanza, Matthias. 2017. *Die Zeit der Prävention: Eine Genealogie*. Weilerswist: Velbrück, 369 pp.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Leanza, Matthias. 2024. "The German Colonial Empire, Seen from Its End." *static* 3(1): 57–69.
- Leanza, Matthias. 2023. "The Imperial Origins of Nation-States: Revisiting Hannah Arendt's Genealogy of Totalitarianism." *Sociological Forum* 38(1): 144–68.
- Leanza, Matthias. 2023. "Nach der Dekolonisation: Imperien und Nationen jenseits der Inkompatibilitätsthese." *Leviathan* 51(1): 53–84.
- Leanza, Matthias, and Axel T. Paul. 2021. "Kolonialismus und globale Moderne: Jenseits der Vereinfachungen." *Soziologie* 50(2): 150–65.
- Leanza, Matthias. 2020. "Colonial Trajectories: On the Evolution of the German Protectorate of Southwest Africa." *Comparativ* 30(3/4): 372–86.
- Paul, Axel T., and Matthias Leanza. 2020. "Comparing Colonialism: Beyond European Exceptionalism. Introduction." *Comparativ* 30(3/4): 223–35.

EDITED VOLUMES

- Paul, Axel T., and Matthias Leanza, eds. 2020. *Comparing Colonialism: Beyond European Exceptionalism*. Special issue, *Comparativ* 30(3/4).
- Bröckling, Ulrich, Christian Dries, Matthias Leanza, and Tobias Schlechtriemen, eds. 2015. *Das Andere der Ordnung: Theorien des Exzeptionellen*. Weilerswist: Velbrück.

SELECTED TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

2026

Invited discussant, book discussion of Sven Beckert's *Capitalism: A Global History* (with Sven Beckert, Jürgen Osterhammel, and Thomas Steiner), University of Freiburg (scheduled)

2024

"The German Colonial Empire, Seen from Its End," invited presentation, Social Science History Association Annual Meeting, Toronto

2023

"Beyond Empire and Nation-State: Hannah Arendt's Theory of the Council System," invited presentation, Social Science History Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.

2023

"Genealogie als Perspektive der Historischen Soziologie," invited lecture, University of Koblenz-Landau

2022

"Am Ende der europäischen Kolonialreiche: Zum Aufstieg des Nationalstaats im soziologischen Imaginären," plenary talk, Congress of the German Sociological Association, Bielefeld University

2022

"The Imperial Origins of Nation-States: Revisiting Hannah Arendt's Genealogy of Totalitarianism," invited talk, Social Theory Workshop, University of Michigan

2021

"Disentangling the German Imperial Nation, 1871–1919," conference presentation, University of Toulouse–Jean Jaurès

2018

“Imperial Nation-States: Sociological Reflections on the ‘First Age of Modernity’,” invited lecture, Université de Montréal

2018

“Geschichte und Gegenwart der Krankheitsprävention in Deutschland,” invited lecture, Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA), Cologne

2011

“Emotional Immunization: Emotion as Threat and Preventive Resource in the Theory of Salutogenesis,” invited presentation, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND AWARDS

2025-2029

SNSF Starting Grant (Principal Investigator), *The World of Modernization Theory: Sociology and the End of Empire*, University of Basel
(SNSF = Swiss National Science Foundation)

2025

Conference grants, SNSF; Freiwillige Akademische Gesellschaft Basel (Basel Academic Society), *Capitalist Dynamics*, University of Basel

2023-2024

Fellow, Käte Hamburger Research Center “global dis:connect,” Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

2019-2024

Fellow (non-resident), Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF), Bielefeld University

2022

Conference grant, Institute for World Society Studies, *Aufgaben historischer Soziologie*, Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF), Bielefeld University

2019

Conference grants, SNSF; Freiwillige Akademische Gesellschaft Basel (Basel Academic Society); Max Geldner Foundation, *Comparing Colonialism: Beyond European Exceptionalism*, University of Basel

2017

Erasmus Prize for the Liberal Arts and Sciences, University College Freiburg

2017

Publication grant, Federal Center for Health Education (BZgA), for *Die Zeit der Prävention*

2009

Award for the best theoretical diploma thesis in sociology, Bielefeld University

2006-2007

ERASMUS Scholarship, University of Bologna

VISITING APPOINTMENTS

2023

Visiting Scholar, Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF), Bielefeld University

2022

Visiting Scholar, Department of Sociology, University of Michigan

2021

Visiting Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Virginia

2014

Visiting Scholar, Leibniz Center for Literary and Cultural Research (ZfL), Berlin

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

2026

USA: Stanford University; University of California, Los Angeles; University of Colorado Boulder; University of Chicago; Library of Congress; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Harvard University; Columbia University

2025

USA: Columbia University; Binghamton University; Harvard University; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Yale University; Princeton University; Rockefeller Archive Center

2020

United Kingdom: The National Archives, Kew

2019

Tanzania: National Archives of Tanzania; affiliated with the University of Dar es Salaam

2019

Namibia: National Archives of Namibia

2018

Germany: Federal Archives, Berlin-Lichterfelde; Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF BASEL

Modernization Theory (Spring 2026; undergraduate)

Historical Sociology (Fall 2025; Spring 2026; graduate/doctoral colloquium)

Pierre Bourdieu: An Introduction (Fall 2025; undergraduate)

Theories of Social Differentiation (Spring 2025; undergraduate)

Historical Sociology: Themes and Theories (Spring 2025; undergraduate)

Max Weber: An Introduction (Spring 2023; undergraduate)

Reading Course: Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Simmel (Spring 2022; undergraduate)

Empires and Nations (Spring 2020, 2021; undergraduate/graduate)

Sociology of Colonialism (with Andreas Schöenberger) (Spring 2019; undergraduate/graduate)

Metamorphoses of the Modern State (Spring 2018; graduate)

Historical Research in the Social Sciences (with Alp Yenen) (Spring 2018; doctoral)

Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences (Fall 2017; undergraduate/graduate)
 Bruno Latour and Actor-Network Theory (Spring 2017; undergraduate)
 Introduction to Sociology (Fall 2016-2023; undergraduate)
 Micro-Sociology (Spring 2016; undergraduate)

UNIVERSITY OF FREIBURG

Micro-Sociology (Winter 2015–16; undergraduate)
 Prevention and Society (with Sabine Blum) (Spring 2015; undergraduate)
 Theories of Biopolitics: From Foucault to Esposito (Spring 2014; undergraduate)
 From Dyads to Collectives (Winter 2013-14, 2014-15; undergraduate)
 Reading Course: André Kieserling, *Kommunikation unter Anwesenden* (Spring 2013; undergraduate)
 Reading Course: Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme* (Spring 2012; undergraduate)
 Functional Differentiation and Social Inequality (Winter 2011-12, 2012-13; undergraduate)
 Space and Society (Spring 2011; undergraduate)

MARTIN LUTHER UNIVERSITY HALLE-WITTENBERG

Niklas Luhmann and Michel Foucault—Two “Modern Classics” (Spring 2010; undergraduate)
 Health, Prevention, Risk (Spring 2010; undergraduate)
 Exclusion and Society (Winter 2009-10; undergraduate)
 Social Differentiation (Winter 2009-10, 2010-11; undergraduate)
 Émile Durkheim: An Introduction (Spring 2009; undergraduate)
 Body and Society (Spring 2009; undergraduate)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

2025-present

Editorial Board Member, *Swiss Journal of Sociology*

2022-present

Member, Steering Committee, Working Group Historical Sociology, German Sociological Association

2017-2019

Member, Governing Board, Graduate School (G3S), University of Basel

2011-2016

ERASMUS Coordinator, Department of Sociology, University of Freiburg

PEER REVIEW

Behemoth: A Journal on Civilisation

Berghahn Books

History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences

Leviathan

NTM Journal of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine

Austrian Journal of Sociology

Palgrave Macmillan

Sociological Forum

Zeitschrift für Politische Theorie

CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

2026

Annual Meeting, Working Group Historical Sociology, German Historical Institute in Rome
(scheduled)

2025

Annual Meeting, Working Group Historical Sociology, University of Basel

2024

Annual Meeting, Working Group Historical Sociology, University of Heidelberg

2023

Annual Meeting, Working Group Historical Sociology, Humboldt University Berlin

2022

Conference, "Aufgaben historischer Soziologie," Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZiF),
Bielefeld University

2019

Conference, "Comparing Colonialism: Beyond European Exceptionalism," University of Basel

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

German Sociological Association (since 2018)

Founding Member, Working Group Historical Sociology, German Sociological Association (since
2022)

Social Science History Association (since 2021)

Swiss Sociological Association (since 2022)

LANGUAGES

German (native), English (near-native fluency), Italian (upper intermediate), French (basic), Latin
(reading knowledge)