

THE LECTURERS

ROWLAND ATKINSON is Research Chair in Inclusive Societies at the University of Sheffield. He is an urban sociologist whose work crosses the boundaries of urban and housing studies, sociology, geography, and criminology. The central focus of his research is on how social divisions find spatial expression in urban contexts. His most recent book, *Alpha City* (2020), looks at how the super-rich have co-opted the political and property machine of London.

VIRGINIA DOELLGAST is Professor of Comparative Employment Relations in the ILR School at Cornell University and a Senior Research Fellow at the Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut of the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung. She is currently a visiting researcher at Freie Universität Berlin, where she is studying the politics of technological change and “just transitions” in the ICT services, telecommunications, and auto industries.

LISA MARIA HERZOG is Professor of Political Philosophy and Director of the Centre for Philosophy, Politics, and Economics at the University of Groningen, Netherlands. She is currently working on the relation between markets and democracy from an epistemic perspective, and on workplace democracy and the future of work.

ARIS KOMPOROZOS-ATHANASIOU is Associate Professor of Sociology at the Social Research Institute, University College London, where he leads the Sociology & Social Theory Research Group. His current book project, tentatively titled *Real Fake*, is an intellectual history of distortion technologies and myth-making in finance capitalism.

The *MPIfG Lectures* are open to the public. In the summer term 2022, they are planned to take place on site. Please consult the MPIfG website www.mpifg.de for updates.

To attend, please email info@mpifg.de or call 0221 2767-0.

For more information on events or on recent publications, current research projects, and researchers at the MPIfG, please see our website www.mpifg.de.

For a general literature search you can use the catalog of the MPIfG library online at www.mpifg.de/bib.

Would you like to be kept up to date about new titles in our publication series or be invited to our public lectures? Sign up online at <https://www.mpifg.de/981396/form>.

Follow us on Twitter
[@MPIfG_Cologne](https://twitter.com/MPIfG_Cologne).

MPIfG

Max-Planck-Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung
Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies
Paulstr. 3 | 50676 Cologne | Germany
Tel. +49 221 2767-0
info@mpifg.de | www.mpifg.de

KVB stops:
Ulrepforte (15, 16),
Severinstraße (3, 4)
(about 7 minutes walk to
Paulstr./corner Ulrichgasse)



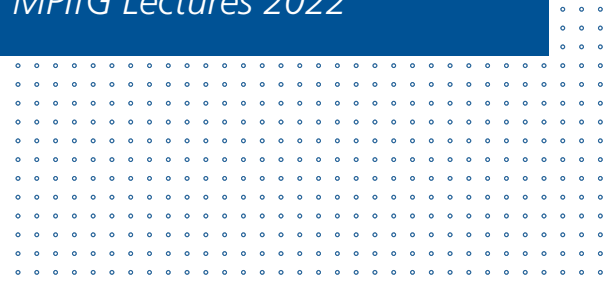
Öffentliche Vorträge MPIfG Lectures



Summer 2022

April 27 | May 18 | June 8 | June 29





WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2022 | 17:00 CEST

**Big Data and the Risk of Misguided
Responsibilization**

LISA MARIA HERZOG

The arrival of “big data” promises new degrees of precision in understanding human behavior. Could it also allow a finer line to be drawn between “choice” and “circumstances”? In a culture in which individual responsibility continues to be celebrated, this raises questions about new opportunities for institutional design with a stronger focus on individual responsibility. But what is it that can be drawn from big data? In her talk, Lisa Maria Herzog argues that we should not expect a “god’s eye view” on choice versus circumstances from big data. “Responsibility” is a social construct that depends on the logic of different social situations, as well as our epistemic access to certain counterfactuals (e.g., whether an agent “could have acted differently”). It is this epistemic dimension that changes with the arrival of big data. But while it might help overcome some epistemic barriers, it might also create new problems, e.g., because of polluted data. This is not just a theoretical problem; it is directly connected to the regulation of insurance. The new developments force us to directly confront questions about mutualist versus solidaristic forms of insurance, and more generally about how much weight to ascribe to individual responsibility, given all we know about unequal background circumstances.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2022 | 17:00 CEST

Exit, Voice, and Solidarity in the Digital Economy

VIRGINIA DOELLGAST

While national economies may rely on different growth models, they are all going through a similar “digital transformation.” Telecommunications and IT firms are at the forefront of these developments – responsible for building and servicing networks and data storage infrastructure; and developing and selling new AI- and cloud-based tools to businesses. This talk will look at how labor unions are influencing the strategies of telecom and IT firms in this growing industry, based on case studies in the US and Europe. Unions have shaped strategic choices through campaigns or actions in three areas: first, by influencing state policies in service market regulation, data protection, and infrastructure investments; second, by negotiating at firm and workplace level over adoption and use of new technologies; third, by establishing solidaristic bargaining structures that limit technologically enabled opportunities to segment work. All three can be seen as complementary in establishing the conditions for the social regulation of new digitally enabled markets – by limiting employer exit, supporting collective worker voice, and encouraging inclusive labor solidarity. This talk draws on current research projects and Virginia Doellgast’s forthcoming book, *Exit, Voice, and Solidarity: Contesting Precarity in the US and European Telecommunications Industry* (OUP 2022).

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2022 | 17:00 CEST

**Speculative Communities: Living with Uncertainty in
a Financialized World**

ARIS KOMPOROZOS-ATHANASIOU

From staggeringly expensive tech IPOs to big bets on the derivatives market, speculation has gripped the financial world. As sociologist Aris Komporozos-Athanasίου argues, however, speculative thinking has had the greater impact, shaping our larger social and political lives. As ordinary people make exceptional decisions, such as the American election of a populist demagogue or the British vote to leave the European Union, they are moving from time-honored and -tested practices of governance toward the speculative promise of a new, more uncertain future. As *Speculative Communities* shows, even our methods of building community have shifted to the speculative realm as social media platforms enable and amplify our volatile wagers.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2022 | 17:00 CEST

**New Gilded Age in a Broken World? The Super-Rich,
Urban Life, and City Politics**

ROWLAND ATKINSON

The extent of social inequalities was well known before the pandemic arrived. Poverty and staggering wealth had already reappeared at levels not seen since the gilded age of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This wealth, and those who wielded it, brought power to craft city settings according to the needs of the rich. Political actors, seeking capital investment and sometimes personal enrichment, declared the rich a mark of the city’s success. Today, as the pandemic eases, we might ask what a social politics of inequality will look like in an apparently “new” urban context that, in reality, contains the same public “bads” that existed before. While a “capture” of the city by the rich will continue, it may be that systemic constraints and public anger propel the taming of wealth. Will an egalitarian enlightenment grow, as some have suggested, or will pro-market orientations prevent a commitment to tackle excessive wealth and increase social investment?