

The Speakers

ZSÓFIA BARTA is Associate Professor in Political Economy and Public Policy in the Department of Political Science at the University at Albany. Her research interests focus on the politics of public debt, covering diverse aspects of public finances from societal conflicts surrounding austerity to the influence of the markets for government debt on policy choice. Her first book, *In the Red: The Politics of Public Debt Accumulation in Developed Countries* (University of Michigan Press, 2018), explored the variation in countries' ability to control their debt. The book received honorable mentions for the APSA's European Politics and Society Section Best Book Award, the ISA's International Political Economy Annual Best Book Award, and the SASE Alice Amsden Book Award. Her latest co-authored book, *Rating Politics: Sovereign Credit Ratings and Democratic Choice in Prosperous Developed Countries* (Oxford University Press, 2023), explores the power that credit rating agencies exercise over the political and policy choices of sovereign governments.

ANITA ENGELS is Professor of Sociology, especially Globalization, Environment, and Society, at the University of Hamburg. She spent her first eighteen years of sociology at the University of Bielefeld, interrupted by eighteen months as a postdoc at Stanford University in California. Since 2005, she has worked at the University of Hamburg and helped create a hub of social science research on climate change. She spent many years co-chairing and chairing the Cluster of Excellence Climate, Climatic Change, and Society (CLICCS). As a professor of sociology, she conducts research on company responses to the challenges of climate change, on local climate governance and civil engagement, and on financial flows.

OLIVER NACHTWEY is Professor of Sociology at the University of Basel and Director of the Forum Basiliense, the newly created platform for interdisciplinary dialogue at the University of Basel. His research interests include processes of social modernization, inequality, social conflicts, and digital capitalism.

LAURA SEELKOPF is Professor of International Comparative Public Policy at the Geschwister Scholl Institute of Political Science, LMU Munich. Her current research focuses on three main topics: the development of the modern tax state, support for green taxes, and gender discrimination in taxation.

The MPIfG Lectures are open to the public. In the winter term 2023/2024, they will take place on site. Please consult the MPIfG website www.mpifg.de for updates.

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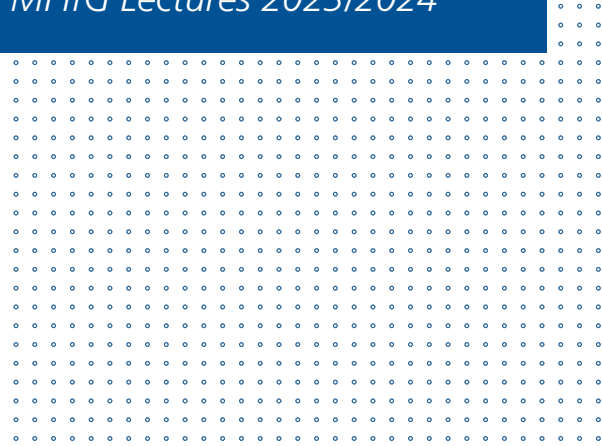
KVB stops:
Ulrepforte (15, 16),
Severinstraße (3, 4)
(about 7 minutes walk to
Paulstr./corner Ulrichgasse)



Öffentliche Vorträge MPIfG Lectures



Winter 2023/2024
Oct 23 | Nov 15 | Jan 10 | Jan 31



MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2023 | 16:00

**Perspektiven für eine erweiterte politische Ökonomie
des digitalen Kapitalismus**
OLIVER NACHTWEY

Technologieunternehmen sind häufig milliardenschwer, verdienen ihr Geld aber vielfach mit Werbung. Die Forschung über die Wertschöpfung datengetriebener Plattformunternehmen bezieht sich vielfach auf die Enteignung von Daten oder die Ausbeutung der Nutzer. Im Gegensatz zu dieser Position argumentiert Oliver Nachtwey, dass die Wertschöpfung auf digitalen Plattformen im Sinne anthropologischer Theorien des Gabentauschs verstanden werden muss. Darüber hinaus nimmt er die Rolle der ideologischen Legitimation und die ontologischen Konsequenzen der Datafizierung für den digitalen Kapitalismus in den Blick.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2023 | 16:00

The Politics of Climate Taxation
LAURA SEELKOPF

There is broad consensus about the need for an effective climate policy. Green taxation is seen as a key policy to combat climate change. Framing such a policy is difficult, however. Other crises are always more urgent; green taxation is costly and has stark redistributive implications. Also, the policy is boundary-spanning and requires simultaneous action by different governments and at different levels of governance. Based on a series of survey experiments across the EU and in Germany, Laura Seelkopf discusses the drivers of support for (or opposition to) climate taxation.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2024 | 16:00

**The Logic of Credit: How and Why Credit Rating
Agencies Exercise Power within Global Governance**
ZSÓFIA BARTA

Although credit rating agencies are best known for their disastrous role in recent financial crises, the function they fulfill in “normal times” is just as important and arguably much more pernicious. Sovereign ratings place significant and tendentious constraints on the policy choices of democratically elected governments. They penalize center-left governments, generous entitlement systems, heavy taxation, and institutional arrangements that require consensus-based decision-making. These penalties not only constrain democratic sovereignty but also potentially undermine long-term growth, social cohesion, and even countries’ ability to repay their debt. The lecture will explain how rating agencies award sovereign ratings; why they impose penalties on certain political and policy choices; why they are in a position to interfere with politics and policy in the first place; and why it is unlikely that these unelected, unappointed, unaccountable profit-seeking institutions would be stripped of their power, which rivals that of institutions at the peak of global governance, like the IMF or the World Bank.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2024 | 16:00

**Companies and Climate Activists in the Transformation
toward Deep Decarbonization**
ANITA ENGELS

There is a growing ecology of actors concerned with climate change and trying to promote a transformation toward the goal of a deep decarbonization of society. At the same time, global emissions curves are not pointing downwards and the world is still tightly locked into a fossil fuel-based economy. How do different actors position themselves vis-à-vis the transformation? How can their potential and actual contributions to deep decarbonization be assessed? This lecture starts with a broad assessment framework and then discusses in depth the contributions of companies and climate activists. These two groups are normally analyzed separately, with different methodological and theoretical tools. The lecture brings these different types of actor perspectives together and looks at them individually and in interaction with each other.