

Berenike Firestone

WZB Berlin Social Science Center
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Berlin Social Science Center (WZB)

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Transformations of Democracy Research Department 2024 –

EDUCATION

Columbia University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, New York, NY

Ph.D., Sociology 2024

- Dissertation: *The Social Reproduction of Support for the Far Right*
- Committee: Tom DiPrete (Chair), Gil Eyal, Maria Abascal, Robert Braun, Ruth Ditlmann

M.Phil., Sociology 2020

M.A., Sociology 2019

Georgetown University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Washington, DC

M.A., Conflict Resolution 2014

Certificate, Arab Studies 2014

Maastricht University, University College Maastricht, Maastricht, Netherlands

B.A. *summa cum laude*, Liberal Arts and Sciences 2011

University of California at Berkeley, College of Letters and Science, Berkeley, CA

Study Abroad, Peace and Conflict Studies 2010

AREAS OF INTEREST

Political sociology, comparative-historical sociology, global & transnational sociology, education, democracy, race/racism, nationalism, memory, multimethod research

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Firestone, Berenike, Ruth Ditlmann, and Oguzhan Turkoglu. 2025. "Confronting the past in a polarized present: holocaust representations motivate people for symbolic justice and against antisemitism." *Social Forces*. Online First, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soaf142>.

Ditlmann, Ruth, **Berenike Firestone**, and Oguzhan Turkoglu. 2025. "Participating in a digital history project mobilizes people for symbolic justice and better intergroup relations." *Psychological Science* 36(4), <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976251331040>.

- [Interview](#) in Deutschlandfunk (German national public radio) about the study

Turkoglu, Oguzhan, Ruth Ditzmann, and **Berenike Firestone**. 2023. “Commemorating Local Victims of Past Atrocities and Far-Right Support over Time”, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 120(28), <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2221158120>.

- Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP) [Policy Brief](#) about the article

Dembinski, Matthias, and **Berenike Schott**. 2014. “Regional security arrangements as a filter for norm diffusion: the African Union, the European Union and the responsibility to protect”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 27(2): 362-380, DOI: 10.1080/09557571.2013.868406

Dembinski, Matthias, and **Berenike Schott**. 2013. “Converging around global norms? Protection of civilians in African Union and European Union peacekeeping in Africa”, *African Security* 6(3-4): 276-296, DOI: 10.1080/19392206.2013.854085

REVISE & RESUBMIT

Firestone, Berenike. “Building the Big Tent: How the Local Political Incorporation of Displaced Germans into the Center-Right Curbed Far-Right Support in Post-WWII Germany” *Revise & Resubmit*

- Elise Boulding Graduate Student Paper Award, Honorable Mention, PWSC Section, ASA (2022)
- Reinhard Bendix Student Paper Award, Finalist, CHS Section, ASA (2024)
- Political Sociology Graduate Student Paper Award, Finalist, Political Sociology, ASA (2024)

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Turkoglu, Oguzhan, **Berenike Firestone**, Sabina Čehajić-Clancy, and Ruth Ditzmann. “Information alone might not be enough: The limited impact of exposure to factual information about historical atrocities.” (*under review*, [preprint](#))

Firestone, Berenike. “From the ‘German Fatherland’ to the ‘Christian Occident’: (Re-)Education, Waning Empires, and the Shadow of White Supremacist Ideology in Post-WWII Germany.”

Firestone, Berenike. “Raising Obedient Democrats: Right and Duty in Understandings of Democracy Among School Students in West Germany After Fascism.”

Firestone, Berenike, Ruth Ditzmann and Oguzhan Turkoglu. “‘It has been an awakening.’: How engagement with past atrocities informs people’s views on social and political issues today.”

Ditzmann, Ruth, Sabina Cehajic-Clancy, **Berenike Firestone** and Oguzhan Turkoglu. “The role of memory norms in predicting how people engage with difficult histories in five countries.”

Firestone, Berenike, Irene Pañeda-Fernández, and A.K.M. Skarpelis. “Representing the Nation: How Immigrant Descent, Appearance, and Accent Shape Symbolic Inclusion.”

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Book Reviews

Firestone, Berenike. 2025. Review of *Distancing the Past: Racism as History in South African Schools*, by Chana Teeger, *British Journal of Sociology*, DOI: 10.1111/1468-4446.13228.

Firestone, Berenike. 2020. Review of *Between Heimat and Hatred: Jews and the Right in Germany, 1871–1935*, by Philipp Nielsen, *Nationalities Papers* 1-2, <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2020.74>

Research Papers and Reports

Ditlmann, Ruth, and **Berenike Firestone.** 2024. “Werte in der Friedensforschung: Am Beispiel empirischer Forschung zu Holocaust-Erinnerung”, *Wissenschaft und Frieden*, 4/2024: 61-64, <https://wissenschaft-und-frieden.de/ausgabe/2024-4-eskalationen-im-nahen-osten/>

Beyerle, Shaaska, Daniel Bulman, Marco Larizza, and **Berenike Schott.** 2017. “Citizens as Drivers of Change: How citizens practice human rights to engage with the state and promote transparency and accountability”, *Working Paper*, Washington, DC: World Bank Group, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/27653>

Schott, Berenike. 2013. “An analysis of the arguments for the 2010 salary increase for Indian Members of Parliament”. In: *Lifting the Fog – Exercises in Analytical Discourse Analysis*, Marble Research Papers, Maastricht University, 5:23-44, <https://doi.org/10.26481/marble.2013.v5.170>

Dembinski, Matthias, Jörg Krempel, and **Berenike Schott.** 2012. “Towards effective security governance in Africa – African and European actors in peacekeeping and peace-building: Partners or competitors?” *PRIF Report* No. 115. Peace Research Institute Frankfurt. <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/32584>

Schott, Berenike. 2011. ““City on the Hill” or “Crusader Nation”: The influence of religion on American foreign policy through the period of ‘born-again’ presidency”, *The Maastricht Journal of Liberal Arts*, 3:3-15, <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/sites/default/files/mjla-2011-2012.pdf>

Policy Notes and Opinion Pieces (selected)

Firestone, Berenike. 2021. “LSBTIQ: Nach wie vor ein weiter Weg zur Gleichberechtigung”, *ad hoc international*, March 2021. [interview with trans rights advocate Julia Ehrt on the global fight for equality; in German]

Firestone, Berenike. 2021. “Mehr Mut!”, *ad hoc international*, January 2021. [analysis of original survey on sexism, racism, and discrimination in international affairs; in German]

Jespersen, Ann-Sophie, Marco Larizza, and **Berenike Schott.** 2019. “Fostering Impactful Citizen Engagement”, *Governance Note*, No 17, June 2019, Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

Schott, Berenike. 2016. “Money alone is not the answer – More sensible support for the democratic transition in Tunisia is possible”, *Internationale Politik*, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, Special Edition Mercator Kolleg.

Schott, Berenike. 2015. “After the Revolution: Why we need a better understanding of the role civil resistance movements play in political transitions”, *The Governance Post*, November 2015.

Schott, Berenike. 2014. “Moderation in the Context of Revolution? Thoughts on the Moderation Theory in Light of Post-Revolutionary Egypt”, In: Ethics Fellows for the Future 2014 Essay Collection, Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, pp. 38-41

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2025 **Seed Funding Grant**, WZB Berlin Social Science Center (15,000 EUR)

2022 **Elise Boulding Graduate Student Paper Award Honorable Mention**, Peace War and Social Conflict Section, ASA

- 2021 **Department Research Grant**, Columbia University, Department of Sociology
- 2021 **Small Research Grant**, Columbia University, GSC Workshop
- 2021 & 2023 **GSAS Matching Travel Fund**, Columbia University
- 2020 **Department Research Grant**, Columbia University, Department of Sociology
- 2019 **Tilly Award in Sociology** in recognition of outstanding teaching and service, Columbia University, Department of Sociology
- 2018 **Small Research Grant**, Columbia University, Department of Sociology
- 2018 **Spivack Travel Grant**, Columbia University, Department of Sociology
- 2018 **Institute on Qualitative and Multimethod Research**, Syracuse University (full travel and tuition stipend)
- 2017-2022 **Paul F. Lazarsfeld Fellowship**, Columbia University
- 2017 **President’s Award for Excellence**, The World Bank (for work on behalf of LGBTQ+ employees)
- 2014-2015 **Mercator Fellowship on International Affairs**, Mercator Foundation and German National Academic Foundation, Project Title: Supporting Democratic Change in a Region in Transition – Citizen Engagement and Civil Society in Development Interventions in North Africa
- 2013-2014 **Ethics Fellow for the Future**, Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, Theme: Democracy and its Challengers
- 2012-2014 **ERP Fellowship**, German National Academic Foundation and German Ministry of Economy (full academic scholarship)
- 2009-2012 **Full Academic Scholarship**, Ev. Studienwerk Villigst
- 2010-2011 & 2008-2009 **Top 3% Award**, Maastricht University (award and tuition reimbursement for top GPA)

PRESENTATIONS

- 2025 “Confronting the Past in a Polarized Present: Holocaust Representations Motivate People for Symbolic Justice and Against Antisemitism.” European Council on Sociological Research, Cologne, September
- 2025 “From the ‘German Fatherland’ to the ‘Christian Occident’: (Re-)Education, Waning Empires, and the Shadow of White Supremacist Ideology in Post-WWII Germany.” American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, August
- 2025 “Confronting the Past in a Polarized Present: Holocaust Representations Motivate People for Symbolic Justice and Against Antisemitism.” American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, August
- 2025 “Raising Obedient Democrats: Right and Duty in Understandings of Democracy Among School Students in West Germany After Fascism.” Kolloquium des Instituts für Politikwissenschaft, Uni Mainz, July
- 2025 “Raising Obedient Democrats: Right and Duty in Understandings of Democracy Among School Students in West Germany After Fascism.” WZB Evolution of Democratic Ideas Conference, June

- 2025 “Participating in a digital history project mobilizes people for symbolic justice and better intergroup relations today.” ASA PWSC Section Virtual Coffee Hour, April
- 2024 “Participating in a digital history project mobilizes people for symbolic justice and liberal democracy.” Social Science History Association Annual Conference, Toronto, November
- 2024 “Confronting the Past in a Polarized Present: The Effect of Holocaust Representations on Mobilization for Symbolic Justice and Against Antisemitism.” Social Science History Association Annual Conference, Toronto, November
- 2024 “Confronting the Past in a Polarized Present: The Effect of Holocaust Representations on Mobilization for Symbolic Justice and Against Antisemitism.” TD workshop, Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), Berlin, May
- 2024 “Confronting the Past in a Polarized Present: The Effect of Holocaust Representations on Mobilization for Symbolic Justice and Against Antisemitism.” Statistics Lab, Columbia University, New York City, May
- 2023 “From the “German Fatherland” to the “Christian Occident”: (Re-)Education and the Shadow of White Supremacist Ideology in Post-WWII Germany” Social Science History Association Annual Conference, Washington D.C., November
- 2023 “Does Participatory Memory Work about Past Injustice Mobilize Participants Against Prejudice and Injustice Today?” American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, August
- 2023 “Commemorating Local Victims of Past Atrocities, and Far-Right Support over Time.” General Meeting of the European Association of Social Psychology, Krakow, July
- 2022 “Does Participatory Memory Work about Past Injustice Mobilize Participants Against Prejudice and Injustice Today?” Experimental Design Workshop, Columbia University, October
- 2022 “Building the Big Tent: How Mainstream Conservative Politics in Post-WWII Germany Shaped Regional Trajectories in Far-Right Success.” Comparative Historical Sociology Mini-Conference, Los Angeles, August
- 2021 “Building the Big Tent: Christian Democrats and the Political Integration of the Right in Post-WWII Germany.” Social Science History Association Annual Conference, Philadelphia, November
- 2021 “Building the Big Tent: Christian Democrats and the Political Integration of the Right in Post-WWII Germany.” 8th Annual Graduate Workshop on Comparative Historical Research on Europe, June
- 2021 “Forced Migration and the Persistence of Far-Right Support in Germany from Weimar to Today.” 27th International Conference of Europeanists, June
- 2021 “Political Socialization during Historical Turning Points: Education, Democracy, and the “Fatherland” in Post-WWII Germany.” Race, Ethnicity, and Migration Workshop, Columbia University, April
- 2021 “Political Socialization during Historical Turning Points: Perceptions of the “German Fatherland” by School Students in Post-WWII Germany.” Problem-Solving Sociology Virtual Coffee Hour, Northwestern University, April
- 2020 “Forced Migration as a Driver of Spatial Heterogeneity in the Intergenerational Persistence of Far-Right Support: Evidence from Germany.” Conference on Right-Wing Studies, UC Berkeley Center for Right-Wing Studies, August
- 2020 “Spatial Heterogeneity in the Intergenerational Persistence of Political Behavior: The

- Case of Far-Right Support in Germany." Accepted for the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, August *canceled due to COVID-19
- 2020 "Spatial Heterogeneity in the Intergenerational Persistence of Far-Right Support in Germany: Migration and Displacement as Drivers of Change?" Race, Ethnicity, and Migration Workshop, Columbia University, New York City, May
- 2019 "Support for the Far Right: Why Local History Matters for Understanding a Global Phenomenon." Presented at the ISERP Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Seminar, Columbia University, New York City, December
- 2019 "Electoral Support for the Far Right in Germany: Spatio-Temporal Patterns from Weimar to Today." Presented at the Association for the Study of Nationalities World Convention, New York City, May
- 2018 "The Rise of the Far Right in Germany: Is Conservative Christian Thought a Piece of the Puzzle?" Presented at Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Baltimore, February
- 2017 "Citizens as Drivers of Change: Practicing Human Rights to Engage with the State and Promote Transparency and Accountability." World Bank Global Partnership for Social Accountability Forum 2017, Washington DC, October

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), Berlin, Germany

Research Fellow, June 2024 – ongoing

Affiliated with Transformations of Democracy research department (Director: Prof. Daniel Ziblatt)

Hertie School, Berlin, Germany

Research Associate, May 2021 – May 2024

Affiliated with research project on democracy, inclusion, and participatory memory work in pluralistic societies (PI: Prof. Ruth Dittmann)

Columbia University, New York City, NY

Research Assistant, Fall 2019 – Spring 2020

Supporting the research of Prof. Debbie Becher for the book project "A Fractured Nation"

Columbia University, New York City, NY

Research Assistant, Summer 2019

Data gathering and coding (using GIS) for project on regional histories and the European Social Survey under the leadership of Prof. Andreas Wimmer (resulting publication in *Sociological Science*: "Layered Legacies. How Multiple Histories Shaped the Attitudes of Contemporary Europeans.")

Phineo, Berlin, Germany

Contractor, Winter 2018/2019

Synthesized empirical literature on effect of civic engagement on social cohesion, wrote report, and presented recommendations for donors funding civil society organizations and initiatives

Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), Berlin, Germany

Visiting Researcher, July – Aug. 2018

Affiliated with research unit Institutions and Political Inequality (Director: Prof. Macartan Humphreys)

The World Bank, Washington, DC

Consultant / Operations Analyst, 2015 – 2017

Co-authored research report on citizen participation and human rights; co-authored note on fostering citizen participation in World Bank operations; co-authored case study on citizen service centers in Kenya

and note on design and implementation of citizen service centers; authored/co-authored six case notes on citizen engagement in projects in MENA; performed monitoring and evaluation of citizen engagement in World Bank projects

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (German Institute for International and Security Affairs),

Brussels, Belgium

Visiting Fellow, Oct. – Dec. 2014

Conducted research on the European Neighborhood Policy reform and EU democracy support in the MENA region through interviews with decision-makers in Brussels; participated in German Marshall Fund Mediterranean Strategy Group

Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany

Research Assistant / Intern, Jan. – July 2012

Co-authored report with research fellows on peacebuilding by UN, AU and EU; co-authored two journal articles with senior research fellow on regional security cultures and R2P; gathered, coded and catalogued data on decision-making modes in 120 IGOs; translated data from Spanish and French into English

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2021 Spring **MA Thesis Seminar II**, Columbia University, with Professor Denise Milstein; student evaluation mean: 4.6/5 and median: 5/5
- 2020 Fall **MA Thesis Seminar I**, Columbia University, with Professor Denise Milstein; student evaluation mean: 4.7/5 and median: 5/5
- 2020 Spring **Social Theory**, Columbia University, with Professor Debbie Becher; taught own section (27 students); no evaluations due to COVID-19
- 2019 Spring **Social Theory**, Columbia University, with Professor Debbie Becher; student evaluation mean: 4.2/5 and median: 4.5/5
- 2018 Fall **The Social World**, Columbia University, with Professor Teresa Sharpe, taught own section (30 students); student evaluation mean: 4.2/5 and median: 5/5

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (selected)

Oxfam, Tunis, Tunisia

Program and Advocacy Assistant, Feb. – May 2015

Mapped youth programs, analyzing needs and best practices; conducted outreach among civil society for advocacy on enabling environment (work language: French)

IREX (International Research and Exchanges Board), Monrovia, Liberia & Washington, DC

Intern, June – Dec. 2013

Co-facilitated three weeklong trainings on gender mainstreaming and conflict analysis in Liberia; designed and facilitated one-day training on conflict resolution with women grassroots activists; developed 20-page training manual for 4-day training on conflict resolution skills for community peacebuilding and reconciliation with Liberian civil society groups

Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Abuja, Nigeria

Intern, Oct. – Dec. 2011

Wrote and edited internal and external publications (English and French); wrote conference report about three-day international conference on democratizing security sector reform

LANGUAGES

- German (native)
- English (full professional proficiency)
- French (professional proficiency)
- Spanish (intermediate proficiency)
- Dutch, Finnish, Modern Standard Arabic, Portuguese (basic proficiency)

ACADEMIC SERVICE & AFFILIATIONS

2025	Search committee member for professorship, WZB Berlin Social Science Center
2025	Funding distribution committee member, WZB Berlin Social Science Center
2024-	Mentor for doctoral student, WZB Berlin Social Science Center
2024	Fellowship selection committee member, WZB Berlin Social Science Center
2022	Advising member, dissertation defense committee of Jonas Bergmann, Humboldt University, Berlin
2018-2019	Graduate Student Coordinator, Networks & Time Workshop, Columbia University
2018	Graduate Student Representative, Department of Sociology, Columbia University

Reviewer for: *American Journal of Sociology, European Sociological Review, International Journal of Comparative Sociology, Political Behavior, Social Forces, Social Problems*

Member of: American Sociological Association (2018-), Council for European Studies (2020-), Social Science History Association (2017-)