NEWSLETTER

Issue 4

Dear members, partners, and friends of the Research Training Group DYNAMICS,

This newsletter addresses anyone interested in the activities of the DFG-Research Training Group DYNAMICS. DYNAMICS is a joint endeavor of the Department of Social Sciences at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the Hertie School and funded by the German Research Foundation. From fall 2019, a total of 35 doctoral researchers will study the relationship between demo-graphic change, democratic processes, and public policy.

2022 was an exciting year as the first DFG-funded doctoral students successfully defended their dissertation and left DYNAMICS to continue their postdoctoral journey at other renowned research institutions. This year, it was also finally possible to conduct a DYNAMICS Retreat. About this and more, we will report in our newsletter. We hope you enjoy it.

Best regards

The DYNAMICS –Team

DFG-Research Training Group

DYNAMICS

"The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy"

Organisation:

DFG Research Training Group
DYNAMICS
Department of Social Sciences
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Juliette Corbi

Juliette is a PhD candidate at the Research Training Group "The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy" (DYNAMICS) and at the Hertie School of Governance.

She obtained her Bachelor Degree at the French-German Campus of Sciences Po Paris and a Master Degree from Sciences Po Paris and from the Freie Universität Berlin in Political Science. She has worked as a research assistant at TwinLife, a panel study focusing on the development of social inequalities.

Her research interests lie at the intersection of political behavior, right-wing extremism and gender. In her dissertation, she focuses on the gender gap in populist radical right voting. Her dissertation is supervised by Mark Kayser.

Stefania is a PhD candidate at the Research Training Group "The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy" (DYNAMICS). She obtained a bachelor's degree in Public Administration from Fundação Getulio Vargas and a Master of Public Policy from the Hertie School.

She previously worked as a Research Assistant at WZB Berlin Social Science Center Berlin and as a Research Associate at the Hertie School on the project "Family Behavior and Health."

Her research interests include families, fertility, inequalities and social policy. More specifically, she is interested in understanding how social inequalities affect family dynamics. Her dissertation is supervised by Michaela Kreyenfeld.

Stefania Molina

Elena is a PhD candidate at the Research Training Group "The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy" (DYNAMICS), jointly organized by the Hertie School and the Department of Social Sciences at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin since September 2022.

She obtained her BA in Political Science from Freie Universität Berlin, before pursuing her MA in Public Policy at the Paris Institute of Political Studies, commonly known as "Sciences Po Paris". Interested in interdisciplinary research, she completed studies abroad in Management at a Parisian business school (HEC Paris) as well as in International Relations at Tallinn University and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Boston.

Her current research interest lies in the field of comparative electoral behaviour and vote modelling. Specifically, she studies how the public support for post-material issues like climate protection develops in times in which material security is compromised, for instance due to an economic crisis or war. Her dissertation is supervised by Mark Kayser.

Elena Schulz-Ruhtenberg

Jan is a PhD candidate at the Research Training Group „The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy" (DYNAMICS).

Jan holds degrees in sociology and public policy from the University of Mannheim, the Hertie School and Bocconi University. During his studies he gained international work experience in the public and private sector and was a Student Research Assistant at the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES) and the WZB Berlin Social Science Center. Jan is currently a Consultant at the Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation of the OECD where he contributes to a review of Germany's innovation system and a project that explores natural language processing tools for innovation policy analysis.

His main interests include life course, social stratification, and comparative welfare state research. For his dissertation he plans to study the effects of pension and labour market policies on inequalities in retirement from a comparative perspective using sequence analysis and related quantitative methods. His dissertation is supervised by Johannes Giesecke.

Jan Einhoff

Ana Karalashvili

Ana is a PhD candidate at the Research Training Group "The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy" (DYNAMICS), jointly organised by the Hertie School and the Department of Social Sciences at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, starting September 2022.

Ana Karalashvili is interested in life-course inequalities and youth studies. She will examine the social inequality of transition to adulthood from a cross-country comparative perspective. Her research is motivated by the question of what the roles of social origins and individual socioeconomic achievements are in the stratification of school-to-work transitions and family formation in the context of different welfare policy regimes.

Prior to joining DYNAMICS, Ana completed her M.A. in Sociology at Free University Berlin and received a B.A. in Sociology from Tbilisi State University with an exchange semester spent at the University of Helsinki. Throughout the past years, Ana worked as a research assistant in different institutions in Germany and Georgia. Her dissertation is supervised by Johannes Giesecke.

Alejandro is a Doctoral Researcher of the Research Training Group "The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy" (DYNAMICS), jointly organized by the Hertie School and the department of Social Sciences at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. He holds a Bachelor in Sociology from the University of Chile and a Master of Arts in Sociology from the University from the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. In his master thesis, he explores specific aspects of class politics, particularly how economic development and inequality influence rates of social mobility, and thereby shape preferences for redistribution and welfare policies.

Until 2022, he served as Technical Coordinator of the Chilean Longitudinal Social Survey (ELSOC) at the Center for Social Conflict and Cohesion Studies (COES). Alejandro co-founded a social network analysis laboratory (RedesLab). His main interests are welfare states, social stratification, public opinion, social networks analysis, and quantitative methods. His dissertation is supervised by Steffen Mau.

Alejandro Plaza Reveco

Dissertation Project: Environmental Politics and Political behaviour in Established Democracies

by António Valentim

Climate change threatens ecosystems and livelihoods, and addressing it is inherently a political challenge. My dissertation studies political conflict on the environment in established democracies, with a focus on Green parties, and the relationship between the behaviour of voters and elites. I argue that because the environment is politicized, discussed and ultimately acted on at the national and subnational, these levels are essential to the study of environmental politics.

I first outline the dissertation's theoretical framework, which maps the different phases of the political conflict on the environment: from its politicization, to how political actors who focus on it emerge, to the challenges they face, to policy design. Chapters 2 to 5 provide empirical analyses of each of these, applying causal inference methods on observational and geospatial data.

Chapter 2 asks when protests are effective, and if environmental protests have any electoral consequences. I argue that protests are likely more effective when repeatedly exposing voters to their message, and find that exposure to Fridays for Future protests has an effect on voting behaviour and preferences, and that repeated exposure to protests increases these effects. This has important implications to our understanding of when (environmental) protests matter.

Chapter 3 – based on work with Tom Arend and Fabio Ellger – argues that new radical political actors can create electoral backlashes. We find that the success of the Green Parties led to a strong conservative backlash, driven by both the Greens' policy positions and behaviour.

Chapter 4 studies political elites' responsiveness to extreme weather events and their effects on public opinion. I argue that floods provide an electoral opportunity for Green parties: they put the environment on the agenda and create an incentive for protest vote.

I find that floods create an opportunity for Green parties but that the British Greens do not respond to floods because they have limited resources and/or are unaware of how floods influence voters. This suggests that elite responsiveness is not a given, as often assumed.

Chapter 5 – based on work with Heike Klüver and Cornelius Erfort – studies the electoral consequences of nuclear power plants. As energy transitions are central to decarbonisation plans, it is important to understand their electoral consequences. We find that the presence of nuclear power plants penalizes Green parties, largely due to voters' perceived economic gains from these plants – a key insight for how to design energy transition policies.

Overall, this dissertation contributes to a better understanding of environmental politics, and makes contributions to the broader study of comparative political behaviour and political elites.

Meet our new office team members!

Jennifer Häseling-Mayer is 41 years old and has four sweet children. She was born and raised in Berlin and completed her education and studies here. She recently joined the administrative team and works part-time as Charlotte Reinisch's secretary. Additionally, she works in the secretary's office of Prof. Heike Klüver at the Institute of Social Sciencees at Humboldt University. In her spare time, she is a hobby beekeeper. Together with her children, she takes care of six bee colonies and they harvest their own honey. She enjoys spending time with her children in the nature, cycling, and doing yoga.

Philipp obtained his bachelor's degree in political science and economics from the University of Mannheim, where he worked as a student assistant at the Chair of Political Science & Political Economy and spent one semester as an Erasmus exchange student at the University of Sheffield. Currently, he is pursuing his M.A. in Social Sciences at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Over the course of his B.A. studies, he developed an interest in the field of political sociology, exploring topics such as populism, the radical right, and democratic deconsolidation using quantitative methods. His bachelor's thesis investigated the relationship between authoritarian predispositions, issue politicization and voting behavior.

Appointments

Ana Karalashvili & **Emily Frank** were elected as Doctoral Student Representatives 2023.

Prof. Hanna Schwander will continue as Ombudsperson.

Juliette Corbi is Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Officer (2023-2024).

Our sincere thanks to Tabea Naujoks, Cornelius Erfort, Nicolai Berk, Korinna Lindemann, and Prof. Hanna Schwander for their commitment and support as ongoing Ombudsperson, former doctoral student representatives, and student representative in the Selection Panel.

by Nadirah Porter-Kasbati

It's mid-winter and a protest is making its way down the street, having already marched for hours. The buildings on either side of the street form a wind tunnel, scattering flyers and causing protesters to lose their signs and flags. More than a few people decide to call it quits. It's hard not to ask yourself at that point, will it really have an impact if I steel myself against the cold and keep marching?

This is precisely the question that Jóhanna Bjarnadóttir is pursuing in her research. Bjarnadóttir is a doctoral researcher in the RTG Dynamics research group at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the Hertie School, where she researches questions related to street protests, political parties, and voting behvavior. She wants to find out how responsive political parties are to protests and what that says about the health of a democracy.

Bjarnadóttir grew up in Iceland and moved to Berlin at 20 to study at HU Berlin, where she earned a BA and MA in social sciences, specializing in political science. Throughout secondary school and her undergraduate studies, she thoroughly enjoyed studying and learning new things. This sense of curiosity led her to pursue a PhD after her BA and MA. "I wasn't quite ready to stop studying," she says. She joined the RTG Dynamics in 2020.

Now, two years into her PhD, she still feels excited by her research and by the prospect of uncovering something new. Particularly rewarding is the research process itself — zeroing in on a question, reading a lot about one topic, grappling with data, and at the end of the day (or month) having a concrete result that she produced. "I still find it inherently interesting, even after three years of thinking about nothing else."

But what makes her work exciting can also make it challenging. "In a PhD, you're often trying to answer things which have not been answered before. I can't expect anybody really to have all the answers that I need." Indeed, her research area is one that until recently was rather neglected in political science.

"I thought, this cannot be," she says. "Parties are the main representative channels in democracy, and protests are such a legitimate form of political participation, but this link just wasn't there."

Inherent in these considerations is the assumption that parties respond to protests because of electoral concerns — they're worried that protesters might be voters or might persuade other voters and think that by addressing the issues being protested they can win voters. But, Bjarnadóttir noticed, this assumption hasn't really been tested. So in her next study, she's testing whether responsiveness to protests actually does affect voting behavior.

Ultimately, she's driven by a desire to provide information that can shape political participation and speak to the quality of our democracy. Especially if it turns out that street mobilization *doesn't* influence what happens in parliament. "Then there's a missing link in the democratic chain," she notes. "A vibrant civil society is a mark of a healthy democracy. But if that civil society doesn't have any effect, that adds a question mark to the health of that democracy." She sees her role as creating awareness of those kinds of gaps.

After her PhD, she hopes to continue this work, whether in academia or as a researcher at an NGO. Which title she ends up with isn't of great concern to her — what's important is that she can make an impact and continue to pursue the questions she finds interesting. "You never finish learning. I'm happy with what I've learned during my PhD. But there's so much that I don't know. It just opens up more doors with more questions."
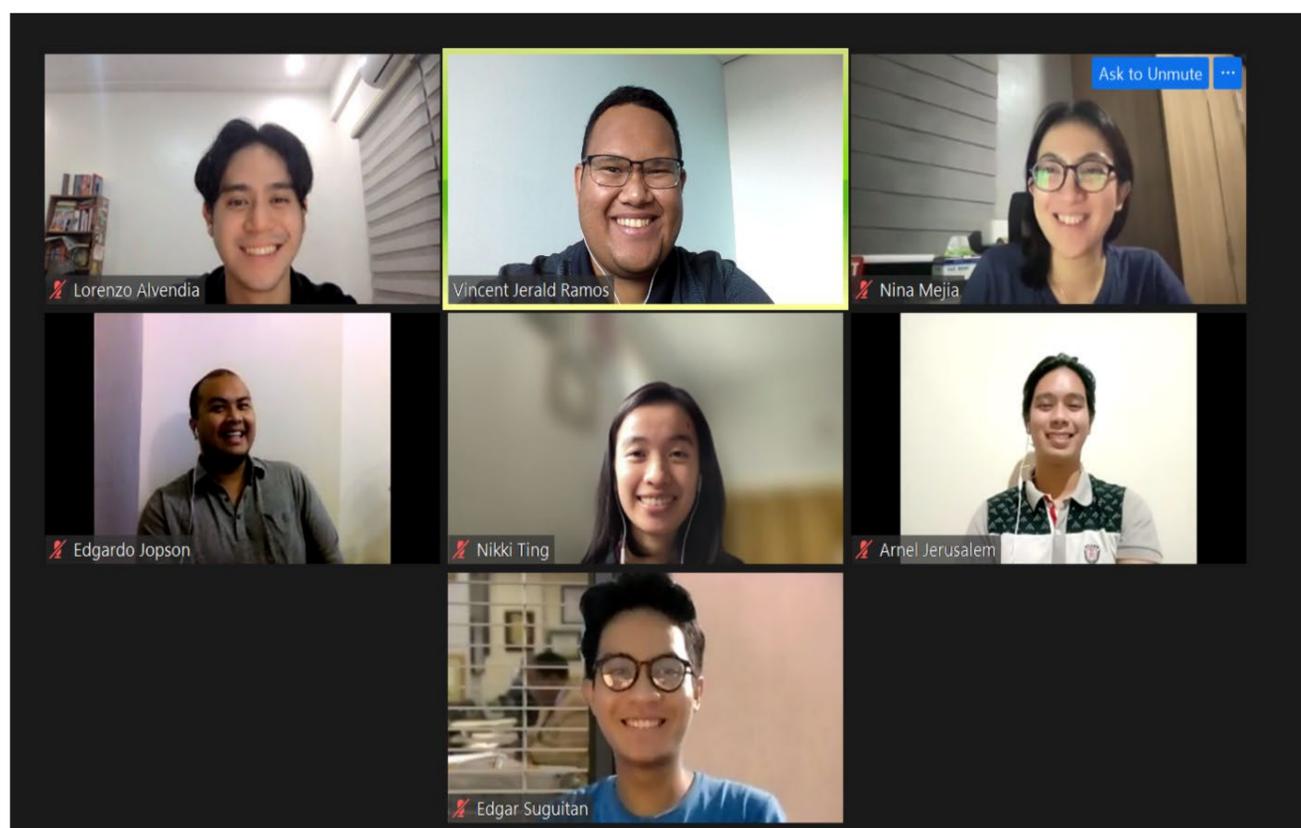
by Vincent Ramos

Workers acquire and exercise bargaining power in the labor market through unionization and collective bargaining. While a thick strand of the literature document "success stories" of unions in improving working conditions, I thought there was a gap in analyzing the determinants and effects of collective bargaining in many developing countries, especially in those where unionization rates are not particularly high. Hence, I reached out to the Philippines' Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in early 2021 (when I was still an MA student) to obtain copies of all collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) filed since 2016—a request that was graciously approved.

There were 1073 workplace CBAs filed between 2016 and 2021—80 percent of which we have already obtained from DOLE and preliminarily checked for completeness. We expect to receive the rest of the CBAs in early 2023. Given the size and scope of the project, I was aware that it would be impossible for me to work on it alone, especially while working on a slightly different (but still labor-related) dissertation topic. So along with former colleagues who expressed interest in this initiative, I applied for a research grant.

Last September 2022, the Philippine Competition Commission, the antitrust agency of the Philippines (with a mandate comparable to that of the US Federal Trade Commission and the Bundeskartellamt in Germany) awarded us a PHP 1,000,000 (~EUR 17,000) grant for our research agenda on Product Market Competition and Labor Market Power Exercise, with CBAs as our focal data source. We are broadly interested in the question: who gets "better deals" and why? Why are some unions able to bargain for as much as a EUR 2 daily wage increase while some CBAs merely restate national minimum wage levels? Why do some CBAs contain extensive family provisions while others do not? Our hypothesis is that workers' bargaining power is associated with the level of competition in product markets. In other words, the more concentrated a sector is, workplace unions in that sector are able to bargain less.

We aim to construct a CBA-level dataset that systematically reports a wide range of variables (~100) including firm and union-level information, wage benefits, non-wage benefits, and firm and union responsibilities, among others. To the best of our knowledge, this would be among the largest, most representative, and publicly available datasets of CBA provisions upon its completion, containing the population of all CBAs filed in a single country over a 6-year period.

Analyzing the Exercise of Workers' Bargaining Power

As a co-Principal Investigator of this project, I envision our analysis to be multi-disciplinary, accessible, and policy-relevant. This is reflected by the diversity of our research team, which would be remiss for me not to introduce. Edgardo Jopson is a co-Principal Investigator with a background in Economics and Data Analytics (Queen Mary U London) and Nina Mejia is a co-Principal Investigator with a background in Law (Ateneo de Manila). We also have two part-time research associates—Nikki Ting (Computational Social Science, U Chicago) and Lorenzo Alvendia (Sociology, U Philippines) and two full-time research assistants Edgar Suguitan and Arnel Jerusalem (both BA Economics-honors, U Philippines).

Indeed, being involved in a "side" research project while doing a PhD is not a walk in the park as it demands time and attention apart from what the "main" dissertation output require. However, I believe that it also develops many transferrable skills—forming and managing research teams, applying for grants, and pursuing project ideas that truly bridge disciplinary and methodological silos. I am optimistic that with proper time management, the generous guidance of my supervisors, and the dependable support of our research team, I could make the most out of this initiative while also timely delivering good-quality dissertation outputs.

If you're interested to learn more, use the forthcoming CBA dataset, or collaborate on any related ideas, please feel free to reach out!

DYNAMICS Retreat

by Nathalie Aerts

In October, the DYNAMICS team embarked on a journey to Brandenburg for a well-deserved and long-awaited Retreat. After more than two years of social distancing, online meetings and, working from home, both DYNAMICS doctoral researchers and professors were excited to be able to meet in person and work on interdisciplinary research projects. A short train ride brought the DYNAMICS team to a beautiful location in the heart of Brandenburg, called Projekthaus Drahnsdorf. The Projekthaus has had an eventful history. In the middle of the 19th century, Otto van Manteuffel commenced with his project "little castle" facing and old fieldstone church. Over the years, the estate has been used for a variety of purposes, during WOII as a military hospital, somewhat later it was a mayor's office and after that a school and kindergarten. As a result of both political reasons and shortage of materials, the beautiful brick façade got destroyed in the 1980's. Fortunately, the current owners have done a wonderful job in renovating the property to is original state and managed to restore the façade.

Nowadays, Projekthaus Drahnsdorf is an open and energetic place that encourages collaboration and community building, especially for research initiatives.

DYNAMICS Retreat

Of course, the Retreat would not have been complete without some fun activities too! On the first day, the team visited an Alpaca farm where they had a guided tour and, most importantly, took lots of photos of and with alpacas. Unfortunately, the alpacas' looks deceived the DYNAMICS team as they did not want to be petted despite their high cuddliness. In the evening, a very exciting, yet competitive, Mario Kart tournament was organized. The further the tournament got, the higher the tension rose… We congratulate the winners for their great Mario Kart skills. Those skills might be applicable for your dissertation someday! The next morning, all tensions were gone after a relaxing yoga session given by Emily.

On the way back to Berlin, the entire team felt revived and realized the importance of getting together in person. A big thank you to the organizers of the Retreat: Charlotte Reinisch, Nicolai Berk, Tabea Naujoks and Emily Frank!

All doctoral students and professors prepared a flash talk in which they had to present their research interests. To make the talks a bit more dynamic and fun, they also had to incorporate three random words in their presentation, such as "Fanta", "Sourdough" and "herumdoktern". These talks set the stage for interdisciplinary collaborations between doctoral students and professors. While interdisciplinary research ideas are incredibly challenging, our team has come up with very interesting interdisciplinary research ideas. Some of the ideas included, for example, the relationship between ageing, party competition and European growth regimes.

Scientific Output & Awards

Publications

Joshua Cova (2022)
'Reconsidering the drivers of country-specific recommendations: The Commission's ideological preferences on wage policies', European Union Politics, 23(4).
https://doi.org/10.1177%2F14651165221102696

Tabea Naujoks & Maik Hamjediers (2022)
Do You Think That I Should Care? Measuring Social Expectations About Cognitive Labor in Household Contexts.
https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/awyr7/

Anthea Alberto (2022)
Coalition Governments and Political Communication. Dissertation; HU edoc Server
https://doi.org/10.18452/24372

Emily Frank (2022)
Determinants of welfare benefit use of immigrant groups-longitudinal evidence from Germany. Frontiers in Sociology, 166.
https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2022.839352

Awards

Nicolai Berk was awarded the 2022 Elizabeth Meehan Prize for his paper "The Causal Effect of Media Frames on Issue Definitions."

Defenses & Placements

Anthea Alberto: 26.01.2022
Research Navigator at University of Basel

Fabio Ellger: 30.03.3022
Postdoctoral Research Fellow at WZB Berlin

Cristina Samper Meija: 26.08.2022
Scientific Collaborator at Potsdam University

António Valentim: 17.11.2022
Postdoctoral Researcher at Yale University

Joshua Cova: 14.12.2022
Postdoctoral Researcher at King's College London

Guest Researchers

May, 2022
Prof. Georg Vanberg, PhD, Duke University

May & June, 2022
Prof. Jae-Jae Spoon, PhD, University of Pittsburgh

July 2022 – July 2023
Prof. Felix Elwert, PhD, University of Winconsin-Madison

September, 2022
Prof. Dr. Gema García Albacete, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

November – December 2022
Prof. Dr. Ann-Zofie Duvander, Stockholm University

December 2022 – July 2023
Prof. Jonathan Homola, PhD, Rice University

December 2022 – July 2023
Prof. Michelle Torres, PhD, Rice University

Visiting Doctoral Students

September 2021 - April 2022
Jeanne Ganault, SciencePo Paris

April – May 2022 Queralt Tornafoch Quirveches, University of Southern Denmark

April – July 2022
Maria Francesca Morabito, University of Florence

September 2022 – February 2023
Claudia Brunori, EUI

September 2022 – February 2023
Alessandro Ferrara, EUI

September – October 2022
Anna Helgøy, University of Oslo

Lecture Series

January 17, 2022
DYNAMICS Lecture Series with **Prof. Brienna Perelli-Harris**, University of Southhampton

April 25, 2022
DYNAMICS Lecture Series with **Prof. Rahsaan Maxwell**, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

May 10, 2022
DYNAMICS Lecture Series with **Prof. Georg Vanberg**, Duke University

June 7,2022
DYNAMICS Lecture Series with **Prof. Jae Jae Spoon**, University of Pittsburgh

September 1, 2022
Kick-Off Lecture by **Prof. Felix Elwert**, University of Wisconsin-Madison

November 28,2022
DYNAMICS Lecture Series with **Prof. Ann-Zofie Duvander**, Stockholm University

Research Skills

May 2022
Workshop "Introduction to Computational Thinking in R" with Dr. Christopher Gandrud

July 2022
Graduate Workshop Oxford-Berlin "Political Behavior and Comparative Political Economy" with Prof. Tarik Abou-Chadi from Nuffield College, University of Oxford

November 2022
Workshop "DAGs: Causal Inference with Graphical Models" with Prof. Felix Elwert, University Wisconsin-Madison

Academic Career Support & Networking

June 2022
Individual Feedback Meetings with Prof. Jae-Jae Spoon, University of Pittsburgh

June 2022
DYNAMICS Summer Party

June 2022
Talk: "Life after PhD", with Dr. Guillem Vidal, European Commission

June 2022
Mentoring Talk "Academic Careers in Political Science and Sociology/Demography", with Prof. Hanna Schwander & Prof. Anette Fasang

September 2022
DYNAMICS Welcome Event for 4th Cohort

October 2022
DYNAMICS Retreat at Projekthaus Drahnsdorf

Women @ DYNAMICS

June 2022
Workshop **"Career Development for Female Doctoral Students"** with Dr. Anne Löchte

November 2022
Webinar on **"Overcoming Imposter Syndrome & Self-Doubt"** with Dr. Catherine Sorbara

December 2022
Career Talk with Prof. Ann-Zofie Duvander, Stockholm University