

# Doctoral Programme Newsletter

May 2020

Dear all,

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus we are all working from home, which works quite well for some of us while others are struggling with finding their routines. Many of you are worried about their progress, how their families are doing, and deal with the negative effects of isolation.

We advise you to regularly consult your supervisors, keep in touch with other researchers via Jour Fixes, RP and RT meetings in MS Teams, and exchange with the other doctoral students. I know that many of you are doing so already and that you try to support each other as best as possible, which is great!

We understand that many of you will be concerned about the impact that any disruption caused by the coronavirus crisis may have on your PhD. Please be reassured that we



want you to succeed as doctoral students and we will do everything we can to support you.

Take care and stay safe,

Maren

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## News

[Leonardo Bandarra](#) got interviewed by Pierre de Chabot for the French outlet [Gavroche](#) in April.

Several of our students such as [Daniel Geissel](#), [Swantje Schirmer](#), [Nils Lukacs](#) and [Clara Franco Yáñez](#) are currently teaching courses at different universities. For some of them, it is the first time they teach and although it is a big challenge to teach online in the current situation they really enjoy this experience.

[Tom Konzack](#) participated in a workshop on "Getting it done" offered by the Hamburg

Research Academy. The course is designed for PhD students in their final phase to help them with their project planning, setting of priorities, and organising their work in an efficient way. Tom highly recommends the workshop.

We are happy to announce that we have a new student assistant supporting the Doctoral Programme. [Ricarda Oldekop](#) joined in May and you can read more about her in the "Spotlight on ..." below. Welcome on board, Ricarda! We are looking forward to working with you.

## Spotlight on ... SCRUM working group

Hello everyone,

As the exchange on our work is a little scarcer than usually, we thought this was a good occasion to tell you a bit more about the SCRUM-project that some of you have maybe already heard about. Many of us researchers seem to suffer from similar problems: emotional struggles regarding the content of our work, relative professional isolation, a high volatility in productivity because of distrac-

tions, maintaining work routines and structure, etc. Thus, in the end of November, we started an experiment: working together in a SCRUM setting.

SCRUM is a project management technique that originated in IT development and resembles the opposite of classic top-down project management. The process is divided into so-called *sprints*, which can last between one and three weeks, for which the team defines so-called *deliverables* that are to be achieved by the end of the sprint. In the IT world, a deliverable could be a website that is functional in terms of navigation, but not yet finished regarding design and linkages to external websites. During the sprint, a set of meetings with strict time regimes (Sprint Planning, Daily, Sprint Review, and Sprint Retrospective) provides structure.



Of course, the original SCRUM technique needed to be adapted to our circumstances as we are not actually working on the same product, but our own dissertations and side-projects. Still, we report our goals and obstacles for the next three weeks in the *sprint planning* and get feedback from our peers regarding feasibility. The deliverables we would present range from a finalized methods chapter or the draft of a conference paper to the coding of 15 documents or the production of five types of descriptive statistics. In the *review*, we openly reflect on our achievements and “failures” of the past sprint, understanding the SCRUM setting as a safe space to address problems and that we would create a non-competitive environment of mutual support. The *retrospective* normally serves as a time frame where the team can address issues regarding collaboration problems. As this is not directly applicable to our situation, we use it for discussing our satisfaction with the process or getting external input. In the *Daily*, we would gather every working day at 9am for a maximum of 20 minutes basically mimicking the *sprint planning* but for a single day.

Using the SCRUM processes did a couple of things for us: Firstly, for some of us, the Daily itself already improved work routines by mildly forcing everyone to appear at a fixed time (which proved particularly valuable since

the start of corona related work from home). Secondly, the SCRUM process induces reflection upon work processes in the short and medium run and connects it to our pursued goals. Thus, we recognize inefficient time-consuming tasks before we get lost in them. Thirdly, we learned to improve our judgement of how long certain tasks actually take us, thereby improving our planning. Finally, since the corona outbreak and beginning of physical distancing we have discovered new great side-effects of our SCRUM as we still see each other daily using Microsoft Teams, mitigating the negative effects of isolation.

In a nutshell, we are very happy to have this tool and think that it helps us to work more closely together, learn from each other much more than previously, and to share in a more structured way our experiences with academic work. We are also looking forward to exchange more of our experiences with all of you. If you are interested, please approach us per e-mail, call us or use any other channel you like.

Yours,

The Scrummers

(Jan, Pedro, Clara, Viviana, Markus, Rebecca, Sabine, Désirée and Swantje)

## Spotlight on ... Ricarda Oldekop

Dear All,

my name is Ricarda and I am now working as a student assistant in the Doctoral Programme. I am in my third undergraduate year, studying Cultural Studies and Sustainability Studies at Leuphana University Lüneburg.



Since studying abroad in 2019 I noticed how much I love working in an international environment. I find the academic focal points at the GIGA institute extremely relevant and I hope that I can dive deeper into your research projects at some point. Due to the current situation we might not meet in person soon, but you can always contact me via email with any concerns.

I am looking forward to this new, exciting job!

## Jobs and Career Opportunities

### [Postdoctoral Position in Political Science](#)

University of Konstanz – Project: “Perceptions of Inequality in a Socialist Dictatorship”

Deadline: 20 May 2020

### [Lecturer/Associate Professor in International Relations](#)

Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

Deadline: 22 May 2020

### [Postdoc Researcher: The United Nations as a Dynamic Globalizing Force](#)

University of Leiden – Institute for History

Deadline: 31 May 2020

### [Teaching Assistant in Peace & Development Studies](#)

University of Limerick

Deadline: 3 June 2020

### [LSE Fellow in Gender, Peace and Security](#)

London School of Economics and Political Science – Department of Gender Studies

Deadline: 5 June 2020

### [Research Associate: Assessment of Climate Policies](#)

University of Cambridge – Department of Chemistry

Deadline 5 June 2020

### [Stipendiary Lecturer in Political Science](#)

University of Oxford - Christ Church

Deadline: 19 June 2020

### [Assistant Professorship of Political Science](#)

University of Southern Denmark – Research Program: “JUST SOCIETY”

Deadline: 1 August 2020

## Save the date

26 May 2020	<b>Summer Term Seminar:</b> Research Data Management - Introductory Course for Doctoral Students (Catharina Wasner)
27 May 2020	<b>Colloquium:</b> Rebecca Lohmann
2 June 2020	<b>Colloquium:</b> Rafael Castro
4 – 5 June 2020	<b>Summer Term Seminar:</b> Case Studies, Process Tracing, and Comparative Analysis (Eleanor Knott)
9 June 2020	<b>Soft Skills Seminar:</b> Project Management for Scientists (Katja Wolter)
10 June 2020	<b>DP Jour Fixe</b>
11 June 2020	<b>Global Approach to CAS Series I:</b> Economic Statecraft in the Middle East: Conceptualization and Case Studies (Eckart Woertz)
17 June 2020	<b>Global Approach to CAS Series II:</b> Choosing Case Studies in Comparative Research (Merike Blofield)