

## Projektgruppe "Internationales Studierendenpanel"

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## Call for Papers

International Student Panel

in preparation for the 51st Biennial Meeting of German Historians

**„Belief and Identity“, 20th September 2016 in Hamburg**

Scarcely any single phenomenon has influenced history as much as belief. The word ‘belief’ is not used here in the narrow context of religion, but is meant rather as a system of convictions which implicitly claim to represent cultural paradigms. However convictions are often ambivalent and, undoubtedly, open to outside influence. They are formed in, and continually influenced by, social experience.

The impact of the social environment on our thoughts and experiences fundamentally determines our perceptions and interpretations of the world in general. Our personal and social self-image can be defined as both an individual and a collective identity.

The question of the reciprocal influences of belief and identity is complemented by the question of their historical effectiveness. Belief and identity are generally expressed indirectly, in discourse and in actions which can themselves be adapted or changed while being carried out. Furthermore belief and identity interact in a complex way with social, political and economic structures and with culturally meaningful configurations such as nation or gender.

In the spirit of the motto of the 51st Biennial Meeting of German Historians 2016, the student panel “Belief and Identity” will examine the reciprocity between these two important terms, addressing itself primarily to students of history.

It is hoped that the international composition of the conference will allow a multifaceted study of “Belief and Identity”. The panel has been conceived in such a way as to cover different historical periods and to allow varied approaches to religious, social and cultural history as well as to historical actors, events and discourses. This does not exclude interdisciplinary ideas.

In this way diverse topics can be discussed, ranging from the individual need for belief to the collective consequences of belief (religion, state, nation, world views, conspiracy theories, identity, etc.)

Investigations into the reciprocal influence of belief and identity – including, of course, questions relating specifically to religious conflict – are of special interest to the panel.

Suggestions for papers:

- Belief and conflict: Belief as a justification for persecution, suppression or missionary work? What characterises those conflicts in which belief is fundamental to identity? What are the consequences of such conflicts for identity?
- Belief and culture: Plurality of belief? How does belief take root in different cultures? What happens to individual and collective identities when different cultures and beliefs meet and mix, e.g. in migration processes? How does the relationship between belief and identity manifest itself culturally, e.g. in ritual and narrative, or visually?
- Belief and knowledge: For or against each other? What is the relationship between religion and science for one's self-image? What role does belief play in the scientific view of the world?
- Other faiths or beliefs: What role does the belief of the 'other' play in the construction of one's own identity? Does belief function primarily through social demarcation ('the other') or is its function as a marker of identity sufficient unto itself?
- Belief and time: What role does belief play in the construction of history? What influence do history and ideas about the future play in the construction of identity?

Other themes are possible – and most welcome – as long as they fall within the scope of the central theme.

Possible themes should be sent to [studierendenpanel2016@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:studierendenpanel2016@uni-hamburg.de) by April 17 as an exposé (PDF file) of no more than 600 words. The exposés do not have to be 'finished products' (final research results, etc.). An outline of a thematic focus, of the topic to be studied, of the questions to be asked, or of the methods and sources to be used – together with a probable title – are quite sufficient. We also require a short description of the course of studies so far (in a separate PDF file).

The exposés will be read by a student selection board; candidates will be informed by May 6. The final 20-minute paper (PDF file) of no more than 2500 words should be submitted by July 3 to [studierendenpanel2016@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:studierendenpanel2016@uni-hamburg.de).

Any enquiries should be addressed to Hannah Rentschler, Franziska Zollweg, and Lasse Zeuch via [studierenpanel2016@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:studierenpanel2016@uni-hamburg.de).