

Dr Roman Birke

Curriculum Vitae

Assistant Professor in Modern European History
Dublin City University
School of History and Geography
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MAIN FIELDS OF RESEARCH

Transnational European History of the 19th and 20th Century, History of International Law and Human Rights, History of Population Control and Eugenics, History of Property Law and Colonialism, Digital Humanities

CURRENT POSITION

from 4/2024	Dublin City University, Ireland Assistant Professor in Modern European History (with tenure) School of History and Geography
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FORMER POSITIONS

4/2024–8/2025	University of Regensburg, Germany Assistant Professor (non-tenured) Department of Interdisciplinary and Multiscalar Area Studies (DIMAS)
9/2021–3/2024	Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena, Germany Postdoctoral Researcher Interdisciplinary Research Cluster <i>Structural Changes of Property</i>
10/2018–8/2021	Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena, Germany Research and Teaching Associate Modern History (Chair: Norbert Frei)
9/2017–8/2018	Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena, Germany Fritz Thyssen Foundation Research Fellow
9/2013–8/2017	University of Vienna, Austria Pre-Doctoral Lecturer at the Department of Contemporary History (Chair: Carola Sachse)

VISITING POSITIONS

5/2017–9/2017	Trinity College Dublin, Ireland Erasmus+, Department of History (Host: Carole Holohan)
10/2015–3/2016	Columbia University in the City of New York, USA Visiting Scholar, Department of History (Host: Volker Berghahn)

CAREER BREAKS

Paternity leave: 18 months between September 2019 and December 2022

ACADEMIC EDUCATION

- 2013–2018 **University of Vienna, Austria**
PhD in History (with distinction)
PhD Thesis: Population Control and Human Rights. The Humanitarian Struggle against Overpopulation (Examiners: Samuel Moyn (Yale University), Norbert Frei (Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena))
- 2007–2013 **University of Vienna, Austria**
Mag. phil. in History (equivalent to MA)
Thesis: „Voluntary Emasculation“ as an Instrument of Repression of Homosexual Men in National Socialism

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

Population Control as a Human Right. International Law and the Global Quest to Curb Overpopulation, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2025.

Eigentumspolitik des deutschen Kolonialismus (forthcoming February 2026) (transl.: Property Politics of German Colonialism)

Geburtenkontrolle als Menschenrecht. Die Diskussion um globale Überbevölkerung seit den 1940er Jahren, Göttingen: Wallstein 2020.

Reviews: [HSozKult](#), [Historische Zeitschrift](#), [Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung](#), [Sueddeutsche Zeitung](#), [Deutschlandfunk Kultur](#)

JOURNALS

“Kleine Geschichte der Reproduktionspolitik”. Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (APUZ) 43/2024, (October 2024), 11–16.
(transl.: *Short History of Reproductive Politics*)

“It is under the banner of the defence of human rights that we shall gather our crusade”. Human Rights and the Population Control Movement, 1950–1975, in: *Humanity Journal* 2/2019, 157–178.

Together with Barbara Kraml: Gleichzeitigkeit von Inklusion und Exklusion: Homosexualitäten zwischen Verfolgung und Normalisierung in Österreich 1971, in: *Zeitgeschichte* 2/2016, 85–100.
(transl.: *Simultaneity of Inclusion and Exclusion: Homosexualities between Prosecution and Normalization in Austria in 1971*).

Reviews: [Invertito. Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Homosexualitäten](#)

„...eine die Sicherheit der Allgemeinheit bezweckende Maßregel...”. Zwangskastrationen und "Freiwillige Entmannungen" im Nationalsozialismus, in: *Juridikum. Zeitschrift für Kritik, Recht, Gesellschaft* 1/2014, 19–28.
(transl.: „...a measure to guarantee public security...”. *Coercive Castrations and 'Voluntary Emasculations' under National Socialism*)

EDITED VOLUMES

Property Politics in the German Empire and the Weimar Republic (Campus, November 2025).

Together with Carola Sachse: Menschenrechte und Geschlecht im 20. Jahrhundert.
Historische Studien, Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018.
(*transl.: Gender and Human Rights in the 20th century. Historical Studies.*)

Reviews: [HSozKult](#), [der Freitag](#), [literaturkritik.de](#)

Together with Birgit Kolboske, Axel C. Hüntelmann, Ina Huemann, Susanne Heim, Regina Fritz: Wissen Macht Geschlecht. Ein ABC der transnationalen Zeitgeschichte, Max Planck Research Library, Proceedings 9, Berlin 2016.
(*transl.: Knowledge Power Gender. An ABC of transnational contemporary history.*)

BOOK CHAPTERS

Birth Control and Global Diplomacy, Cache: Special Issue on Diplomacy, Zürich:
Intercommverlag (forthcoming 2025).

Kastration homosexueller Männer im Nationalsozialismus, in: Brunner,
Andreas/Sulzenbacher Hannes (eds.): Homosexualität im Nationalsozialismus, Wien:
Mandelbaum 2023, 191–212. (*transl.: Castration of homosexual men during National
Socialism*)

Reproductive Technologies, Contraceptives and Human Rights in the 20th Century, in:
Möckel, Benjamin/Homberg, Michael (eds.): Human Rights and Technological Change,
Göttingen: Wallstein 2021, 129–150.

UN Resolution on Human Rights Aspects of Family Planning (1968), in: Stahl, Daniel (ed.):
Quellen zur Geschichte der Menschenrechte, Göttingen: Wallstein 2021, 151–172.

Together with Carola Sachse: Einleitung, in: Roman Birke/Carola Sachse (eds.),
Menschenrechte und Geschlecht im 20. Jahrhundert. Historische Studien, Göttingen:
Wallstein 2018, 7–19.
(*transl.: Introduction*)

Zwischen Aktivismus und Diplomatie. Eleanor Roosevelts Bedeutung für internationale
Menschenrechte, 1936–1962, in: Roman Birke/Carola Sachse (eds.), Menschenrechte
und Geschlecht im 20. Jahrhundert. Historische Studien, Göttingen: Wallstein 2018,
72–97.
(*transl.: Between activism and diplomacy. Eleanor Roosevelts contributions for an
international human rights regime, 1936–1962*)

Medizinische Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung der Homosexualität ‚Freiwillige
Entmannungen‘ homosexueller Männer im Nationalsozialismus, in: Marco Brenneisen
et al.: Stigmatisierung – Marginalisierung – Verfolgung. Beiträge des 19. Workshops
zur Geschichte und Gedächtnisgeschichte der nationalsozialistischen
Konzentrationslager, Berlin 2015, 37–56.
(*transl.: Medical Measures in the fight against Homosexuality. ‘Voluntary Emasculations’
of homosexual men under National Socialism*)

BLOG POSTS

'The Conservative Roots of Reproductive Rights'. HISTORY | SEXUALITY | LAW
Verschränkung von Recht und Sexualität im Historischen Kontext (blog), 2021.
<https://hsl.hypotheses.org/1580>.

„Geburtenkontrolle durch private Stiftungen. Realität oder Verschwörungstheorie?“
Geschichte Der Gegenwart (blog), 12 September 2020.
<https://geschichtedergegenwart.ch/geburtenkontrolle-durch-private-stiftungen-realitaet-oder-verschwörungstheorie/>.

'Die Bevölkerung in der Moderne ist immer ein Problem'. L.I.S.A. Wissenschaftsportal der Gerda Henkel Stiftung (blog), 20 October 2020. https://lisa.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/bevoelkerung_und_menschenrechte.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Dublin City University

2026 Summer term	Module HIS1038 Topics in European History (Dissertation module)
2025/26 Autumn term	Module HIS1069 Europe in the 19 th and 20 th centuries
2025/26 Autumn term	Module HIS1075 People and Politics: Case Studies in Modern European History (Focus on the history of prosecuting war crimes and genocide in the 19 th and 20 th centuries)

University of Regensburg

2025/26 Winter term	Module Global Warming in the Anthropocene: Human Populations and Climate Change in the 20th Century (to be held in English)
2025/26 Winter term	Module European Legal History: The European Convention on Human Rights (to be held in English)
2025/26 Winter term	Module Digital Humanities: Theories and Hands on Methods (to be held in English)
2025 Summer term	Module 80763rb Genocide and Crimes against Humanity: Prosecuting War Crimes from the 20th Century to the Present (held in English)
2025 Summer term	Module 80762rb History of German Colonialism (held in German)
2025 Summer term	Module 80741rb Digital Humanities: Theories and Hands-on Methods (held in English)

2024/25 Winter term	Module 80760rb European and US entanglements in the 20th century: International and transnational connections in history and the present (held in English)
2024/25 Winter term	Module 80761rb Eugenics, Reproductive Policies, and Medical Crimes during National Socialism (held in German)
2024/25 Winter term	Bi-weekly workshop Digital Humanities: Theoretical Considerations and Hands-on Methods (held in English)
2024 Summer term	Module 80740rb Human Rights from US Independence to Today (held in English)
2024 Summer term	Module 80730rb History of German Colonialism and current political controversies (held in German)
2024 Summer term	One day workshop Digital Humanities: Theoretical Considerations and Hands-on Methods (held in English)

Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena (all held in German)

2021 Summer term	Module 186977 Expropriations of Royal Property in the Weimar Republic
2020/21 Winter term	Module 180501 History of Conspiracy Theories since the French Revolution (Together with Maik Tändler)
2020/21 Winter term	Module 152924 History of Human Rights in the 20 th Century

Winter term 2019/2020 and summer term 2020: Parental leave

2019 Summer Term	Module 159850 Eugenics, Reproductive Policies, and Medical Crimes during National Socialism
2018 Winter Term	Module 152915 History of Human Rights in the 20 th Century
2018 Winter Term	Module 153809 History of the Cold War

University of Vienna (all held in German)

2016 Winter Term	Module 070005 Methods of Historical Research and Writing
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2015 Summer Term	Lecture Series 070055 Human Rights – Women's Rights? Human Rights and Gender from the Early Modern Period until Today (Together with Carola Sachse)
2014 Winter Term	Module 070049 Eugenics, international population control, reproductive rights: Regulating populations in the 20th century
2014 Summer Term	Module 070049 Contemporary History of the 20th century

PRIZES AND GRANTS

2025	Leibniz Science Campus Seed Funding This grant will support a research trip to the United States as part of my current book project.
2025	Vielberth Foundation Grant for the 2025 DIMAS conference which I co-organized.
2024	German Research Community (DFG) project submission together with Stefanie Middendorf, University of Jena I developed this funding application together with Stefanie Middendorf (University of Jena). I did not accept the position due to taking up a role at the University of Regensburg.
2023	British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship submission (supported by Celia Donert (Cambridge)) (‘Reserve Candidate’, rejected after 9 months of funding negotiations between the BA and the UK government)
2023	Wellcome Trust project submission (supported by Catherine Cox (UCD)) (rejected after three stages in the final interview round)
2021	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship submission (supported by Catherine Cox (UCD)) (rejected, Total Score: 86.4%)
2019	Grete-Mostny Prize Prize for excellent PhD-theses, University of Vienna
2017–2018	Fritz Thyssen Foundation Research fellowship
2017	Republic of Austria Theodor Körner Prize for Dissertations 2017
2017	Future Fund of the Republic of Austria Publication grant
2017	City of Vienna Publication grant
2017	Erasmus+ Fellowship
2015-2016	Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research, Economy Research Grant
2015	Austrian Student Union Research Grant

LECTURES – WORKSHOPS – CONFERENCES

- 05/2025 **Panel at the University of Regensburg with Helmut Aust**
Disruptions in the Global Order. Is there a Future Role for International Law?
- 11/2024 **Book presentation 'The Question of Unworthy Life: Eugenics and Germany's Twentieth Century'** (Princeton University Press, 2025) by Dagmar Herzog (CUNY) which I organized and chaired.
- 10/2024 **Galway History Research Seminar (in cooperation with the Centre for the Investigation of Transnational Encounters and the Irish Centre for Human Rights)**
Population Control to Protect Human Rights. Overpopulation discourse and collective rights in the 1960s/1970s.
- 11/2023 **Workshop (Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena)**
Property and Property Politics in the German Reich and the Weimar Republic (together with Norbert Frei)
- 9/2023 **Unlikely Heroes: Histories of Capitalism from Below (Birmingham)**
Native Land Owners and Chinese Labor in 'German Samoa'
- 4/2021 **Panel at University College Dublin, CHOMI Seminar Series**
Demographic Policies and Human Rights (Together with Alanna Armitage, UN Funds for Population Activities, Regional Director)
- 9/2019 **Human Rights and Technological Change: Conflicts and Convergences since the 1950s (Cologne)**
Individual freedom or responsibility to the community?
Human rights, contraceptive technologies, and fertility control in the 1960s and 1970s
- 9/2018 **Panel at the 52nd Meeting of German Historians 2018**
Panel Title: Human Rights and Gender in the 20th Century (I organized the panel)
- 9/2018 **1918-1938-2018: Dawn of an Authoritarian Century? International Conference (German Federal Agency for Civic Education and University of Vienna)**
Turbulent Transitions. Political and Ideological Reorientation in the United States after the End of the Cold War, 1989–1997
- 4/2018 **Austrian Day of Contemporary History 2018 (University of Vienna)**
Panel Title: Human Rights and Gender in the 20th Century (I organized the panel)
- 1/2018 **Panel at Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena**
The recent state of democracy
(Together with Ian Kershaw, Christiane Lemke, Piotr Buras, Dieter Grimm)
- 11/2017 **Economic and Social History of Ireland 2017 Conference, Dublin**
Globalizing the History of Irish Family Planning, 1968–1980

- 06/2017 **University of Münster Research Seminar**
Between Freedom and Responsibility. Discourse on Overpopulation and the Human Right to Family Planning in the United Nations, 1968–1974
- 10/2016 **Austrian Academy of Sciences**
Human Rights, Freedom, Well-Being: Framing the control of global overpopulation in humanitarian terms, 1950–1960
- 6/2016 **Austrian Day of Contemporary History 2016**
Development Economics, Women's Movement and the Cold War: Human Rights and Population Questions at the UN Symposium on Population and Human Rights, 1974
- 6/2016 **Conference organization (University of Vienna)**
45 years after the reform of the Austrian Criminal Code: (Dis-)Continuities in the prosecution of homosexuals in Austria, <http://homosexualitaeten.univie.ac.at/>
(Together with Elisa Heinrich, Johann Kirchknopf, and Barbara Kraml)
- 2-6/2015 **Lecture Series organization (University of Vienna)**
Gender and Human Rights from the Early Modern Period until the Present, <http://gender-humanrights.univie.ac.at>
(Together with Carola Sachse)
- 11/2014 **Austrian Day of Political Science 2014**
The Body in Post-Colonialism: International Population Policies and Birth Control in the 1960s and 1970s
- 10/2013 **19th Workshop on History and Memory of National Socialist Concentration Camps: „Stigmatisation – Marginalisation – Persecution“ (Kassel, Germany)**
Discourse on Homosexuality and Castration in National Socialism
- 03/2013 **5th Workshop of Women's and Gender Studies at the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies (University of Vienna)**
„Voluntary Emasculation“ of Homosexual Men in National Socialism

DIGITAL HUMANITIES/IT

I have a professional background in IT and use this knowledge for IT based text analysis in my research. Particularly, I am turning large amounts of unstructured text into structured datasets that can be analysed using software algorithms. I am mostly working in R and Python.