

Vaccines and (Dis-)trust in Medical Science in Times of Crisis

March 9, 2021 | 10:45 AM PST | 13:45 PM EST | 7:45 PM CET [REGISTER HERE](#)

Part 3 of Panel Series “Racism in History and Context”, organized by the German Historical Institute Washington with its Pacific Regional Office, the German Historical Association, and the Institute of European Studies at University of California, Berkeley

Panelists: Ute Frevert (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Samuel K. Roberts (Columbia University), Sarah B. Rodriguez (Northwestern University), Malte Thießen (LWL-Institut für westfälische Regionalgeschichte)

Moderators: Akasemi Newsome (University of California, Berkeley), Johannes Paulmann (Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz)

“Vaccines and (Dis-)trust in Medical Science in Times of Crisis” is the topic of the third panel in a series of discussions on “Racism in History and Context” organized by the German Historical Institute Washington, the German Historical Association (Verband der Historiker und Historikerinnen Deutschlands), and the Institute of European Studies at UC Berkeley. On March 9, Ute Frevert (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Samuel K. Roberts (Columbia University), Sarah B. Rodriguez (Northwestern University), and Malte Thießen (LWL-Institut für westfälische Regionalgeschichte) will discuss the deep historical roots of trust and distrust in medical and scientific authority.

Around the globe, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to disproportionately affect racialized populations. Structural disadvantages in access to health care and doubts about the integrity of medical scientists arguably have reduced the effectiveness of vaccines as a cure for the global crisis. This panel will use vaccines as a lens through which to investigate past experiences that inform today’s discourses and developments in Europe and in the U.S.

The panel will focus on dynamics that have influenced the historical relationship between medical science and public health, on the one hand, and society and racism, on the other. For example, what is the legacy of medical experimentation on racialized groups in both Europe and in the U.S.? What role has race played in the trust or distrust of medical experts and public health authorities?

The 90-minute panel discussion will be held in English via zoom; the audience will be able to submit questions via chat.

[Panelists](#)



Foto: Andreas Reeg

Ute Frevert is the managing director of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, where she has led the Research Center for the History of Emotions since 2008. Ute Frevert is an honorary professor at the Free University, a member of the governing bodies of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina and has been selected to be a corresponding fellow of the British Academy. In 2016, the President of the Federal Republic of Germany conferred upon Ute Frevert the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for the strong impact of her scientific work. Some of her best-known work has examined the history of women and gender relations in modern Germany, social and medical politics in the nineteenth century, military conscription and the politics of humiliation. Her latest book *Mächtige Gefühle: Von A wie Angst bis Z wie Zuneigung – Deutsche Geschichte seit 1900* was published in 2020.



Samuel Kelton Roberts, PhD is associate professor of history, sociomedical sciences, and African-American and African Diaspora Studies at Columbia University, where he also leads the research cluster for Historical Study of Race, Inequality, and Health. Roberts currently is writing a book tentatively titled *“To Enter a Society Which Doesn’t Want Them”: Race, Recovery, and America’s Misadventures in Drug Policy*. He also is the host of the public health and justice podcast, PDIS: People Doing Interesting Stuff and the co-host (with Mabel O. Wilson, PhD) of Black Lives In the Era of COVID 19.



Sarah B. Rodriguez is a medical historian who focuses on women’s reproductive health and the history of clinical care and clinical research. She is a senior lecturer in Global Health Studies, a lecturer in Medical Education, and senior faculty in Medical Humanities and Bioethics at Northwestern University. She published her second book, *The Love Surgeon: A Story of Trust, Harm, and the Limits of Medical Regulation*, in 2020 and her first book, *Female Circumcision and Clitoridectomy in the United States: A History of a Medical Treatment*, in 2014.



Malte Thießen is a historian of modern Europe with a particular interest in German regional and local history, cultural history of medicine, Nazism and its aftermath, memory studies, history of digitalization and history of British town twinning. In 2017, he joined the Westphalia-Lippe Regional Association (LWL – Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe) as director of the Institute for Regional History in Münster. His latest book *Immunisierte Gesellschaft. Impfen in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (2017) examines the impact of vaccination campaigns on the society in 19th and 20th century Germany.

Moderators

Akasemi Newsome is the associate director of the Institute of European Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Her research on the politics of labor, immigration, and comparative racialization addresses topics at the forefront of international and comparative political economy, including rights and global governance, institutions, capitalist development, and social movements. In addition to two co-edited special issues and published articles in the *Journal of European Integration*, *Comparative Labor Law and Policy Journal*, *Perspectives on Europe*, and *PS: Political Science and Politics*, her book manuscript *The Color of Solidarity* examines the conditions for labor union support of immigrant claim-making in Europe. She is also a co-editor (with Marianne Riddervold and Jarle Trondal) *The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises* (2021).

Johannes Paulmann is the director of the Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG) Mainz and a professor of Modern History at Johannes Gutenberg Universität-Mainz. He was distinguished visiting professor at the London School of Economics, St Antony's College Oxford and Sorbonne University Paris. His research interests cover the history of Europe, International History and German history in a transnational perspective. Recent publications: *Globale Vorherrschaft und Fortschrittsglaube. Europa 1850-1914* (2019); *Gendering Global Humanitarianism in the Twentieth Century* (2020; with E. Moeller and K. Stornig); *Humandifferenzierung. Disziplinäre Perspektiven und empirische Sondierungen* (2021; with D. Dizdar, S. Hirschauer and G. Schabacher).

About the organizers

The **German Historical Association (VHD)** is the representative organ of German historical scholarship in the public. The core task of the VHD is to organize the Biennial Convention of German Historians ("Historikertag") – one of the largest conferences in the humanities in Europe, most recently with more than 4,000 participants. As a lobby group, the VHD is committed to the interests of its members in a variety of ways and, as a professional association, is in constant dialogue with universities, university-related institutions, and society. The VHD has about 3,400 members. (www.historikerverband.de)

The **German Historical Institute Washington (GHI)** is a center for advanced historical research. Working with junior and senior scholars around the world, the GHI facilitates dialogue and scholarly collaboration across national and disciplinary boundaries. The GHI was established in 1987 as an independent non-profit foundation. Since 2002 it has been part of the Max Weber Foundation – International Humanities Institutes Abroad, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, which coordinates an international network of humanities institutes. In 2017, the GHI opened its Pacific Regional Office on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley, to foster cooperation with a myriad of world-class scholars and renowned research institutions on the West Coast, and to extend its public outreach effort there. (<https://www.ghi-dc.org>)

The **Institute of European Studies (IES)** at the University of California, Berkeley, is the leading center for research and education on Europe in the Western United States, and among the top three such organizations in the U.S. Through interdisciplinary public events, research programs, grant opportunities, and community outreach, IES seeks to enrich America's understanding of Europe – its people, developments and challenges – at Berkeley and throughout the state of California.