



Cluster of Excellence „Creative Destruction“

Abstract of the Draft Proposal for the Excellence Initiative 2006

"Destructive and creative energy are directly connected."

From St. Peter's Basilica to the Refrigerator

A contemporary observer watching a papal audience, either in person at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome or on television, usually has no idea that the church we see today arose out of the brutal destruction of one of Christianity's most important churches. Before the foundations of the current structure could be laid, an older basilica dating back to the time of Emperor Constantine, with magnificent mosaics and exquisite columns, had to be torn down. All that is left of one of antiquity's most famous churches are drawings and a few scattered remains.

This direct connection between destructive and creative energy was observed by the economist Josef A. Schumpeter (1883-1950), who noticed that the development of the refrigerator had led to the unemployment of thousands of ice deliverymen. His paradigm of creative destruction which was originally developed for economic analysis, is also a promising tool in describing processes of radical change in cognitive, symbolic, political, and social systems. The "Harnack Kolleg for Transdisciplinary Study" will be established as an institutional framework in which transdisciplinary study groups can work together.

With this Exzellenzcluster, Humboldt-Universität is building upon its existing research associations such as the Collaborative Research Centers 649 "Economic Risk", and 644 "Transformations in Antiquity", and the interdisciplinary August Boeckh Center for Antiquity.

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Fields of Study

- Theology
- History
- Cultural Studies
- German Literature
- Social Sciences
- Law
- Philosophy
- Life Sciences
- Economics
- Mathematics
- Psychology

Existing Research Associations

- Collaborative Research Center 618: "Theoretical Biology: Robustness, Modularity and Evolutionary Design of Living Systems"
- Collaborative Research Center 640 "Changing Representations of Social Order - Intercultural and Intertemporal Comparisons"
- Collaborative Research Center 644 "Transformations of Antiquity"
- Collaborative Research Center 647 "Space - Time - Matter: Analytic and geometric structures"
- Collaborative Research Center 649 "Economic Risk"
- Research Center 86 "Mathematics for Key Technologies: Modelling, Simulation and Optimization of Real-world Processes"
- Priority Programme 1173 "Integration and Disintegration of Cultures in the European Middle Ages"
- Research Unit 391 "Image Script Cipher"
- Junior Research Group "Micropolitics of Armed Groups"
- Research Training Group 424 "Codification of violence in media transformation"
- Research Training Group 1014 "Gender as a Category of Knowledge"
- Research Training Group 1015 "History and Culture of the Metropolises in the 20th Century"
- "Berlin Graduate School of Social Sciences" (BGSS)
- "Center for Comparative History of Europe" (ZVGE)
- Doctoral Programme of the ZVGE "Berliner Kolleg für Vergleichende Geschichte Europas"
- Interdisciplinary Center CASE (Center for Applied Statistics and Economics)
- Interdisciplinary August Boeckh Center for Antiquity
- Interdisciplinary Georg Simmel Center for Urban Research
- Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies (ZtG)
- Schumpeter Institute

Further Information on this Project

<http://www.exzellenz.hu-berlin.de/>