

## SUBPROJECT C – 03

TERMS DENOTING COMPARISON: THE SEMANTICS OF COMPARING FROM THE SIXTEENTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

From time immemorial, past events and forecasts served as templates for constructing and judging upon present and future. Whereas pessimists stressed human decline since the Golden Age, optimists praised progress bound to bring about salvation, communism, or market equilibrium. The comparisons between 'then' and 'now', or 'now' and 'later' not only marked perceived differences in history, but also stressed the politically and culturally relevant similarities. While the abundance of such and similar comparative evaluations is evident, few attempts have been made to track down their vocabularies/syntactic structures, and, most importantly, link these constructions to specific languages, periods, political disputes, or literary genres.

Featuring a small number of experts across relevant disciplines (conceptual history, history of ideas, intellectual history, discourse analysis), the workshop is aimed at laying the foundations for a large-scale interdisciplinary study of temporal comparisons.

### Organization

Kirill Postoutenko  
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### Venue

Bielefeld University  
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### Web

[www.uni-bielefeld.de/sfb1288](http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/sfb1288)



## TEMPORAL COMPARISONS AS VALUATION TOOLS: HISTORICAL SEMANTICS AND BEYOND

05–06 December 2018 | Bielefeld University

Universität Bielefeld

SFB 1288  
PRACTICES  
OF COMPARING

WEDNESDAY, 05 DECEMBER 2018	
16:00	Registration and Coffee
16:30	Willibald Steinmetz, <i>Bielefeld</i> : Historical Semantics of Temporal Comparisons: A Short Introduction
17:00	François Hartog, <i>Paris</i> : From Parallel to Comparison (18th – 19th Centuries)
18:00	Reception
THURSDAY, 06 DECEMBER 2018	
09:00	Coffee
09:30	Anna Karla, <i>Köln</i> : Restoration, Reconstruction, and the Politics of Materiality: Temporal Comparisons in Modern European Postwar Periods
10:15	Javier Fernández Sebastián, <i>Universidad del País Vasco</i> : Waving the Historians' Wand. Compa- risons and Parallels in the Writing of History
11:00	Coffee
11:15	Zoltán Boldizsár Simon, <i>Bielefeld</i> : Domesticating Novelty through History

12:00	Michael Götzelmann, <i>Bielefeld</i> : Stitching Time/Space: Towards the Functions of Temporal Comparisons in Utopias and Dystopias
12:45	Lunch
14:00	Jussi Kurunmäki, <i>Stockholm</i> , and Jani Marjanen, <i>Helsinki</i> : How Temporal Comparisons Shape Political Language in Early Nineteenth-Century Finland
14:45	Kirill Postoutenko and Olga Sabelfeld, <i>Bielefeld</i> : Post-War Consensus in British Parliament (1945–1959) through the Prism of Temporal Comparisons
15:30	Coffee
15:45	Final Discussion

### Further information about Subproject C03

*Principal Investigator: Willibald Steinmetz*

*Team: Kirill Postoutenko, Michael Götzelmann, Olga Sabelfeld*

The SFB's subproject C03 is exploring the semantics of comparing in Europe since 1500. The inquiry proceeds on three levels: terms denoting practices of comparing, explicit definitions of comparing, and speech acts (sentences) that perform comparisons. The basic hypothesis for the early modern period is that comparisons in the form of analogies were on the decline, whereas progressive comparisons, embedded in perceptions of competition, were on the increase. Finally, since 1800, there has been a growing importance of comparisons that stress equivalence in spite of difference or even complete incomparability.