

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Half a year into SCRIPTS' second funding phase, many of the plans and priorities we set out at the beginning of the year are already well underway. New research projects have been selected and are now being prepared for launch or have already started their work this year. Across the Cluster, research groups and units have aligned their agendas with the new phase, strengthening collaboration and sharpening their thematic focus.

A particular highlight is the first SCRIPTS Forum on AI governance, which continues to create new spaces for exchange between academia, policy, media, and the public. The Forum has already brought together diverse perspectives and formats, ranging from workshops and public talks to discussions in parliamentary and cultural settings.

With the new projects now taking shape and existing collaborations deepening, SCRIPTS 2.0 is moving into an active phase of research and exchange. We look forward to continuing this work together with our partners and sharing new insights in the months ahead.



Warm regards

Tanja A. Börzel

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## **SCRIPTS Forum Reaches Midway Point**

This year marked the launch of the first SCRIPTS Forum on “Emergent Digital (Dis-)Orders: AI Governance between Liberal and Authoritarian Scripts.” At the halfway point, the Forum has already brought together a wide range of voices from academia, politics, journalism, and the arts. Activities included talks with journalist Karen Hao, a szenario workshop with science fiction authors, events at the Long Night of the Sciences and the Humboldt Forum, a lecture series, and a parliamentary breakfast at the Bundestag. [Read more.](#)

## **Guest Researchers Join SCRIPTS Forum**

As part of this year’s SCRIPTS Forum, several international guest researchers will join SCRIPTS over the summer. We are delighted to welcome Dastan Jasim (PSL Paris), Linette Lim (UCD Dublin), Nikita Khokhlov (UCD Dublin), and Eddie Yang (Purdue University Lafayette). Their research will contribute new perspectives on AI governance, digital politics, and authoritarianism through workshops and exchanges with SCRIPTS members.

## **SCRIPTS Research Featured in Podcast**

SCRIPTS recently welcomed podcaster Sydney Harper for a series of interviews with SCRIPTS-PIs Pola Lehmann, Genia Kostka, and Swen Hutter. The conversations focus on the researchers’ current projects and explore contemporary contestations of liberal societies from different perspectives. The podcast series was recorded at SCRIPTS and will be released over the summer.

## **RESEARCH**

### **News SCRIPTS Projects Start This Fall**

Four new SCRIPTS research projects will begin in September 2026 with a funding duration of three years. The projects address topics ranging from global science ethics and democratic backsliding to authoritarian strategies in the video game industry and the democratic potential of AI-based Holocaust testimonies. Together, they reflect the broad interdisciplinary scope of SCRIPTS and its focus on the resilience of the liberal script. Find more information on our [website](#).

### **PALS Survey Enters Second Phase**

The project “Public Attitudes towards the Liberal Script” (PALS) is entering a second phase with new members and an expanded research focus. Based on survey data from around 60,000 respondents in 30 countries, the first phase identified global patterns in attitudes toward core liberal principles. The team at the WZB is now preparing the next round of research, focusing on changes in public attitudes, democratic

resilience, collective mobilization, and international collaboration within and beyond SCRIPTS. More information on PALS on our [website](#).

## PUBLICATIONS

### Newest Publications by SCRIPTS Researchers

New publications examine the intersections of liberalism, capitalism, democracy, and social change. Topics range from neoliberal thought in Pinochet's Chile and Russia's post-Soviet trajectory to global attitudes toward nondiscrimination, EU responses to autocratization, and young adult life courses in the Global South. Find the complete list on our [website](#).

### New Working Papers and Blog Contributions

New SCRIPTS Working Papers explore far-right masculinity in Latin America, authoritarian nation branding, deep contestations of liberal order, and democratic responses to disinformation. Together, they examine how contemporary challenges reshape democracy, political legitimacy, and the resilience of liberal societies. Check our website for the full [Working Papers](#) and [Blog posts](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Short Talks on AI and Digital Conflict

On 21 September 2026, Anita Gohdes and journalist Katja Weber will discuss how artificial intelligence and social media are transforming contemporary conflicts. As part of the series "Democracy Between Freedom and Algorithms," the Short Talk explores the role of digital platforms in war, propaganda, and political escalation, as well as the implications for democratic societies and civil liberties. The [event](#) will take place at the Humboldt Forum and will be held in German.

### Save the Date: SCRIPTS Conference 2027

The next SCRIPTS Conference will take place on 8–9 April 2027 at the Henry Ford Building of Freie Universität Berlin. The conference will present key findings from SCRIPTS' first funding phase and open discussions on the Cluster's new research agenda. The programme will include research presentations, book discussions, and panel debates. Further information on registration and the full programme will follow soon.

## 3 Questions for: Anita Gohdes, SCRIPTS PI

*How would you describe your position?*

I work at the intersection of technology and security, with a keen interest in the (ab)use of state power. Within this year's SCRIPTS Forum I work

on how artificial intelligence is changing our perceptions of liberal and authoritarian scripts.

*What interests you most about your work?*

I am fascinated by how technology is adopted, weaponized, and contested by individuals and states, and what this means for the international order.

*What projects are you currently working on?*

I am currently researching the ways AI is changing social media during (international) conflicts. And I am about to start a new project on authoritarian influence in the global video games industry.

*Anita Gohdes is Professor of International and Cyber Security at the Hertie School, a PI at SCRIPTS, and the author of the book **Repression in the digital age: Surveillance, censorship, and the dynamics of state violence** (Oxford University Press).*



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