



Leibniz ScienceCampus Regensburg

EUROPE AND AMERICA IN THE MODERN WORLD

Transformations and Frictions
of Globality in Past and Present

In/ter/dependence? Transitions of Power, Frictions of Freedom

2026 Annual Conference of the
Leibniz ScienceCampus Europe and America in the Modern World

- **Conference Date:** 17-19 June 2026, Regensburg, Germany
- **Proposal deadline:** 23 November 2025 | Abstract (200 words), Biography (200 words) to info@europeamerica.de
- **Conference organizing team:** Prof. Dr. Ulf Brunnbauer, Dr. Carmen Dexl, Dr. Birgit Hebel-Bauridl, and Dr. Paul Vickers

July 4, 2026, marks the 250th anniversary of American independence from Britain. The Declaration of Independence of 1776, an iconic moment in the emergence of the United States as a nation, famously demanded “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Yet the document was authored and signed exclusively by white men, and its vision of freedom primarily applied to their white male peers. While male colonists sought and secured their independence, women, Indigenous peoples, and African Americans were largely excluded from these liberties and remained dependent on the white men in power. Unsurprisingly, the *Declaration of Sentiments* of 1848 called for greater rights for women, and abolitionist Frederick Douglass pointedly asked in his 1852 speech, “What, to the slave, is the Fourth of July?” – referencing a system of slavery that had by then existed on the North American continent for over 230 years, relegating the enslaved to the status of property.

The American Declaration of Independence was not the only case of a liberation movement that created a new, supposedly free polity by excluding many of those living in its midst. Liberation for some often meant (continued) oppression or persecution of others along axes of inequality including gender, class, religion, and ethnicity. Moments of independence for one (newly created) nation – like the American revolution or the emergence of new states after the fall of empires or the end of communism in Europe – have also resulted in transnational reverberations and transformations. The consequences include shifts in international power axes and inspiring revolutions elsewhere.

This conference takes the 250th anniversary of US independence as a point of departure for a critical examination of contemporary and historical, national, and transnational dynamics of independence movements in Europe, the Americas, and beyond, focusing on their ambivalences and contradictions. It scrutinizes past and present aspects of in/ter/dependence, sovereignty, and self-determination from the late eighteenth century until today. Independence and interdependence are considered not as opposites but deeply entangled, with liberation for some depending on continued subordination of others, while new sovereignties can themselves create new forms of mutual dependence. Tracing the multidirectional and multiscale reverberations of these phenomena, the conference seeks to explore questions including:



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- Who remains or becomes dependent in the context of successful and unsuccessful struggles for independence? How are structures of dependence challenged and undermined, and by whom?
- How do independence movements generate frictions within local, regional, national, and transregional systems of interdependent communities?
- What new forms of dependence or interdependence do such movements produce; and what role does access to soft and cemented alliances, federations, and unions with shared power play?
- What are the legal dynamics and consequences of independence movements?
- How do struggles for national independence intersect with other emancipatory endeavors, including those relating to class, race, and gender?
- How are these processes negotiated in various forms of cultural expression – and how are they remembered?
- What are possibilities and limitations of the concepts of independence and dependence for area studies?

We invite proposals for papers from colleagues at all career levels addressing the abovementioned questions from multiple critical perspectives and fields of scholarship. We particularly welcome papers that engage with spatially or temporally comparative and transnational methodologies.

Please send your abstract and short biography (each up to 200 words) in a single document in an email with the subject line “LSC Conference 2026” to info@europeamerica.de. The deadline for submissions is **23 November 2025**. The Leibniz ScienceCampus will cover hotel costs and can offer a partial reimbursement of participants’ travel expenses if required.

The conference organizers are Prof. Dr. Ulf Brunnbauer, Dr. Carmen Dexl, Dr. Birgit Hebel-Bauridl, and Dr. Paul Vickers. The conference will take place in Regensburg from 17-19 June 2026. Please contact Dr. Paul Vickers (paul.vickers@ur.de) with any queries about the conference.

The Leibniz ScienceCampus Europe and America in the Modern World is a joint research platform of the University of Regensburg and the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS). It is funded by the Leibniz Association. For more information visit www.europeamerica.de. This event is a collaboration between the ScienceCampus and [REAF | Regensburg European American Forum](http://REAF|RegensburgEuropeanAmericanForum).