

Departmental Colloquium Series – Winter Semester 2024/25

Wednesday 30.10.2024 - 16:00-18:00

The Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology Münster

Stadtstraße 21, Room STU 2.10

What is the meaning of democracy? Youth knowledge of politics

The global trend of the rise of radical right-wing movements presents us with a series of conceptual and practical challenges regarding how we conceive and engage in politics in Western societies. It forces us to pay attention to the younger generations, who seem to disdain democracy, unlike the adults who raised them. But is this true? How do we verify or refute this hypothesis that has taken hold in common sense? How do children construct knowledge in the fast-changing world they live in? How do we account for the processes of transformation in political perspectives throughout the social history of a community? How are the meanings that each generation constructs about politics and democracy formed?

In this lecture, we will address the complexity of studying the processes of knowledge construction about power and government under the hypothesis that these concepts are deeply intertwined with economic practices and objects. This means that it is not possible to study the meanings young people construct about democracy without considering those they build and live around money and property. Two case studies will be presented. The first, carried out between 2015 and 2018, involves girls and boys who participate in a social movement and live in poor conditions in squatter houses. The second one, still ongoing, involves boys who participate in money-making practices and belong to different social classes. Both ultimately show that we need to foster more intergenerational dialogues to create fairer societies.

***Paülah Nurit Shabel:** PhD in Anthropology at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, and Master's in the Psychology of Knowledge at FLACSO. She works as an Assistant Researcher at CONICET, studying issues related to intergenerational affections and bonds, non-adult-centric epistemologies and pedagogies, and children's political action, within various teams. She is also a teacher at the university, in schools, and in her community, as well as an anti-ageism activist with AulaVereda.*

