Ratified by the Plenary Meeting on March 24, 2021

The Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology (BGHS) is an academic institution under the responsibility of the Faculty of Sociology and the Department of History in the Faculty of History, Philosophy and Theology of Bielefeld University. Members of the BGHS include all professors who teach and supervise doctoral researchers of the BGHS, all academic staff at the Department of History and in the Faculty of Sociology, all staff employed or attached to BGHS, and all doctoral researchers admitted and registered to the doctoral programme.[1] The scope of dissertation projects covers a wide thematic range across various disciplines and tackles different questions around current and past lived societies.

Among its objectives, BGHS identifies the training of doctoral researchers within a structured doctoral programme, the creation of an interdisciplinary environment, the encouragement of the international orientation of its doctoral researchers, and the offer of a supportive working environment.[2] BGHS emphasizes the importance of equal opportunities to scholarship, regardless of gender, class or any other form of social marginalisation.[3]

BGHS Doctoral Researchers' Statement on Inclusion, Diversity, and Antiracism

We, the BGHS doctoral researchers, acknowledge the international, inclusive and interdisciplinary character of the BGHS as a valuable resource for innovative research. Due to the rise of exclusionary politics worldwide, amongst other phenomena, we recognize that issues of intolerance, discrimination and racism are systemic, particularly salient, and require urgent and decisive action. Global social and political mobilization challenging these phenomena calls all institutions – including universities – to action. Universities are urged to self-reflect and take action with a view to building inclusive campuses wherein all students, faculty, and staff feel welcomed, respected, and capable of thriving. We welcome and support the manifold campaigns, initiatives and bodies at Bielefeld University already engaging in the task of creating equal opportunities, supporting diversity and inclusion, and fighting against prejudice.

As doctoral researchers devoted to academic work, we ascribe to the "Principles to safeguard good scientific practice at Bielefeld University" based on the guidelines provided by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).[4] We see this not solely as a professional requirement, but an ethos we strive to live by as part of the broader academic community. Recognizing that academic research is not a solitary enterprise, but one dependent on open discourse and the free exchange of ideas, we value the diversity and breadth of dissertation projects at the BGHS and their contributions to interdisciplinary research. Taking into account the spectrum of social realities that might shape members' lived contexts and experiences which include but are not limited to: age, class, gender, race,[5] ability, religion, sexual orientation and/or identity, social, cultural and/or national background, we aspire to actively participate in creating a respectful and appreciative working environment, and provide a safe and inclusive space for all members of our doctoral community, the BGHS and Bielefeld University.

Notwithstanding the underlying principles of academic discourse and practices which aim to foster critical thinking and a free exchange of ideas, perspectives and opinions, we strongly reject any positions and ideologies that: dehumanize, objectify, discriminate, and deny basic human rights and access, and restrict the achievement of full personhood especially for marginalized groups. Any positions that undermine, threaten or attack the fundamental democratic principles that secure these rights are contrary to our values as doctoral researchers in the BGHS. Furthermore, we recognize that the symbolic capital and professional authority associated with academic titles, expertise and institutional affiliations are often recognized and lauded outside of the academic community. We oppose the instrumentalization of this authority to legitimize arguments that are in clear opposition to the principles of good academic practice by which it was obtained in the first place.

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[1] Universität Bielefeld, *Verwaltungs- und Benutzungsordnung (VBO) für die Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology der Universität Bielefeld* (Bielefeld: 2011), §§ 1, 4.

[2] Ibid, § 2.

[3] Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology, "Gender & Diversity", accessed: 21.1.2021., https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/(en)/bghs/Profil/Ziele/gender_diversity.html; Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology, "Bottom-up", accessed: 24.3.2021., https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/einrichtungen/bghs/profil/promotionsausbildung/bottom-up/.

[4] Universität Bielefeld, *Grundsätze zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis an der Universität Bielefeld* (Bielefeld: 2000); Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, *Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis / Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice* (Weinheim: Wiley-VCH, 2013); Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, *Leitlinien zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis: Kodex* (Bonn: 2019).

[5] Here we use the concept of race as a social construct as coined by Derrick Bell originator of critical race theory and elaborated upon by Alan Freeman, Mari Matsuda, Kimberle Crenshaw, Patricia Williams and Richard Delgado. For further reference see: Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York, London: New York University Press, 2001).