



## CERGU Newsletter Spring 2025

### Director's Letter

Dear CERGUites,

As I write these words the first real Swedish summer rain falls outside my window. A real Swedish summer rain is one of those really warm rains, which where I live always brings the fantastic smells of moist earth and wet asphalt. Summer is upon us, and it is time to accept that, once again, the period from Easter to Midsummer operates on a different time scale than the rest of the year.

Or does it? As I sit here trying to summarize what I think has been a very successful semester for CERGU, I cannot help being overwhelmed by what is going on in international politics. Armed conflicts continue to rage in Ukraine and Gaza, and more recently in Iran and Israel, and the blatant disrespect of a rules-based international order worries me more than ever. And it happened so fast! Obviously, the states who clearly violate the rules so are other states, such as Sweden, who fail to recognize these transgressions for what they are. On top of that, this spring will also go down in history as the time when the transatlantic relations between Europe and the USA were reformulated, and the pace of the change is breathtaking. I worry where these paths lead, to the extent that I find it hard to finish this letter.



But I will not finish before I have shared some positive news because although these pale in comparison to current world events, they are by no means insignificant. In fact, keeping up the support for the enthusiastic research about European issues that I witness in my role as director of CERGU is a way to keep fighting back against authoritarianism and violence. During the past spring semester, we have convened the CERGU seminar eight times for working seminars, and guest seminars. On top of that, we arranged two research application seminars – my own personal favourite seminar. In my view, the research application seminar is where the CERGU-network really reaches its full potential, as it represents a great simulation of what actually happens in the evaluation groups at funding agencies such as RJ and VR. We also arranged the Europaperspektiv seminar in February and participated in the program of the Gothenburg International Science Festival in April. This year, CERGU's participation in the science festival program was a collaborative effort by our three postdocs, and hopefully a CERGU-postdoc collaborative production will become a reoccurring item in the science festival program for the coming years. During the CERGU internal conference in May, we were treated to a smorgasbord of research presentations. The program mixed long time network members with first-timers from all three faculties, and the discussions captured the essence of what our network is good for – the non-unidisciplinary approach to European Studies. Speaking of non-unidisciplinarity, I am very happy to inform you that on 21 July, the anthology produced within the CERGU project will be available in printed form. Keep an eye on our website for more updates!

Looking forward, I would like to welcome the incoming deputy director of CERG U Hjalmar Falk to the CERG U management team. We have an interesting seminar autumn ahead of us, with a good mix of topics and disciplines – as is the CERG U hallmark. We are very much looking forward to the guest seminars, working seminars and public events planned for the autumn semester seminar program. You can find the program, and a lot more, on our website. Also, keep a close eye on the CERG U weekly updates in order not to miss these events. We start off the autumn semester with a traditional CERG U Kick-off, so please sign up for that!

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has participated in our work to support research on European issues this past semester. It is truly a great pleasure to work with you all. In particular, I would like to extend my personal gratitude to Markus Johansson, who will step down from the role as deputy director for CERG U. Thank you, Markus, it has been a pleasure working with you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hj. Falk', on a light blue background.

## CERG U Kicks off Autumn 2025

Have you seen the skyscraper Karlatornet yet? It's hard to miss, but few of us have been inside. Here's your chance! You're invited to join CERG U researchers and staff to start off the autumn term with a view from the 69th floor. Feel free to invite a colleague who might be curious about CERG U or who might be a good addition to our European research network!

We will walk to Ölstugan Tullen Kville afterward for dinner and drinks.

When: Tuesday August 26th, 16.00

Where: Meet at Karlatornet on Hisingen

[Register to attend](#) (this is an internal event, so if you have trouble registering, contact CERG U research administrator Angie Sohlberg)





## Recruitment of New CERGU Postdocs

This spring CERGU has been busy recruiting new postdoctoral researchers. The application portal opened in February and when the period ended, we had received 142 applications! This is a new record high, and because of the number of qualified applications we received, the recruitment and evaluation committee was expanded to ten expert CERGU network members from different disciplines. A short list of 13 applicants were interviewed in May and the final three top candidates were offered positions, which they accepted. The new CERGU postdoctoral researchers will be presented in the autumn once the entire hiring process is completed.

## Impressions from Harvard University: Katarzyna Wojnicka

CERGU sociologist and former postdoctoral researcher, Katarzyna Wojnicka (shown below next to the Center for European Studies at Harvard and alongside a photo from one of the protests in Boston) has been notably absent from breakfasts and seminars this spring in Gothenburg. She has instead spent the past few months in Massachusetts as a visiting scholar at the Minda de Gunzberg Center for European Studies at Harvard University. She graciously took time to discuss her impressions of this tumultuous time at Harvard with CERGU research administrator, Angie Sohlberg. The interview took place in mid-June and Wojnicka will conclude her visit to Harvard on June 30, upon which she will return to her post at the University of Gothenburg.

Link to interview, also available on CERGU's website: [Interview with Katarzyna Wojnicka.pdf](#)



## Upcoming Conference

CERGU postdoc Louise Schou Therkildsen will arrange a conference during autumn 2025 entitled *Repairing Colonial Wrongs: 21st Century Reparations Politics in Europe*. The conference will be held October 21-22 on the University of Gothenburg campus. Stay tuned for more information about opportunities to attend.

## Researcher Profile: Hjalmar Falk



*Hjalmar Falk (pictured above next to the political scientist Rudolf Kjellén) will be taking over as deputy director of CERGU starting on July 1st. He was kind enough to agree to be profiled in the CERGU newsletter.*

*Angie Sohlberg:* Thanks very much for agreeing to this interview, Hjalmar! This summer you will be joining the CERGU management team as the Deputy Director. Could you tell us a bit about yourself and your history with CERGU?

*Hjalmar Falk:* Thank you for this opportunity to introduce myself, Angie! I'm a researcher and docent, soon to be associate professor in History of Ideas and Science at the University of Gothenburg. I defended a thesis at my home department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion way back in 2014 and since then I have mostly been employed as a researcher and research coordinator, except for shorter stints as a temporary lecturer in various departments and educational settings. Given my multidisciplinary background (I have an old master's degree in political science), I have always found myself at home in CERGU and working on modern European political thought certainly helps!

*AS:* What have you been doing at GU prior to becoming the Deputy Director at CERGU?

*HF:* I sometimes brag that I have had the privilege of working in no less than four faculties at the University of Gothenburg (Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Sahlgrenska, in the latter case teaching human rights and ethics to public health students). Besides that, I have worked as a PI for two research projects funded by the Swedish Research Council. Since 2022, I have been employed as a research coordinator at the Faculty of Education, though I have had a parallel position as an



externally funded researcher at the Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion. It is all a bit complicated, but very fun and rewarding. I like doing many different things and seeing the university from different angles, not just through the scope of everyday departmental life.

AS: What kind of research are you currently involved in?

HF: I am currently working on a project concerning the Swedish right-wing thinker and political scientist Rudolf Kjellén (1864-1922) and the pre-fascist European far right, something that neatly connects some of my main interests, namely the history of modern political thought, theories of ideology, and transnational reception studies in intellectual history.

AS: Do you have any plans for your time at CERGU? For example, things you hope to introduce or continue with as the Deputy Director?

HF: I have no immediate plans and think that Markus Johansson has been doing a great job, so I plan on keeping up the good work. In general, I really like transdisciplinary environments and if I can contribute to developing that aspect of CERGU even more I would be very happy.

AS: Finally, looking forward to the fast-approaching summer, would you say that you're more of a beach person, a city person, or a forest person? Have you been anywhere that you'd recommend, perhaps somewhere off the beaten path?

HF: I identify strongly with the following lines of Bertolt Brecht from '[Concerning poor B.B.](#)' from 1922: '... the cold of the forests / Will be in me until the day of my death. / In the asphalt city I am at home.' I guess that sets me apart from most other Swedes who do not tend to shudder when confronted with cold, dark forests, but in line with a canonical reference like Brecht I tend to stay on the beaten path and mostly enjoy visiting large European cities on holidays. There is still a lot to see and rediscover and mostly reachable by train as well. I will not go to any of them this summer, but right now I feel the places I would most like to revisit are Madrid and London.

## CERGU Internal Conference

The CERGU internal conference is an annual gathering and an opportunity for network members to present research to the group in a positive, encouraging environment. This year's internal conference was held at Arken Hotel and Art Garden Spa on the island of Hisingen. 17 members of the network attended the lunch-to-lunch conference and dinner. This year's conference focused on research presentations by members of the network, and discussions on the CERGU research themes. The title of the seminar, formerly known as the October Workshop and European Graduation Seminar, was also a hot topic. CERGU postdoc, Luka Miladinovic won the prize for best title suggestion- the Annual Europa Lecture.



*Pictured above from left to right: Hjalmar Falk, Felix Lehmann, Luka Miladinovic, Andrea Spehar, Linda Berg, Christina Reimann, Jens Carlessen Magalhaes, Louise Schou Therkildsen, Markus Johansson, Anna Ghavanini, Angie Sohlberg, Kristina Gurok, and Andreas Moberg.*

## Europaperspektiv 2025



CERGU hosted the annual book seminar Europaperspektiv in February 2025 at the School of Business, Economics, and Law. The theme of this year's seminar was the new geopolitical map and EU at a crossroads. The book is available for free, and if you happened to miss the seminar, you can still secure a copy of the book by contacting CERGUs administration. The authors who presented included Hannes Lenk, Christian Sandström, and Louise Bengtsson.

## Upcoming CERGU Events

26/8, 16.00 CERGU Kick-off Event: Karlatornet and dinner (Register to attend)

2/9, 8.30-9.30 First Breakfast (held at Plgatan 19A, floor 1 kitchen)

9/9, 9.30-11.00 Working seminar: Trisha Rajput, Assistant Professor, and Abhinayan Basu Bal, Assistant Professor, Department of Law, "Building Trust in International Supply Chains using Charity and Decentralized Autonomous Organization (DAO)". Conference Room Pilen, Room K309

17/10, 13.15-15.00 Annual Europa Lecture (see separate program) Vasaparken, Torgny Segerstedtssalen

21/10, 9.30-11.00 Working Seminar: Caroline Hasselgren Bune, Researcher, and Björn Halleröd, Professor, Department of Sociology and Psychological Studies at Karlstad University, "A matter of transition? Working life trajectories and retirement behavior in post-socialist contexts across Central and Eastern Europe". Conference Room Pilen, Room K309

21-22/10, Conference (see separate program): "Repairing colonial wrongs: 21st century reparations politics in Europe", postdoc conference organized by Louise Schou Therkildsen. Room TBD



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