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Press Release

Humboldt Research Fellow from the U.S. Joins the University of Mannheim: Human Rights, Political Violence, and Privacy in Focus

In October, a new Humboldt Research Fellow has joined the University of Mannheim. Over the next two years, Dr. Meridith LaVelle will be conducting research at the chair of Professor Sabine Carey on human rights, political violence, and the right to privacy.

In 2023, Mannheim political scientist Professor Sabine Carey, Ph.D., received approval from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation to select up to three international researchers for a fellowship and thereby expand her team. Following Elena Barham, Ph.D., the second postdoctoral researcher from the United States has now joined the chair: Meridith LaVelle, Ph.D., moved from the University of Georgia to Mannheim in October 2025 and will be part of Carey's team until September 2027.

Dr. LaVelle, aged 35, focuses on human rights and political violence, with particular attention to how technology is used to violate human rights. The core of her new project is the right to privacy, a subject that has so far received little systematic attention in political science.

"With the Humboldt project, I aim to systematically document which state actors around the world violate the right to privacy, how they do so, and against whom. Additionally, I would like to assess how privacy rights violations may contribute to broader campaigns of state violence," said the postdoctoral researcher.

The opportunity to collaborate with Professor Carey was decisive in LaVelle's decision to come to Mannheim. "I have admired her work since the beginning of my doctoral studies," said the American researcher. "I want to learn from successful female mentors in the field of international relations, develop new projects, learn how to deal with the challenging aspects of academic life, and expand my network to support others. I have visited Germany several times and have long wished to live here."

"The Humboldt Fellowship allows me to recruit excellent researchers from abroad," explained chair holder Carey. "My goal is to strengthen research and exchange in the field of peace and conflict research. I particularly hope to attract more women to my team, as they remain underrepresented in academia."

Each year, around 40 outstanding researchers are selected through a competitive process as scouts for the Henriette Herz Scouting Program of the Foundation. Within three years, these

scholars may actively invite experts from their international networks to apply. Through this initiative, up to 100 additional research fellowships are to be awarded.

Further information about the Henriette Herz Scouting Program is available [here](#).

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