

## **Invisible Architects: Jews, Muslims, and the Construction of Europe**

Initiative: Freigeist-Fellowships

Bewilligung: 13.12.2020

Laufzeit: 6 Jahre

Projekt-Website: <https://www.soz.uni-heidelberg.de/freigeist-project-dr-elisabeth-becker-topkara-eng/>

The insider-outsider status of Jewish and Muslim Europeans lies at the heart of Europe's unsettled present, from an impending Brexit to large scale refugee migration and a popularizing far-right wing. With the re-questioning of the religious minorities within its bounds, European nation-states are today forced to confront their histories, longings, and shortcomings. This includes a key question that has plagued Europe since its formation: who and what are "we"? This Freigeist project responds to this question with another: what if that which is often perceived at the margins in fact lies at Europe's core? By placing Jews and Muslims at the center of Spanish, German, and French nation-state formation, it questions deep-seated assumptions about the formation of Europe as an exclusively Christian-cum-secular body of nation-states. By interweaving comparative-historical analysis, archival research on court cases, and interviews with Jewish and Muslim leaders in Spain, Germany, and France, the research group will construct an alternative socio-legal genealogy from the 15th century to the present, showing the agency of Jews and Muslims in the making of Europe. Ultimately, this project pushes the boundaries of how we think about European nation-states, and the idea of Europe as a whole: suggesting that Europe was - and is - not formed in juxtaposition to, but by its ethno-religious minorities.

### **Projektbeteiligte**

#### **Dr. Elisabeth Becker**

Universität Heidelberg

Fakultät für Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften

Max Weber Institut für Soziologie

Heidelberg

### **Open Access-Publikationen**

**Struggles for Horizontal Identification: Muslims, Jews, and the Civil Sphere in Germany.**

