



INVITATION

Essen, 18.06.2026

Expropriation in Modern History

Discussion with Nicholas Mulder

Tuesday, 30 June 2026, 18:30 (CET)

Online (Zoom) & Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities Essen (KWI)

Gartensaal, Goethestraße 31, 45128 Essen

The coercive seizure of property has been an important phenomenon in the last two centuries of global history. From the age of colonial expansion and absolutism through the emancipations of unfree populations and the world wars and revolutions of the twentieth century, the large-scale taking and redistribution of property has driven profound political, economic and social change.

Yet since the late writings of Max Weber, the role of expropriation in state formation and economic development has fallen by the wayside in political science, economics, and historical research. In this talk, historian Nicholas Mulder will explore what we can learn from taking the confiscatory dimension of state power seriously, as something more than just a dangerous force to be restrained, but also as a creative force whose power has reappeared over and over.

SPEAKER

Nicholas Mulder, Cornell University

MODERATION

Danilo Scholz, KWI

PARTICIPATION ON SITE

We warmly welcome everyone interested in the topic to attend. Participation is free of charge, and no registration is required.

PARTICIPATION VIA ZOOM

For online participation via Zoom please use the following [link](#) at the given time.

ORGANIZATION

Organized by the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) as part of the annual theme 2026/27 „[Red Lines](#)“.

PRESS CONTACT

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FURTHER INFORMATION

[Event on the KWI website](#)

We would appreciate the circulation of this invitation.

About the Annual Theme 2026/27 “Red Lines”

With our 2026/2027 theme “Red Lines”, we explore practices and modes of thought that set boundaries and make distinctions visible. What political and aesthetic strategies are used to draw these red lines, and to what ends? How are they crossed, ignored, or defended? Where do red lines lead, and to what extent can one even grasp a “thin red line”? Together with our guests and members of the public, we aim to embark on shared expeditions: tracing various red lines, always exploring both sides of each divide.

About the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities Essen (KWI):

Part of the University Alliance Ruhr, KWI is an interdisciplinary research centre for the humanities and cultural sciences, in the tradition of international Institutes for Advanced Study. Current research fields at KWI are: aesthetic practices, constellations of historical impact, dialogues between the cultural and social sciences, science studies, and visual literacy. Within the Ruhr area, KWI is a place to share the results of ambitious humanities research with interested parties from the region, and to convene discussions on the politics of scholarship. www.kulturwissenschaften.de

PLEASE NOTE: If you do not wish to receive any further press releases from the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI), please send a short message to presse@kwi-nrw.de. Many thanks.

NEWSLETTER: The KWI Newsletter provides news about the institute twice a semester. Click [here](#) to register.

PODCAST: Listen now to the latest episode of the new podcast "[Krumme Straße](#)" from KWI & Merkur!

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