



UNIVERSITÄT
LEIPZIG



DEPARTMENT OF BRITISH STUDIES
BRITISH CULTURAL STUDIES

INVESTIGATING THE SUPER-RICH REPRESENTATIONS OF GREAT WEALTH IN BRITISH CULTURES

Annual Conference of the German Association for the Study of British Cultures
18–20 November 2021, Leipzig University

Keynote Speakers

Joanne Roberts, Professor in Arts and Cultural Management and Director of the Winchester Luxury Research Group, University of Southampton

Roger Burrows, Professor of Cities, Newcastle University

Call for Papers

Global pop stars, Russian oligarchs, celebrity writers, football players, members of the royal family or reality soap stars – our current culture is full of images and representations of the lifestyle of very affluent individuals – the super-rich. Although a very fuzzy category, the label of super-rich adheres to the so-called ‘ultra high net worth individuals’ (UHNWIs) with financial assets exceeding \$30 million (Hay & Muller 2012).

The rise of social media, in particular, has brought representations of great wealth and the lifestyle of the super-rich to the centre of public attention. Adam Jaworski and Crispin Thurlow argue that the mediatization of this very affluent group is “mostly devoid of any serious discussion of political economy, upholds and normalizes their privilege by working in tandem with the logics of capital and the tenets of consumer culture” (2017). In fact, Great Britain has a special place in the topography of affluence, since, as Rowland Atkinson states, its capital London has become the “pre-eminent domain for living by the super wealthy globally” (2018).

Of course, culture and representation have a great impact on how the super-rich and wealth in general are perceived in society. In the field of Cultural Studies, working-class concerns have been a vital component of research since its inception in the 1960s, and more recently, aspects of identity construction have taken centre stage. An analytical exploration of the upper echelons of British society, the super-rich, however, remains a lacuna within the discipline. The annual conference of the German Association for the Study of British Cultures seeks to contribute to filling this gap.

The conference will address aspects of the super-rich with a focus on Great Britain and the Commonwealth, but comparative perspectives with regard to the United States, Germany or other nations are also welcome.

Proposals for papers may include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Super-rich public figures and their presence in the media
- Representations of (great) wealth in popular culture (feature films, social media, music videos etc.)
- Forms of protest and resistance against the super-rich
- Representations of very wealthy individuals or groups throughout British history
- London as the ‘capital’ of affluence
- Oligarchy, inequality, and global capitalism
- The super-rich as (ethnic) ‘Other’
- Conspicuous consumption, elite, taste and distinction
- (Historical) perspectives on the ‘nouveau riche’
- The super-rich and the body
- Wealth and the British monarchy
- The super-rich and spaces of privilege/insulation
- Celebrity and philanthropy

A selection of papers will be published in the *Journal for the Study of British Cultures*.

Please send your proposal of about 250–300 words and a short biographical note to Oliver v. Knebel Doeberitz (oliver.knebel@uni-leipzig.de) by **31 March 2021**.

Organisers

Oliver v. Knebel Doeberitz, Jonatan Jalle Steller

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Works Cited

Atkinson, Rowland (2015). “Limited Exposure: Social Concealment, Mobility and Engagement with Public Space by the Super-Rich in London,” *Environment and Planning A*, vol. 1, pp. 1–16.

Hay, Iain & Samantha Muller (2012). “‘That Tiny, Stratospheric Apex That Owns Most Of The World’: Exploring Geographies of the Super-Rich,” *Geographical Research*, vol. 50, no. 1, pp. 75–88.

Jaworski, Adam & Crispin Thurlow (2017). “Mediatizing the Super-Rich, Normalizing Privilege,” *Social Semiotics*, vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 276–287.