About

Visit our **Panel Power Struggles in Academia** at the conference **Anthropology. Activism. Power. Celebrating 10 Years of boasblogs** at the ICI Berlin on October 16, 2026.

This *boasblog* addresses recurring patterns in academic life that many experience but few can openly name: how power within academia is structured unevenly, opaquely, and often elides accountability. It shapes careers, produces legitimacy, and determines who is heard, cited, hired, promoted, or quietly pushed out.

Selection procedures for professorships that are formally transparent yet ethically opaque, hiring practices that often depend on informal endorsements rather than explicit criteria, and tightly knit networks that reproduce themselves under the guise of meritocracy, all point to these enduring conditions. In the German context, these dynamics are further shaped by the WissZeitVG, which produces structurally precarious career trajectories, and by the highly concentrated power and resources embedded in professorship appointment procedures. They are not simply matters of institutional framework but constitutive of the university's ongoing neoliberal transformation, where intensified managerial regimes reorganise academic life and recast what counts as knowledge and who is authorised to produce it.

In practice, academic trajectories are rarely determined by formal criteria alone; they are also shaped by lineage, patronage, and alignment with established networks. Processes of evaluation, such as job interviews, grant reviews, and promotions, feel hard to predict, as they also involve dynamics of recognition, affective economies, and situated judgment. Under these conditions, belonging remains contingent while exclusion is routinely produced in ways that are systemic yet hard to articulate, sustained through subtle practices of censorship and self-censorship.

This *boasblog* will not only unpack these dynamics but also propose actionable points for redress. What forms of refusal, solidarity, or intervention are possible within and against these structures? How might accountability be meaningfully enacted, and how might academic life be organised otherwise?

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