

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

23rd Jena Workshop on Intergroup Processes, July 9–12, 2026

Title: Authoritarianism—and Collective Action?

Location: Berghotel Tambach, Tambach-Dietharz, Germany

Dear colleagues,

We are delighted to revive a cherished tradition with the launch of the 23rd Jena Workshop on Intergroup Processes (formerly known as the Oppurg or Eyba conference). This internationally renowned meeting is scheduled to take place from **9–12 July 2026** in Tambach, in the heart of the Thuringian Forest.

A central question in social psychology, political science, and sociology is when and why people defend the status quo rather than challenging it by promoting change, and how social control shapes these choices. Our 2026 meeting addresses this tension by bringing together two historically separate research traditions: *authoritarianism*, with its emphasis on conformity, submission, and the punishment of deviance (Kessler & Cohrs, 2008), and *collective action*, with its focus on protest and mobilization (van Zomeren et al., 2008). Although collective action is usually associated with promoting change and authoritarianism with resisting it, both are grounded in similar group-based processes (e.g., group formation, collective action, normative regulation, loyalty, and so on). In practice, movements for change can develop internal authoritarian dynamics to protect their “true core,” for examples by identifying “enemies within,” and by enforcing purity, cohesion, entitativity, or agency (Haslam & Reicher, 2011). Authoritarian strategies can enact radical change, while collective action can aim to stabilize open societies. Cohesion can be maintained or achieved through punishment and prejudice, but also through respect, fostering more tolerant intergroup relations (Simon, 2007). We therefore challenge the simple link of authoritarianism with the status quo and collective action with change. Instead, we propose a two-dimensional (four-quadrant) *social control* framework, contrasting pro-change punishment (e.g., LWA, radical flank) vs. resistance to change punishment (e.g., RWA) vs. pro-change respect (e.g., pro-environmental protest) vs. resistance to change respect (e.g., pro-democratic action), offering a nuanced lens to analyze contemporary authoritarianism and collective action beyond simplistic binaries.

In keeping with the long tradition of the Jena Workshops on Intergroup Processes, our medium-size, in-person meeting features single-session presentations with a strong focus on intensive discussions of unresolved questions on authoritarianism and collective action research. We are delighted to welcome leading scholars in both fields as our keynote speakers:

Özden Melis Uluğ (University of Sussex, UK), Lucian Conway (Grove City College, US), and Michał Bilewicz (University of Warsaw, Poland).

We encourage and give preference to joint (two-person) submissions by early career and senior researcher tandems (e.g., a PhD student or PostDoc and their supervisor), as the conference is committed to fostering collaboration across career stages. Work-in-progress is especially welcome. Participation is limited to approximately 30 attendees.

Researchers interested in participation are invited to submit a max. 2,000 characters abstract for their proposed presentation by April 1st, 2026 to this online form:

<https://forms.gle/To5WGpDpbbB2PLrA8>

In the case of a researcher tandem, only the speaker (presenter) needs to submit an application. The tandem partner can be named in the application and does not need to apply with a separate abstract.

A participation fee of around €290 per (PhD) student, €390 per PostDoc, €490 per professor will be charged, including **accommodation for three nights** and **full board**. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions: fabian.hess@uni-jena.de

With best wishes,

Fabian Hess & Thomas Kessler