

**Dissertation Project:****To play society.****Changes in identity and reality through board games.****An analysis on the basis of the German-speaking board game market since the 1960s and the game award****'Spiel des Jahres'.****Valentin Köberlein****1. Supervisor:** Prof. Dr. Anne Kwaschik (University of Constance)**2. Supervisor:** Prof. Dr. Steffen Bogen (University of Constance)**Duration:** Since 2021**Abstract:**

The dissertation project examines the history of modern board games and the German game market since the 1960s. A special focus is placed on the critics' award 'Spiel des Jahres'. The aim of the dissertation is to hereby visualize the entangled links and mutual influences between the social setting and game development (on the part of the authors and editors), game material, game criticism (from the jury 'Spiel des Jahres' and other critics) as well as the gaming experiences of the players themselves. The chosen setting offers numerous opportunities to delve deeper into the fundamental principles of board games and the experiences of the various actors associated with them, thereby establishing games as a valid source material for historical studies - a much needed contribution to the neglected field of board game studies and a help to better understand board games as a cultural asset and the game with it as a cultural technique which has been relevant for thousands of years.

**Biography:**

Valentin Köberlein studied "Cultural Studies in Historical Perspective" with a focus on history, cultural geography and sustainability studies in Saarbrücken (B.A.) as well as 'Transcultural History and Anthropology' at the University of Konstanz and Università di Bologna (M.A.). During his studies, he worked interdisciplinary within the socio-historical contexts of the modern history, such as the history of play and toys, which led to his thesis on the methodical development of dollhouses as a source for historical research (graduation 2018). He first gained professional experience as a freelance historian (2018-2020). He wrote two in-house publications of the company history for today's Ravensburger AG. He also worked in the Ravensburger AG company archive (2018-2019) and was a game development manager for family and adult games at the Ravensburger Verlag (2020-2021).

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