

Lunch Talk PV XVI Thu 13:15 RW 1
Perspectives on the use and abuse of power in academia —
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Abuse of power in academia is currently the focus of intense public and academic debate. Several media reports on specific cases have raised serious concerns. While some observers frame these incidents as unfortunate individual exceptions, others argue that they reflect broader, systemic problems. Empirical work documents various forms of misconduct linked to power abuse, systemic weaknesses and the often severe consequences for those affected.

This talk discusses both individual and systemic causes of power

abuse especially from a psychological perspective. A central systemic factor is the steep hierarchical structure of academia and the multiple dependencies it creates, for example through fixed term contracts, grading authority, and information asymmetries. However, comprehensive systemic analyses show that these problems are embedded in an even more complex interplay of several factors. Against this backdrop, the talk outlines measures at different levels - individual, institutional, and structural - that are needed to reduce these risks and to foster a productive, respectful, and physically and mentally healthy academic work environment. The presentation and subsequent discussion will address concrete options for prevention, intervention, and cultural change in academic institutions.