

Prof. Dr. Gertraud Koch is professor at the Institute of European Ethnology/Cultural Anthropology at the University of Hamburg. She studied European ethnology and cultural anthropology, as well as political science, theatre, film, and television studies at the Universities of Frankfurt and Tübingen. In 1991, she received her magister degree with a thesis on “Identity and memory work in Pforzheim” alongside a compilation film of historical documentaries.

In 1999, she received a PhD in European ethnology at Humboldt University in Berlin. Her dissertation focused on a topic in the then emerging field of Science and Technology Studies. Considering discourses, policies, and knowledge cultures, she researched the emergence of artificial intelligence studies in Germany from a cultural analytical perspective.

After working in the field of IT related and gender sensitive adult education and at the center of excellence ‘Technology and Gender’ at the Hochschule Furtwangen, in 2003 she was appointed professor of communication studies and anthropology of knowledge at Zeppelin University in Friedrichshafen. For ten years, Gertraud Koch contributed to the creation and development of the Department of Culture and Communication Studies (Department Kultur- und Kommunikationswissenschaft) and acted as spokesperson for the research cluster ‘Urban and Regional Diversities’. In 2013, she was appointed W3 professor rank at the University of Hamburg.

Her research interests cover a broad spectrum of topics. In doing research and publishing on regional and urban cultures, her focus is on cultural and social diversity and spatial processes of knowledge production. With regard to the anthropology of knowledge, working cultures is another field she has focused on with research such as the cultural history of education and vocational training. Currently, her focus is on digital cultures, working on projects attending to anonymity and anonymization, online radicalization of youth, and digitization processes in the cultural heritage sector, among others. The volume “Digitisation. Theories and Concepts for Empirical Cultural Research” edited by Gertraud Koch was recently published in German by UVK (2016) and will be published in English by Routledge in July 2017.

The transfer of scientific knowledge to society is a central concern in most of her work, which accounts for her politically consulting in diverse contexts. Some of her commitments include being chairwoman of the scientific advisory council at the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space e.V. (IRS), vice-chairwoman of the expert committee 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' of the German Commission for UNESCO and of the ethics commission at the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Hamburg, as well as spokesperson of the 'Arbeitskulturen' (working cultures) commission of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde (dgv). Furthermore, she co-founded the dgv commission 'Digitalization in everyday life' and, together with Manuel Heib, acted as its spokesperson until 2015.