# The German contribution to the development of the Iranian car industry, 1953–79

## Sources, scholarship and methodologies behind the scenes of a thesis




"Made in Iran": cars on show at an Iranische Woche, January 1975

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**Wednesday**
**2 December 2026**
16:00 • 90 minutes

**Room C03-LG 1 | 223**
Universität Erfurt

Organised by C2PO for students interested in studying the Middle East or in pursuing PhD studies, this lecture dissects the scholarship and methodology behind a doctoral thesis that examines the German contribution to British and American Foreign Direct Investment initiatives in the Iranian automotive industry. It explores how the research contributes to our understanding of the possibilities and limitations of fundamental concepts in political science, such as soft power (Nye, 1990) and strategic narrative (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle, 2018). Turning to scholarship on 20th-century Iran, it makes the case for greater attention to transport and infrastructure development as an often-overlooked part of social and transnational history, and argues that the time for infrastructural and consumerist studies on Iran is now. It closes with a reflection on the importance of flexibility as a researcher, drawn from having to significantly alter research methodologies when Covid-19 cut off access to key bodies of sources. A talk for anyone considering a doctorate, or going through a difficult patch in one.

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