

# Nicolas Hafner

Swiss National Science Foundation Doc.CH Researcher  
Department of International History and Politics  
Geneva Graduate Institute  
Chemin Eugène-Rigot  
2 CH-1202 Genève  
[nicolas.hafner@graduateinstitute.ch](mailto:nicolas.hafner@graduateinstitute.ch)

ORCID-ID: 0000-0002-7546-7372

## EDUCATION

2022-current	<b>PhD student in the Department of International History and Politics</b> , Geneva Graduate Institute, PhD Affiliate at the Gender Centre PhD thesis ' <i>Le Savoir et le Faire</i> ': <i>Decolonisation and Geneva as a Third World Development Studies Hub, c. 1961-1981</i> (working title), supervised by professors Cyrus Schayegh, Nicole Bourbonnais (co-supervisors), and Adom Getachew (external advisor)
2025-26	Visiting stay at the University of Chicago, Division of the Social Sciences
2022	<b>Master in International History and Politics</b> , Geneva Graduate Institute Master thesis on the corporate origins of the private foreign investment protection regime in international law, supervised by Prof. Cyrus Schayegh
2019	<b>Master in Public Management and Policy</b> , University of Bern, uncompleted
2015	<b>Bachelor of Arts in History, Public Law, and Political Science</b> , University of Zurich
2014	Exchange semester at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

## EMPLOYMENT AND FELLOWSHIPS

9/2023-current	<b>Swiss National Science Foundation Doc.CH Researcher</b> Grant number 218930; expected completion: August 2026
2022-23	<b>Interim Executive Secretary</b> (part-time), Swiss Malaria Group
2017-2020	<b>Part-time consultant</b> , Farner Consulting SA
2017	<b>PR Officer</b> , Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme, Medan, Indonesia
2016	<b>Mandatory «service civile»</b> , reconstructing dry stone walls
2015	<b>Intern</b> at the Delegation of the European Union to Switzerland and Liechtenstein
2014-2018	<b>Freelance journalist</b> ( <i>Zürcher Oberländer</i> , <i>unihockey.ch</i> )

## RESEARCH GRANTS AND AWARDS

2025	SNSF mobility grant	CHF 18'200.-
2023	SNSF Doc.CH scholarship	CHF 213'898.-
2022	Geneva Graduate Institute full PhD scholarship package	
2022	Prix Arditi en relations internationales (best master's dissertation in international studies or international affairs)	CHF 5'000.-

## PUBLICATIONS

### Peer-reviewed Articles

“An Island of the Third World?’ Decolonization, Solidarity and the Critique of Development During the Long Sixties at the Geneva Africa Institute,” forthcoming (June 2026) as part of a special issue in *The Global Sixties* on “Cold War internationalisms of/in the Decolonizing World.”

“What Investors Want from Whom: International Economic Institutions and The International Association for the Promotion and the Protection of Private Foreign Investments (APPI) 1958-1974” (together with Dr Filip Batselé, Ghent University, *Business and Politics*, <https://doi.org/10.1017/bap.2024.20>)

### Other Academic Writing

“The Geneva Graduate Institute and the Training of Diplomats in the Context of Decolonisation,” *Global Challenges* 17 (May 2025), written together with Dr Charlotte Roy, <https://doi.org/10.71609/iheid-2b-mn-q911>

“Remeasuring Self and Society after Empire: The Human Sciences in Decolonization,” conference report written together with Devarya Srivastava, <https://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/fdkn-145245>

“The International Association for the Promotion and Protection of Private Foreign Investments’ Overture to the Middle East (1975/76&77),” contribution to the digital source collection *Twentieth-Century Global MENA Histories Primary Source Collection*, housed at the Exeter University Digital Archive of the Middle East. <https://humanities-collections.exeter.ac.uk/dame/s/en/item/15560#lg=1&slide=0>

## **ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS**

Co-organizer of a workshop series titled [“Decolonization Now: Histories, Politics, Possibilities,”](#) together with Atwa Jaber and Devarya Srivastava, with the support of the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Department of International History and Politics and the Center for Digital Humanities and Multilateralism, hosted at the Geneva Graduate Institute.

First workshop (15 participants) on *Counter-Archiving Decolonisation: Methods, Modes, Narratives* hosted on 11 & 12 November 2024.

Second workshop (20 participants) on *Decolonisation and its Forms of Knowledge: Histories, Pedagogies, Methods, & Praxis* hosted on 12 & 13 May 2025.

Third workshop (10 participants) on *Decolonisation and the Promises of Development, ca. 1950-1980*, hosted on 29 & 30 April 2026.

Fourth workshop planned for spring 2027, on *The Aesthetics of Decolonization (Imagining, Relating, Sensing)*.

## **RECENT INVITED LECTURES AND CONFERENCE PAPERS**

“From African to Development Studies: the Geneva Africa Institute in Search of a Programme, ca. 1960-1975,” part of the panel “Learning from Abroad: Higher Education, Developmentalism, and Indigeneity in Postcolonial Africa,” *2026 African Studies Association Annual Meeting*, New Orleans, 3-6 December 2026

“Development as Liberation or Faith? Naive Mechanists, Dreamers, and an Epistemology of Combat at the Geneva Africa Institute,” part of the panel “Religion in Transition - The Religious Factor in the Political, Social, Economic, and Cultural Transformations of Contemporary Societies,” *Márgenes III. Congreso Internacional de jóvenes investigadores en Historia Contemporánea*, Universidad de La Rioja, 8-10 July 2026

“From African to Development Studies: the Geneva Africa Institute in Search of a Programme, ca. 1960-1975,” *Universities and Society at the End of Empire and Beyond*, University of Birmingham, 23-24 June 2026

“Development as Liberation? Third World Encounters, Intellectual Transformation, and the Limits of

Solidarity," *Decolonisation and the Promises of Development, ca. 1950-1980*, Geneva Graduate Institute, 29-30 April 2026

"Development as Faith: Naive Mechanists, Dreamers, and an Epistemology of Combat at the Geneva Africa Institute, ca. 1960-1985," *International Studies Workshop*, Jackson School of Global Affairs, Yale University, 31 March 2026

"From African to Development Studies: the Geneva Africa Institute in Search of a Programme, ca. 1960-1975," *African Studies Workshop*, University of Chicago, 9 February 2026

"The Politics of Development: The Institut Africain de Genève and the Spectre of Third World Solidarity, ca. 1960-1985," part of the panel "El espíritu de las solidaridades del Tercer Mundo durante el Siglo XX," *International Conference on "60 Years of the Tricontinental Conference: Context, Impact, Legacy, and Future,"* University of Havana, Cuba, 12-14 January 2026

"Challenging Development: The Evolution of Critical Thought at the Geneva Africa Institute (1961-1986)," *27th International Congress of History of Science & Technology*, Dunedin, New Zealand (attended online), 29 June – 5 July 2025

"'An Island of the Third World'? Decolonization, Solidarity and the Critique of Development During the Long Sixties at the Geneva Africa Institute," *Intellectual Exchanges Between Revolutionary Africa and the Third World (1950-1990)*, The Africa Centre, London, 9 & 10 June 2025

"Development as Education? Consciousness-raising, Political Struggle and the Third World. A Perspective from Geneva," *Decolonisation and its Forms of Knowledge: Histories, Pedagogies, Methods & Praxis*, Geneva Graduate Institute, 12 & 13 May 2025

"'An Island of the Third World'? The Geneva Africa Institute and the Swiss Development Cooperation in the 1960s," *Collab History Seminar*, Université de Lausanne, 2 December 2024

"The Geneva Africa Institute: Decolonisation, Third World Solidarity and an Early Critique of Development During the Long Sixties," *Historical Challenges to International Development*, King's College London, 12 & 13 September 2024

"The Geneva Africa Institute: Decolonization, Third World Solidarity and an Early Critique of Development During the Long Sixties," *Cold War Internationalisms of/in the Decolonized World*, Geneva Graduate Institute, 5 & 6 June 2024

"Decolonisation and Geneva as a Third World Development Studies Hub, c. 1961-1981," Gender Centre Workshop, Geneva Graduate Institute, 28 & 29 February 2024

"Internationale Investorenrechte: der Schutz von ausländischen Privatinvestitionen, Dekolonisierung und die APPI," colloquium by the Gesellschaft für Unternehmensgeschichte (GUG) (Business History Society), Ergo Group AG, Düsseldorf, 1 December 2023

"Le Savoir et le Faire: Decolonisation and Geneva as a Third World Development Studies Hub, c. 1961-1981," invited guest lecture for the course *History and Development* taught by Prof Amalia Ribic-Forclaz, Geneva Graduate Institute, 27 April 2023

"Safeguarding Foreign Investments Within the Framework of International Law: The Case of the French Mining and Petroleum Companies in the 1950s," *Global Corporations and International Law*, Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, University of Cambridge, 15 & 16 December 2022

"Post-Developmentalism *avant la lettre*? The Critique of Development at the Geneva Africa Institute (IED) 1961-1975," *History Brunch Series* at the Department of International History and Politics, Geneva Graduate Institute, 11 November 2021

## LANGUAGES

German	native
English	proficient, IELTS Academic Training Band Score 8.5, taken December 2017
French	very good, DELF B2 (refresher summer course at UniGe, level C1, 2021)
Persian	intermediate (a total of 9 months language stay in Tehran, 2016 and 2018)
Spanish	elementary (2 months language stay in Spain, courses at University of Zurich 2014-15)