



Societal Challenges – Sociological Answers?

5th Conference of the
Academy of Sociology

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

October 8–10, 2025

Societal Challenges – Sociological Answers?

5th Conference of the Academy of Sociology

At the 5th Conference of the Academy of Sociology, scholars of analytical-empirical sociology discuss the challenges facing today's societies, be they the result of climate change, health epidemics, armed conflicts, economic upheavals, demographic ageing, human migration, multifaceted social inequalities, political populism, or public disinformation through, among other things, generative artificial intelligence. The conference focuses on the problem-solving capacities of sociology and how to transfer evidence-based knowledge to the public and to policy makers.

Local Organizers

Prof. Dr. Gunnar Otte
Prof. Dr. Natascha Nisic
Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz
Institute of Sociology

Conference Venue: Philosophicum, Jakob-Welder-Weg 18, 55128 Mainz

Contact: as25.sociology@uni-mainz.de
Conference Website: <https://as25.sociology.uni-mainz.de>

AS Website: <https://www.academy-sociology.net>

Note: Please refer to the conference website for registration and conference fees, further information on JGU Mainz, sociology in Mainz and the local organizers, for accommodation and suggestions what to do in and around Mainz.

Conference Team

Administrative Staff: Claudia Herz; Sigrid Kesy

Research Assistants: Dave Balzer, MA; Johanna Hoff, MA; Dr. Tim Sawert; Dr. Jürgen Schiener;
Dr. Nico Sonntag; Dr. Miriam Trübner

Student Assistants: Merna Bakous; Lorina Heuer; Jonas Jung; Merle Köhler;
Clara Schuster; Gianluca Thorn; Anne Wagner; Sandro Wolf

Conference Website & Booklet: Lorina Heuer
Booklet version 6, October 31, 2025



JOHANNES GUTENBERG
UNIVERSITÄT MAINZ



Table of Contents

Thematic Outline	4
Conference Venue, Directions and Public Transport	6
Lunch Options on and near Campus.....	9
Conference Dinner and Sociological Cabaret	11
Special Needs	13
Presentation Guidelines.....	14
Selection Committees and Reviewers	15
Cooperation Partners and Sponsors.....	16
Program: Overview	17
Program: Contributors and Abstracts	20

Thematic Outline

Societal Challenges – Sociological Answers?

Today's societies are facing enormous challenges, whether due to climate change, health epidemics, armed conflicts, economic upheavals, demographic ageing, migratory movements, multifaceted social inequalities, political populism, or public disinformation through, among other things, generative artificial intelligence. How to deal with these problems is the subject of considerable public debate and controversy. These issues are, furthermore, increasingly accompanied by the emergence of new social divides, all of which is putting liberal democracies under extraordinary pressure.

At the same time, however, progress has been made in various areas, be it in the reduction of the global poverty rate, the promotion of gender equality, or the legal recognition of social minorities.

Describing and explaining such developments – and dealing with the concomitant societal issues – also presents a challenge for science, and for sociology in particular. Contemporary sociology is thus, as a result of the social causes and repercussions of many of the phenomena described, a genuine problem-solving discipline.

Due to both improved data infrastructure and the accompanying expansion of analytical and empirical knowledge, our discipline is in a better position than ever before to make an informed contribution to solving social problems. What solutions does sociology currently offer? Which role does it play in the concert of disciplines when it comes to policy advice and media attention? How can the influence of sociology be strengthened?

We encourage contributions from sociology and related fields, as well as interdisciplinary research on a wide range of substantive topics. Discussions of current methodological challenges in the areas of theory, description, explanation, intervention, and prediction are particularly welcome.

The social sciences have a broad range of theories of varying scope. Some of these focus on principles of individual attitudes and action, others on social interaction and cooperation, and still others on the functioning of organizations and entire societies. Which of these theories have proved successful, and which also have practical benefits? How do current theories need to be developed and tested?

Evidence-based policy advice requires reliable empirical descriptions of social phenomena. How can sociology make a well-founded diagnosis of both long-term trends and rapidly changing social phenomena (such as the processes by which public opinion is formed)? How should our data infrastructures be further improved? What criteria should be applied to replicative research to better validate empirical findings? What contributions can the field's various research methods make?

Causal research is necessary to provide explanations of the emergence, reproduction, change, and consequences of social phenomena. Sociology has made considerable progress in identifying causal effects, revealing social mechanisms, and testing alternative explanations. However, debates on how to construct and test causal theories continue.

This raises the question: What are convincing examples of sociological explanations in current research, and how do they work? Which roles do cases, variables, narratives, mechanisms, processes, structural models, and situational logics play?

The identification of a causal effect may serve as the starting point for practical interventions. How successful is sociology in deriving evidence-based proposals for political reforms? To what extent can social institutions and public policies be transferred between social contexts, e.g. in regulating the labor market, or preventing crime? What about the scientific evaluation of policy measures? What resistance from stakeholders must be overcome to implement scientific recommendations? And how can sociological findings be communicated to the public and politicians in a comprehensible way?

As a result of digitalization and "big data", predictions are becoming increasingly relevant. Algorithms are often used to derive recommendations for action from correlation patterns in complex, process-produced data sets, which have typically been collected without explanatory ambitions. How satisfactory is this for sociology, which advocates theoretically derived research designs, methodologically controlled data collection, and the specification of explanatory mechanisms? What about the prognostic quality of sociology in general? How can the tools of computational social science be integrated into the research program of analytical-empirical sociology?

The 5th Conference of the Academy of Sociology invites researchers in sociology and related disciplines with an analytical-empirical orientation to present their current research on a wide range of topics. A particular focus will be on the relevance of science for tackling social problems and on issues relating to the transfer of evidence-based knowledge to the public and to policy makers. However, since understanding social phenomena is often a necessary preceding step, there is also great interest in presentations of fundamental research.

Conference Venue, Directions and Public Transport

Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz is located close to Mainz main station and can be readily reached on foot or by one of the many public bus lines.

The following lines serve the university from the main station:

SEV53 (towards Lerchenberg)
54 (towards Klein-Winternheim)
55 (towards Nieder-Olm)
56 (towards Wackernheim)
57 (towards Bretzenheim)
58 (towards Finthen)
68 (towards Budenheim)
79 (towards Ingelheim)
91 (towards Wackernheim)
93 (towards Lerchenberg)
630 (towards Sprendlingen/Bad Kreuznach)

Click **here** to see an overview of the bus stops at Mainz main station.

For further details on public transportation in Mainz you can click **here**.

Public Transport in Mainz

Public transport in Mainz is operated by **Mainzer Mobilität** and is integrated into the **RMV** and **RNN** networks. Tickets are valid on buses, trams, and regional trains within the network areas.

Ticket options include:

- Single Ticket – One-way trip within selected zones
- Day Pass – Unlimited travel for one person or a group of up to five people
- Weekly Pass – For regular travel (personalized versions available)
- Hesse Ticket – Day pass for up to five people across the state of Hesse, valid from 9 a.m. on weekdays
- mainzcardplus – Tourist pass including local transport, museum entries, and a guided city tour

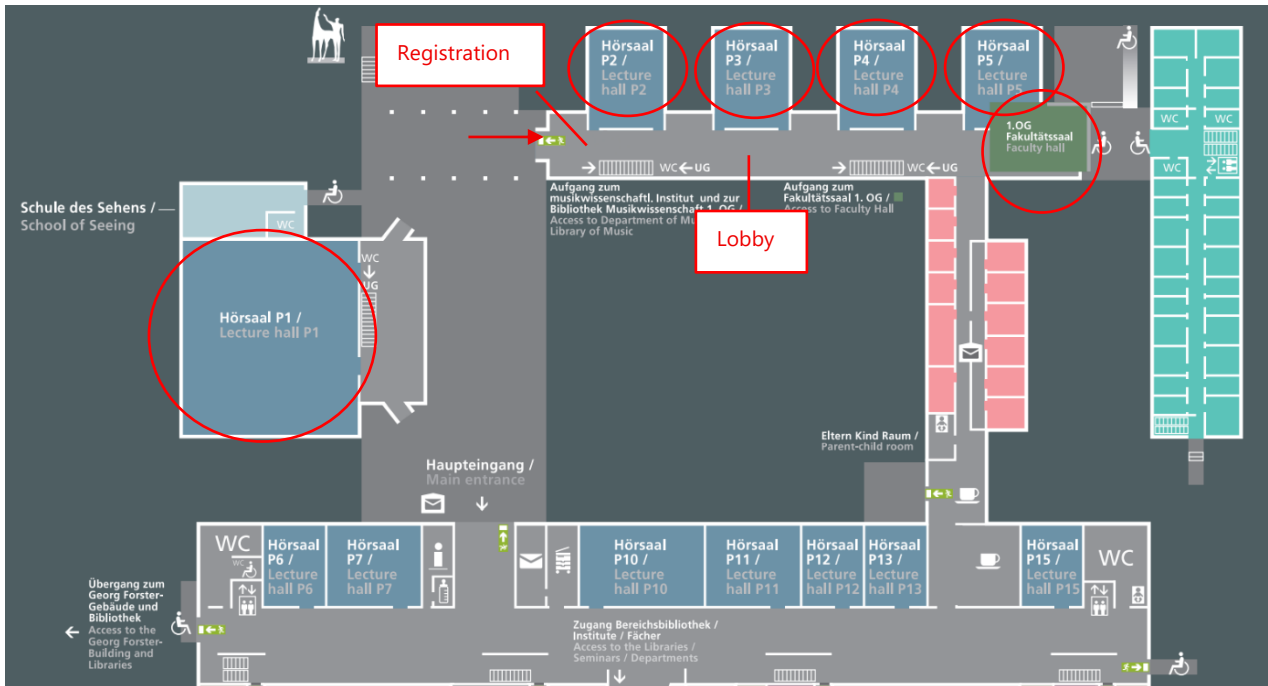
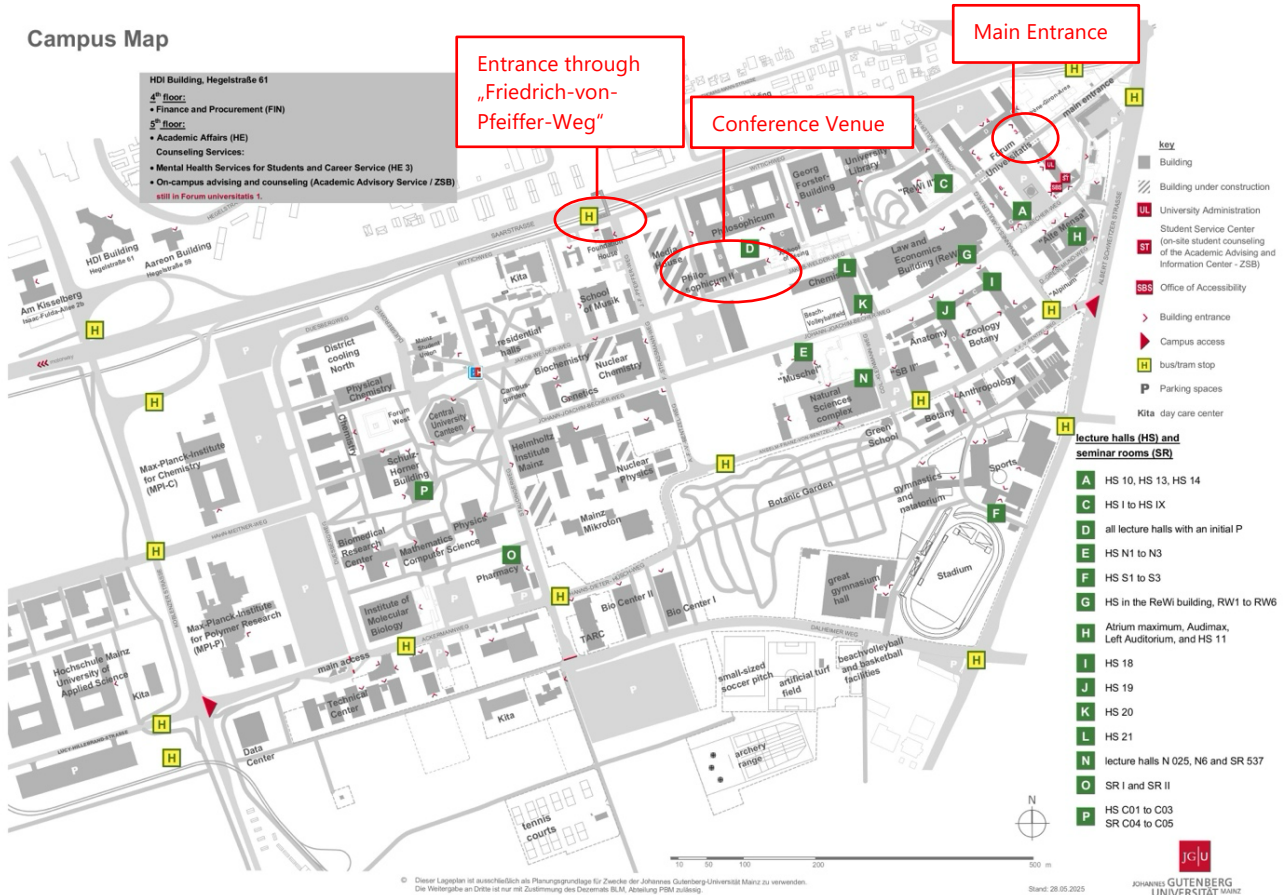
Tickets can be purchased at ticket machines, or via Mainzer Mobilität.

Conference Venue

The conference takes place centrally on campus, with all rooms located in the Philosophicum building. Registration is at the entrance to the lobby. All plenary sessions will be held in room P1, all other events will take place in designated rooms nearby.

Conference venue address: Philosophicum, Jakob-Welder-Weg 18, 55128 Mainz

Campus Map

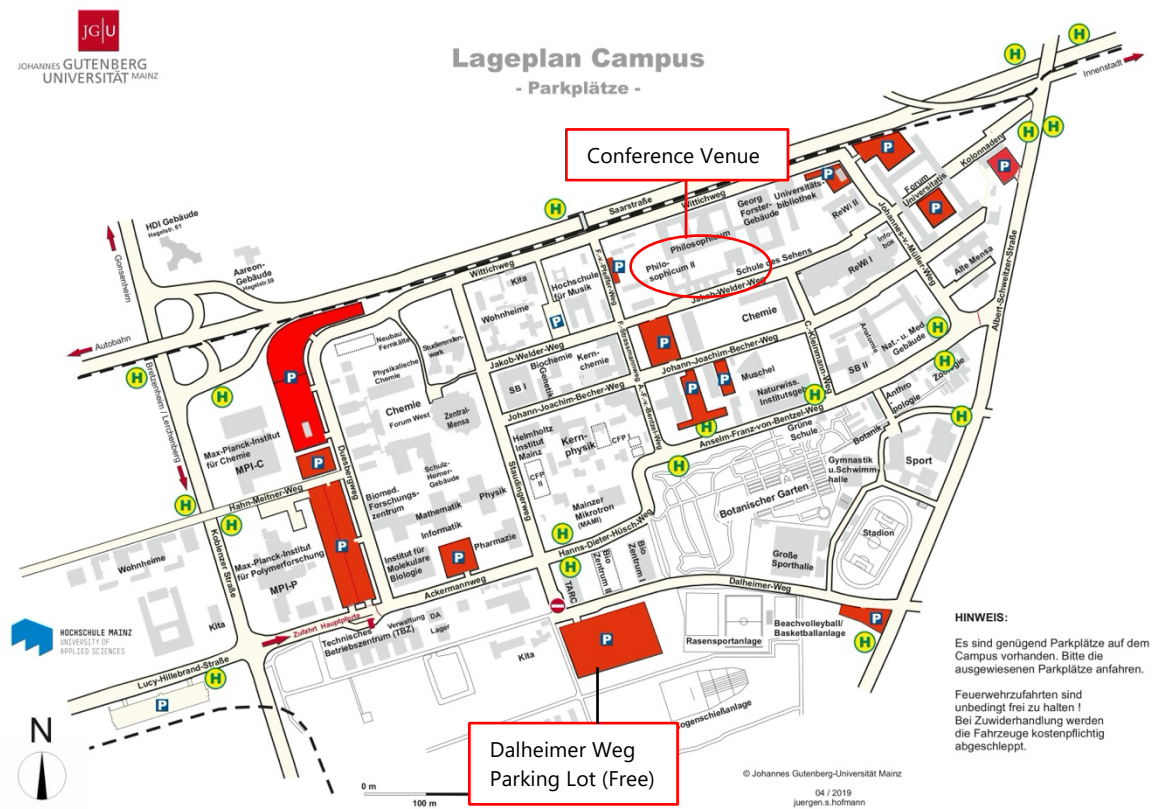


Parking at JGU

There are public, free parking options available in close proximity to the university. The following locations provide convenient access to the conference venues:

- **Bruchwegstadion** – Public, free parking located at Doktor-Martin-Luther-King-Weg, approximately a 5-minute walk from the main university entrance.
- **Dalheimer Weg Parking Lot** – Public, free parking located behind the sports grounds at Dalheimer Weg (access via Albert-Schweitzer-Straße), approximately a 10-minute walk from the conference venue.

Parking on Campus: Each license plate is allocated 30 hours of free parking per year. This is applied automatically when you approach the barriers. A yellow signal on the display means you may enter, but the time will be deducted from your free allocation. If you wish to spend more than 30 hours (per year) on campus, a paid entry permit will be required.



Lunch Options on and near Campus

The conference fee covers catering services throughout the event, including the conference dinner. Please note, however, that participants must pay for their own lunch and all external food services outside the conference location. Various options in different price categories are available on campus and nearby.

The conference venue is centrally located on the campus. From here, you can easily reach two university canteens:

- **Mensa Bambus**, a vegan-vegetarian canteen, is located inside the *Georg Forster-Building*.
- **Central University Canteen** (Zentralmensa), about 8 to 10 minutes' walk. There are always options with meat as well as vegan and vegetarian dishes available. The fixed menu includes a starter and dessert. At the pasta station, there are usually two choices available. The buffet station allows you to select freely: a daily special, soup, or a salad from the salad bar, a dessert from the dessert counter, or a large stew
- Additionally, the **University Chaplaincy's canteen** (Mensa der Hochschulkirche Mainz KHG) is available, where payment in cash is also possible. The daily options include one meat or fish dish, as well as one vegetarian alternative. (Address: Saarstraße 20, 55122 Mainz)

Click **here** for more information on the different canteens on the campus.

NOTE: Please note that cash and credit card payments are **not accepted** in the campus canteens. To pay for lunch in the canteens, we recommend using the payment app. You can download the app before your visit. Credit can be added at machines located in the Zentralmensa, Mensa Bambus, and the Central Library (Zentralbibliothek) by scanning a QR code and depositing cash (notes only). You can also withdraw any remaining credit from these machines. (see picture on the right).



Download the app (*StudiwerkMainz*):

Google Play

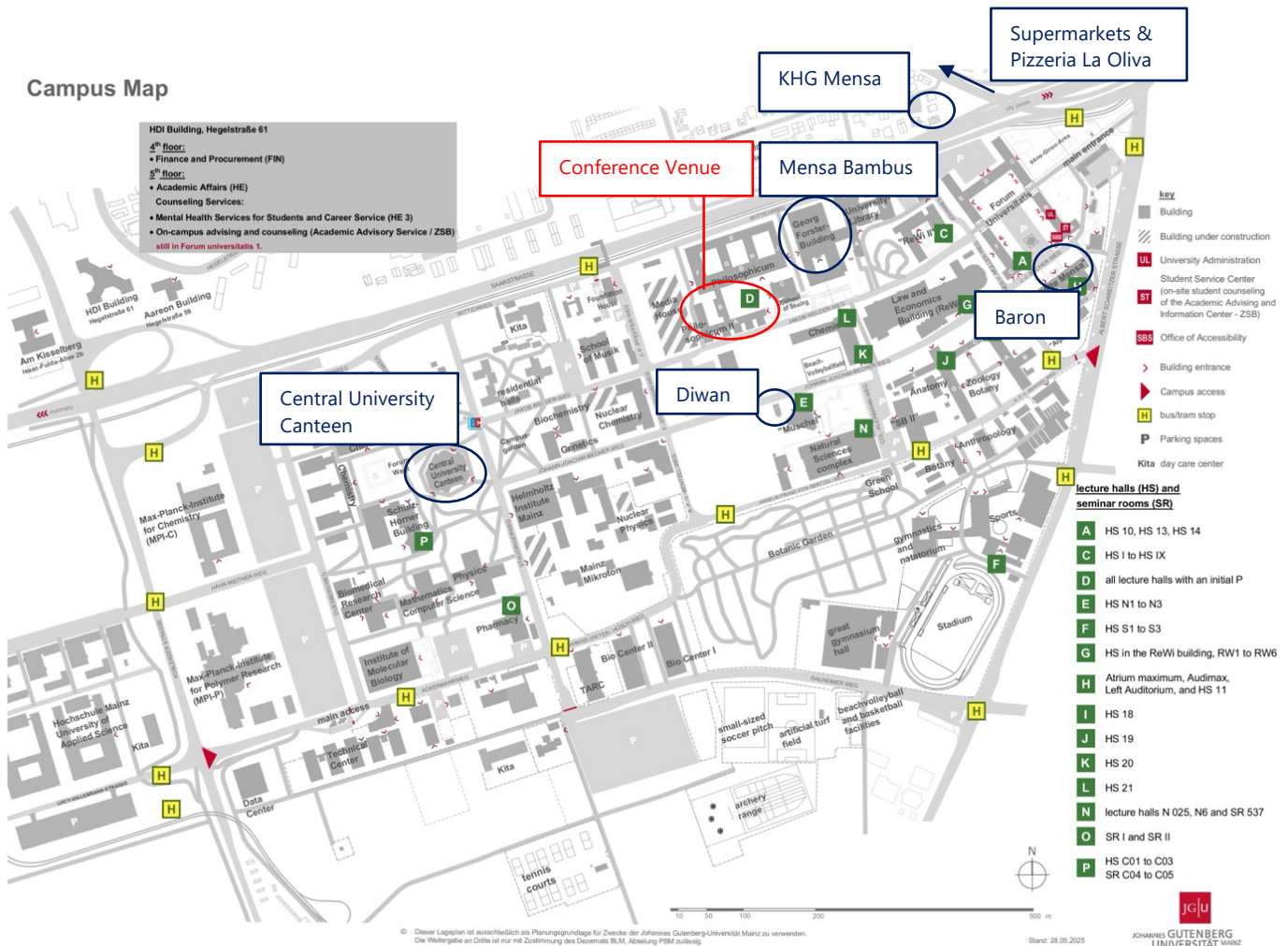
AppStore

Alternatively, you can use a *Gästekarte* (guest card), which requires a €5 deposit fee. The card can be obtained and topped up at payment stations around campus, for example at the entrance of Mensa Bambus.

You can also have lunch at **Diwan**, a fast food restaurant located on campus, offering a variety of delicious Arabic specialties such as kebabs and falafel.

If you have a bit more time, the **Baron** restaurant near the main entrance is a good choice. Here, you can enjoy à la carte dishes, Pizza or tarte flambée (Flammkuchen) or one of the daily specials. On pleasant days, the terrace provides a great spot to enjoy your meal outdoors. Both Diwan and Baron accept cash and credit card payments.

Off-campus, near the main entrance, you can find Pizzeria La Oliva (Address: Am Gonsenheimer Spieß 2, 55122 Mainz), offering authentic Italian pizza and salads. Furthermore, there are **two supermarkets** (Edeka and Aldi Süd) within a 10-minute walk from the main entrance (Address: Dr.-Martin-Luther-King-Weg 20, 55122 Mainz).



Conference Dinner and Sociological Cabaret

We welcome all registered participants to the Conference Dinner, taking place on Thursday, October 9, 2025 (starting at 19.00), at the **Alte Lokhalle Mainz**. This informal gathering will provide the perfect setting for you to unwind, socialize, and engage in enriching conversations with fellow attendees in a warm and relaxed atmosphere. The Conference Dinner will give you the chance to reflect on the first two days, share insights, and spark new ideas for the sessions ahead.

Please note that the dinner is included in the conference fee. During the registration process, you will be asked to specify your dietary preferences (meat, fish, vegetarian, or vegan menu). We look forward to a delightful evening together with you!

How to get to the Alte Lokhalle Mainz:

Address: Alte Lokhalle Mainz, Mombacher Straße 78 – 80, 55122 Mainz.

Due to construction work, there is currently no direct connection from the University to the Alte Lokhalle. We therefore suggest taking a bus to the central station first.

The following lines serve the Alte Lokhalle from the main station:

- Bus 60 (Mainz-Mombach/Am Polygon)
- Bus 63 (Mainz-Mombach/Am Polygon)

get off at **Alte Lokhalle** or take

- Bus 62 (Mainz-Gonsenheim/Josef-Ludwig-Platz)
- Bus 80 (Ingelheim/Bahnhof)
- Bus 81 (Mainz-Mombach/Am Lemmchen)
- Bus 92 (Mainz-Gonsenheim/Wildpark) (Night bus)
- Tram 50 (Mainz-Finthen/Römerquelle)
- Tram 51 (Mainz-Finthen/Poststraße)

and get off at **Zwerchallee**. From there, it's a 2-minute walk to the venue

Bus lines 60 and 80 can be used to return to the central station until around 10:00 pm. Tram lines 50 and 51 run every 15 minutes until 11:47 pm, every 30 minutes until 12:47 am, and then once per hour afterwards.

Sociological Cabaret

The conference dinner will be accompanied by a special highlight of the AS Conference – a sociological cabaret performance by Matthias Ningel, specially tailored to our conference! Matthias is an excellent observer of both social interaction and social change – and he knows how to poke fun at sociologists. You shouldn't miss his show! The cabaret show will be held in German.

Matthias Ningel (born 1987) studied philosophy and music in Mainz, which he completed with a doctorate. His dissertation focused on musical comedy. This was followed by teaching assignments in Mainz and a deputy professorship for music theory at Hochschule für Musik Dresden. He has been working professionally as a music cabaret artist since 2014. He performs his programs on cabaret stages and in theatres throughout the German-speaking world. He has received numerous awards for his artistic and academic work. More information: <https://www.matthiasningel.de>

Special Needs

Accessibility Note

We recognize the importance of accessibility and aim to make our conference as inclusive as possible. Accessibility is a complex and ongoing effort, and as convenors, we strive to meet your access needs. At the same time, we recognize that structural barriers exist within academia and that situational challenges may arise during the conference. While we may not have addressed all aspects yet, we are committed to identifying and reducing barriers where we can. If you have any access needs, suggestions, or concerns, please contact the Local Organizing Committee (as25.sociology@uni-mainz.de) for access-related concerns before and during the conference.

Childcare

If you require childcare during the conference, please contact the Local Organizing Committee (as25.sociology@uni-mainz.de) to discuss your and your children's individual needs and we will inform you of the options available.

Travel Grants

Presenters from country categories B and C according to the Table of Economies by the ISA as well as early career researchers in special need (e.g. because they do not receive travel support from their institution) can apply for a travel grant (up to 1000 EUR). In order to be eligible for a travel grant, the applicant's submission must be accepted for the conference.

The number of available travel grants is limited. The organizing committee will make a selection in recognition of need and of good scholarship.

If you would like to apply for a travel grant, please contact the Local Organizing Committee (as25.sociology@uni-mainz.de). Please include information on why you are requesting a travel grant and on your estimated travel expenses.

Presentation Guidelines

Oral Presentations

Each oral presentation is allotted **25 minutes**. Presenters are kindly requested to prepare a talk of approximately **15 minutes**, allowing for around **10 minutes of discussion**.

Laptops will be provided on site. Please bring your presentation (PDF or PPT) saved on a **USB stick**. Prior to the start of each session, all presentations will be uploaded to the laptop in coordination with the session chair and technical support team.

Poster Session

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

18.00 – 18.30 **Short Presentation of all Posters** (Location: P1)

18.30 – 20.00 **Apéro & Poster Session** (Location: Lobby)

The poster session is an integral part of the AS Conference 2025. The poster session will take place on the first evening of the conference. Posters will remain on display for the entire duration of the conference, allowing participants to view it at their convenience.

The poster session consists of two parts: a brief, one-minute presentation of all posters in plenary (room P1) and an informal presentation and discussion of the posters in the lobby.

Poster Format and Submission

Posters should be prepared in **A0 portrait format** ("Hochformat") and brought to the conference as printed copies. Printing facilities will not be available on site.

To ensure timely setup, posters are to be submitted to the local team **at conference check-in**, and **no later than 4:30 PM on October 8**. Early submission upon registration is strongly encouraged. The organizing team will handle the mounting of posters.

One-Minute Poster Pitch

At the beginning of the session, each poster will be briefly introduced through a **one-minute oral pitch**. This serves to draw attention to the content and invite further discussion during the session. **Strict adherence to the one-minute time limit** is expected in order to ensure equal presentation time for all participants.

An optional **single PowerPoint slide** may accompany the pitch. While there is no prescribed format, a slide template will be provided for inspiration via email.

Slides must be submitted via email by **October 1, 2025**, to allow the organizers to compile the presentations. The final sequence of presenters will be communicated shortly before the event.

Selection Committees and Reviewers

The Academy of Sociology and the local organizers would like to sincerely thank the following individuals for their valuable contributions to the selection of presentations and award winners.

Reviewers of Submitted Conference Papers

Prof. Dr. Katrin Auspurg (LMU München)
Dave Balzer, M.A. (JGU Mainz)
Prof. Dr. Claudia Diehl (Universität Konstanz)
Dr. Johanna Gereke (Universität Mannheim, MZES)
Dr. Isabel Maria Habicht (Bergische Universität Wuppertal)
Dr. Andreas Haupt (Karlsruher Institut für Technologie)
Dr. Fabian Kalleitner (LMU München)
Prof. Dr. Corinna Kleinert (Universität Bamberg)
Prof. Dr. Stefanie Kley (Universität Hamburg)
Prof. Dr. Simon Kühne (Universität Bielefeld)
Dr. Heinz Leitgöb (Universität Leipzig)
Prof. Dr. Lars Leszczensky (Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main)
Prof. Dr. Martin Neugebauer (Pädagogische Hochschule Karlsruhe)
Prof. Dr. Natascha Nisic (JGU Mainz)
Prof. Dr. Gunnar Otte (JGU Mainz)
Dr. Alexander Patzina (Universität Bamberg)
Dr. Tim Sawert (JGU Mainz)
Dr. Jürgen Schiener (JGU Mainz)
Dr. Nico Sonntag (JGU Mainz)
Dr. Miriam Trübner (JGU Mainz)

Jury for AS Dissertation Award

Prof. Dr. Ben Jann (Universität Bern)
Prof. Dr. Gunnar Otte (JGU Mainz)
Prof. em. Dr. Peter Preisendörfer (JGU Mainz)
Dr. Anina Schwarzenbach (Universität Bern)

Jury for AS Replication Award

Dr. Nicole Kapelle (Trinity College Dublin)
Prof. Dr. Ulrich Kohler (Universität Potsdam)
Dr. Heinz Leitgöb (Universität Leipzig)
Prof. Dr. Richard Traunmüller (Universität Mannheim)

Cooperation Partners and Sponsors

Our special thanks go to our cooperation partners and sponsors for their generous support of the 5th Conference of the Academy of Sociology.

With the exception of the IPP, all sponsors and cooperation partners will be presenting their services at a stand in the lobby.

Please visit us and find out more!

Interdisciplinary Public
Policy Mainz



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 **BiB** Bundesinstitut für
Bevölkerungsforschung

 **SocioHub**
FACHINFORMATIONSDIENST SOZIOLOGIE

Program: Overview

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

08.45 – 09.15	Lobby	Registration
09.15 – 09.45	P1	Welcome Address
09.45 – 10.45	P1	Keynote Lecture Nan Dirk de Graaf: Challenging Societal Problems and Rigorous Sociological Research
10.45 – 11.15	Lobby	Coffee Break
11.15 – 13.00	P2 P3 P4 P5 Fakultäts-saal	Parallel Sessions 1 Session 1a: Defining, Measuring and Explaining Deviance and Crime Session 1b: Paths to Integration: Refugees between Informality, Intimacy, and Institutions Session 1c: Inequalities in Vocational Training and Higher Education Session 1d: Pandemic Disruptions: Social Transformations in the Wake of COVID-19 Session 1e: Mobile, Remote, Flexible? Empirical Perspectives on Changing Work Arrangements
13.00 – 14.15	On campus	Lunch Break
14.15 – 16.00	P2 P3 P4 P5 Fakultäts-saal	Parallel Sessions 2 Session 2a: Public Opinion on Environmental Activism, Policy, and Justice Session 2b: Displacement and Decision-Making: Refugee Mobility and Settlement Intentions in Times of Conflict Session 2c: Labor Market Discrimination: Advancing Theory and Empirical Research Session 2d: Advanced Sociological Methods: Causality and Simulation Session 2e: Gender Measurement and Gendered Language
16.00 – 16.30	Lobby	Coffee Break

16.30 – 18.00	P1	Panel Discussion: Empirical Research and Evidence-Based Policy Advice (hosted by JGU Research Unit Interdisciplinary Public Policy [IPP]) Panelists: Herbert Brücker, Lena Hipp, Juliane Seifert, Katharina Spiess Moderation: Marita Jacob This panel discussion will be held in German.
18.00 – 18.30	P1	Short Presentation of all Posters
18.30 – 20.00	Lobby	Apéro & Poster Session

Thursday, October 9, 2025

09.00 – 10.45	P2 P3 P4 P5 Fakultäts-saal	Parallel Sessions 3 Session 3a: Polarization Reconsidered: Educational Divides, Ideological Alignments, and Media Influence Session 3b: New Data Infrastructures for the Social Sciences (in Cooperation with GESIS, RatSWD, KonsortSWD, NFDI) Session 3c: Ethnic Discrimination and the Boundaries of Belonging Session 3d: Gendered Pathways: Understanding Career Aspirations Session 3e: From Concern to Action: Empirical Findings on Environmental Beliefs and Behavior
10.45 – 11.15	Lobby	Coffee Break
11.15 – 12.30	P1	Dissertation Award and Replication Award Ceremony
12.30 – 13.45	On campus	Lunch Break
13.45 – 15.30	P2 P3 P4 P5 Fakultäts-saal	Parallel Sessions 4 Session 4a: Social Inequality: Institutional Structures, Segregation and Social Closure Session 4b: The Role of Genetics in Educational Inequalities Session 4c: Occupational Aspirations and Labor Market Outcomes Session 4d: Navigating Family Ties: Closeness, Conflict, and Intergenerational Wellbeing Session 4e: Analytical-Empirical Sociology and Sociological Practice (in Cooperation with Berufsverband für Soziologie in Deutschland [BSiD]) This session will be held in German.
15.30 – 16.00	Lobby	Coffee Break

16.00 – 17.00	P1	Keynote Lecture Jeannie E. Brand: Uncovering College Effect Heterogeneity
17.00 – 18.00	P1	AS Business Meeting
19.00	Alte Lokhalle	Conference Dinner & Sociological Cabaret

Friday, October 10, 2025

09.00 – 10.45	P2 P3 P4 P5 Fakultäts-saal	Parallel Sessions 5 Session 5a: Antisemitism and Cancel Culture: Sociological Reflections on Contemporary Discourse Conflicts Session 5b: Digital Transformations and Social Divides Session 5c: Religion, Culture, and Collective Meaning-Making in Times of Change Session 5d: Gender and the Labor Market Session 5e: Survey Experiments: Improving Theory-driven Research Designs
10.45 – 11.15	Lobby	Coffee Break
11.15 – 12.45	P1	Panel Discussion: Communicating Sociological Findings in the Media Panelists: Dirk Baier, Mike S. Schäfer, Kathrin Kühn, Gerald Wagner Moderation: Holger Lengfeld This panel discussion will be held in German.
12.45 – 14.00	On campus	Lunch Break
14.00 – 15.30	P1	Panel Discussion: From DEAL to DOA? The Future of Scientific Journal Publishing Panelists: Ralf Depping, Ulrich Köhler, Benjamin Seyd Moderation: Josef Brüderl This panel discussion will be held in German.
15.30 – 15.45	P1	Closing Remarks

Program: Contributors and Abstracts

Welcome Address

Wednesday, October 8, 2025
09.15 – 09.45

Room: P1

Stefan Müller-Stach, Vice President for Research and Early Career Academics, JGU Mainz
Claudia Landwehr, Deputy Coordinator and Spokesperson of Research Unit „Interdisciplinary Public Policy“ (IPP), JGU Mainz
Gunnar Otte and **Natascha Nisic**, Local Organizers of the 5h AS Conference at JGU Mainz

Keynote Lecture

Nan Dirk de Graaf:

Challenging societal problems and rigorous sociological research

Wednesday, October 8, 2025
09.45 – 10.45

Room: P1

Abstract

In Sociology, societal challenges are often phrased as societal problems. Most of these societal problems are related to the question of how we can deliver certain public goods. We generally assume that people value important public goods such as clean air and drinking water, democracy, law and order, equal opportunities, and want to avoid public bads. However, we are currently in the challenging situation where some politicians and a substantial number of citizens seem to contest that some of these 'goods' are indeed 'public goods'. Ignoring or mitigating climate change is an example. Similarly, the public good of 'living in a democracy' was long taken for granted until recently, yet the increasing popularity of populist right-wing parties like the AfD, Putin's hybrid war and Trump's recent blitz to expand his power, suggests that our democracy is threatened. These are challenging problems. Furthermore, it is important to realize that societal challenges are often interconnected and I will illustrate this while trying to answer the question whether we can expect an increase of immigration in Europe.

To answer questions related to societal problems, rigorous sociological research is required. The availability of high-quality data in our sociological toolbox, and an adequate linking of sociological questions to appropriate data and methods is crucial. In my view sociology as a discipline has made big steps both in data quality and variety of data. This has improved the quality of sociological research substantially. High quality longitudinal datasets, geodata, combining social science and molecular genetic data, experiments within surveys, and increasing availability of full register data, offer unique opportunities to better answer research questions related to societal problems. I will provide several examples and some of them are related to immigration and social integration

Prof. Nan Dirk de Graaf is an Official Fellow in Sociology and a Professor in Sociology at Nuffield College, Oxford. His research interests are: social stratification, especially educational attainment and consequences of social mobility, cultural sociology, sociology of religion, pro-social behaviour, and political sociology. He obtained his PhD at Utrecht University (1988) and was a post-doc researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Education and Human Development in Berlin (1988-1989). He was a research fellow of the Royal Netherlands Academy (1990-1995) and a full Professor in Sociology at Nijmegen University (2001-2007) and the chair of the Inter-university Centre for Social Science Theory and Methodology (ICS: 2003-2007). Recent books: *Handbook of Sociological Science: Contributions to Rigorous Sociology* (Edward Elgar; co-edited with Klarita Gërxhani and Werner Raub) and the textbook *Societal Problems as Public Bads* (Routledge; co-author Dingeman Wiertz).

Sessions 1

Session 1a

Defining, Measuring and Explaining Deviance and Crime

Wednesday, October 8, 2025
11.15 – 13.00

Room: P2

Session Chair: Anina Schwarzenbach

Presentations

Understanding trends in youth crime: Results and experiences from a government-commissioned study

Clemens Kroneberg

University of Cologne

The post-pandemic increase in police-recorded child and juvenile delinquency in Germany has sparked scientific, public, and political debate (Bliesener et al. 2024; Nägel & Kroneberg 2023; Pöge & Bredow 2023; Prätor & Baier 2024). Both the existence and extent of this increase—as well as its potential causes—remain unclear, particularly due to the lack of comparable dark-field studies capable of capturing the underlying mechanisms. Against this background, the state parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia requested that the government commission a scientific study to fill this gap. The talk will present main findings from this study and reflect on the public role of empirical-analytical social science. The study consisted of a large-scale school survey conducted between September and December 2024, in which we interviewed students at secondary schools that already participated in a longitudinal study between 2013 and 2016 ("Friendship and Violence in Adolescence"). We thereby contribute to the literature that uses cohort comparisons to gain insights into the general determinants of juvenile delinquency (Dinovitzer et al. 2009; Neil & Sampson 2021; Piquero et al. 2003).

Explaining micro macro dynamics. The example of recidivism rates

Andreas Diekmann¹; Heinz Leitgöb²

¹ Universities Konstanz and Leipzig; ² University of Leipzig

In many social processes, one finds monotonically decreasing risk functions as a function of time. For example, geographical mobility becomes less frequent with length of residence, accidents become less likely with time, and the risk of recidivism among offenders decreases with the length of time since their release from prison. Often, conclusions are then drawn from the aggregated risk curve regarding a similarly monotonically decreasing risk at the micro-level of individual behavior. As has long been known from risk analysis, this may be a fallacy (e.g. Chiang 1968). Unfortunately, the possibility of a fallacy does not always go unnoticed. Using models, we show that the monotonically decreasing risk in aggregated data can also be explained by alternative assumptions. We show these relationships using the example of a study on the recidivism intervals of offenders.

The morality as cooperation— Deviance Relevance Scale (MaC-DRS)

Pay Laurin Jessen¹; Johannes Huinink²; Ulrich Kühnen³; Klaus Boehnke³

¹ University of Hamburg; ² Universität Bremen; ³ Constructor University

Moral deviance is not the same as moral conformity! However, neither in theory nor in operationalization do the Moral Foundations Theory (MFT) and the Morality as Cooperation Theory (MaC) distinguish between morally deviant and morally conform behavior. In a series of three studies, the Morality as Cooperation-Deviance Relevance Scale (MaC-DRS) was developed as a new instrument that overcomes this shortcoming. MaC-DRS is based on a synthesis of MFT and MaC and focuses consistently on moral deviance. Findings from two studies in Germany (Study 1: student sample, N = 792; Study 2: nationwide non-student sample, N = 2326) show that MaC-DRS measures 8

moral domains as first-order factors in a valid and reliable way. In terms of all psychometric properties tested, MaC-DRS is superior to the moral relevance scales that emerged from MFT and MaC. A third cross-cultural study (Study 3: N = 2982, samples from Egypt, Germany, Japan and the USA) provided further evidence for the 8-dimensional factor structure across different cultural contexts. In addition, evidence for different culturally mediated moral systems was found. In my presentation, I will discuss the synthesis of MFT and MaC and the focus on moral deviance. Furthermore, I will present empirical findings regarding the psychometric properties of MaC-DRS.

An assessment of catcalling situations and the characterization of catcallers

Annika Beier

Georg-August Universität Göttingen

Using a quantitative online questionnaire survey, this study examines the phenomenon catcalling – a form of sexual harassment that involves (unsolicited) behavior with sexually suggestive connotations between strangers in public spaces, typically without physical contact.

Following debates in the media all over the world, catcalling is viewed in different ways by society. On the one hand, catcalling is tolerated, normalized and equated with compliments; on the other hand, it is seen as a form of sexual harassment. It seems, that the distinction between catcalling and (misguided) compliments or acceptable attempts to strike up a conversation is unclear. What is socially acceptable and what is not (anymore)?

Research on the perception of this phenomenon can provide important insights for an upcoming criminal policy discussion and can be used to create preventive measures.

Addressing this research gap, the data were collected through an online questionnaire using a factorial survey design (n=3150). The data allows to examine how the public perceives and evaluates various forms of contact, including catcalling and what aspects influence the evaluation. At the same time, it aims to expand the state of research with regard to the (including male) victimization and the motives of catcallers.

The prevalence and incidence of experienced and perpetrated catcalling as well as stated motives will be analyzed. In addition it is planned to employ regression models with adjusted standard errors and the vignette variables and respondent-level variables used as independent variables. The initial results will be presented at the conference.

Session 1b

Paths to Integration: Refugees Between Informality, Intimacy, and Institutions

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

11.15 – 13.00

Room: P3

Session Chair: Claudia Diehl

Presentations

Language courses as springboards or traps? The labour market transition of Ukrainian refugees in Germany

Andreas Ette; Nils Witte

Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung

More than 1.2 million Ukrainians are currently seeking protection in Germany. Compared with refugees from other countries, Ukrainians benefit from a relatively liberal protection regime under the European Temporary Protection Directive. In Germany, they have been granted immediate labour market access alongside early investments in their human capital through integration and language courses. To assess the effectiveness of this “language-first” approach, this paper examines the labour market integration of Ukrainian refugees, emphasizing the impact of early-stage human capital investments following their arrival.

Previous research on refugees from other origins and countries suggests mixed outcomes. On the one hand, early participation in structured language and integration courses may delay refugees’ entry into the labour market by locking them into prolonged training programmes and raising their reservation wages. On the other hand, timely participation in such courses could improve refugees’ subsequent employment quality.

Drawing on the first six waves of the IAB-BiB/FReDA-BAMF-SOEP survey on Ukrainian refugees and using panel regression models, this paper analyses both short- and medium-term effects of language course participation using variation in the duration of language course attendance. It distinguishes between two indicators of labour market integration: access to employment and employment quality.

Preliminary findings indicate heterogeneous effects based on gender, presence of children in the household, and refugees' pre-existing skills. The paper contributes by analysing consequences of language-first approaches under conditions of a liberal protection regime. It shows whether and for whom timely human capital investments are most effective in promoting sustainable labour market outcomes.

Partnerships in transition, marriages in tradition: Partnership histories of recent male refugees from Syria and Afghanistan and the German resident population with and without migration background

Marlene Bauer; Irena Kogan

Mannheim Centre for European Social Research, University of Mannheim

This study examines differences in partnership biographies between young male refugees from Syria and Afghanistan in Germany and young men from the German resident population, both with and without a migration background. Compared to earlier research, this study focuses not only on current partnerships but also on partnership histories, distinguishing among casual, committed, and marital relationships. In addition to the prevalence of these partnership forms, we also examine the extent of ethnic endogamy within them. We employ data from wave 1 of PARFORM, collected in 2022-2023 among male refugee migrants in Germany, and wave 9 of CILS4EU-DE, collected in 2022 among the German resident population. Preliminary findings indicate that Syrian and Afghan refugees are significantly more likely than members of the resident population to report no non-marital partnerships since arriving in Germany. Refugees are also significantly more likely to be married than members of the German resident population, but do not differ in this regard from ethnic minorities with family origins in the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa (MENA+) region. With regard to different types of non-marital partnerships, the findings indicate that refugees are significantly more likely to engage in relationships characterized by low levels of commitment. In contrast, men from the German resident population are more frequently involved in stable, committed non-marital partnerships. Notably, while Syrian and Afghan refugees often report that most of their non-marital partners were of German origin, the vast majority of their marital partners are co-ethnic women.

Opportunity structures and young refugees' transitions into and out of partnerships in Germany – A longitudinal perspective

Carlos Palomo Lario; Jana Kuhlemann; Irena Kogan

Mannheim Centre for European Social Research, University of Mannheim

This study investigates how opportunity structures influence partnership outcomes among young male asylum seekers from Syria and Afghanistan who arrived in Germany between 2014 and 2018. Most of these men, aged 18 to 34, arrived without family and entered environments with relatively small co-ethnic communities, complicating the formation of partnerships within their national ingroup during a typical life stage for relationship formation. Drawing on theories of homophily and homogamy, as well as Blau's structural theory and Feld's theory of focused social interaction, the paper explores how structural conditions affect the likelihood of forming homogamous partnerships—those within the same national, religious, or linguistic group. While prior research often analyzes opportunity structures at broad geographic levels, this study focuses on micro-level foci—neighbourhood, work/study, online communications, and leisure activities—ranked by their constraining capacity, or the extent to which they structure regular social interaction. Using panel survey data from the PARFORM study (N = 3,412), the analysis examines the self-reported share of co-nationals within each focus and its association with partnership exogamy. The study asks whether greater in-group presence correlates with a lower likelihood of exogamous partnerships and whether this relationship is stronger in more constraining social contexts. By incorporating longitudinal data and a fine-grained conceptualization of social foci, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how structural opportunities shape partnership patterns among recent refugees, addressing key limitations in the existing literature on immigrant integration and social behavior.

Beyond crime: Rethinking integration through the illicit street economies of undocumented Vietnamese migrants

Trang Nguyen

Max Weber Kolleg, Erfurt University, Germany

This paper examines the quotidian realities of undocumented Vietnamese men who are involved in the illicit cigarette trade on the streets of former East Berlin. Dominant public discourses perpetuated by media and law enforcement have persistently cast these migrants as either criminal agents of organized crime or victims of human trafficking. Drawing on long-term ethnographic fieldwork, I provide an alternative analytic that foregrounds the interplay between illegality, labor, and migrant aspiration. Rather than reducing these migrants to passive objects of crime control or humanitarian concern, I explore how their participation in the street illegal economy constitutes a mode of social incorporation – at once subversive and generative.

Their trade in illicit cigarettes emerges not simply as a deviant aberration, nor merely as a prompt reaction to structural exclusion from formal labor markets and legal pathways to residency. Their engagement in street vending of cigarettes reflects an agentic pursuit of autonomy, dignity, and belonging within the everyday life of former East Berlin's neighborhoods – paradoxically enabling a certain degree of social integration through illegality.

In attending to how these undocumented men navigate, exploit, and contest the boundaries of legality, this paper raises questions about conventional policy frameworks wherein the criminalization and exclusion of irregular migrants are presumed to enforce a normative social order, and "integration" is narrowly conceived as a linear outcome of formal labor market participation.

Session 1c

Inequalities in Vocational Training and Higher Education

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

11.15 – 13.00

Room: P4

Session Chair: Jürgen Schiener

Presentations

Can a vocational degree erase the 'scar' of school dropout?

Jascha Dräger¹; Martin Neugebauer²

¹ DIW Berlin; ² Pädagogische Hochschule Karlsruhe

Each year, over 6% of students in Germany leave school without a certificate, facing long-term disadvantages in employment, health, and well-being. This study examines whether vocational training can offset these disadvantages or whether school dropout leaves a lasting "scar." Using SOEP data (v39), we compare adults aged 30–60 who either left school without a certificate (N = 1,037) or obtained the lowest certificate (N = 13,662). Outcomes include employment, income, health, and subjective well-being. We apply entropy balancing and mediation analysis to assess the role of vocational training. Preliminary results show that individuals with a Hauptschulabschluss are 5 percentage points more likely to be employed; about half this gap is explained by vocational training. A significant residual gap of 2.5 points remains. Differences in health and well-being are minimal. These findings suggest that vocational training partly, but not fully, compensates for early school dropout.

The qualification and gender structure of occupational aspirations and their realisation in Germany and Switzerland

Sara Möser¹; Corinna Kleinert²

¹ Universität Bern; ² Leibniz-Institut für Bildungsverläufe, Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg

This study examines how structural and institutional contexts shape the formation and realisation of adolescents' occupational aspirations in Germany and Switzerland. Both countries exhibit high occupational gender segregation and traditional gender roles, yet differ in their education systems, labour markets, and family policies.

Using longitudinal data from the DAB panel (German-speaking Switzerland) and the NEPS SC4 cohort (Germany), we analyse trajectories from 9th-grade occupational aspirations to outcomes ten years later. Combining panel survey data with occupational structure data, we classify aspirations and outcomes by gender and qualification profiles. Our analysis addresses three questions: How do occupational aspirations reflect or deviate from occupational structures and trends in educational expansion? What role do country-specific barriers and opportunities in education and labour market play in shaping aspirations? To what extent do employment outcomes align with the gender and qualification typologies of adolescents' aspirations, and what predicts realisation or deviation?

Swiss adolescents show more gendered aspiration patterns than their German counterparts, reflecting traditional gender roles and stronger labour market segmentation. In both countries, more girls than boys aspire to tertiary occupations. However, German students are more likely to aspire to tertiary qualifications despite the smaller tertiary employment sector, reflecting Germany's academic emphasis compared to Switzerland's vocational focus. In the second step, we analyse occupational realisation in the labour market, considering initial aspirations, and interpreting patterns of (de-)gendering and upgrading in the light of individual and institutional conditions. This study contributes to understanding how policy and institutional contexts shape life course transitions.

Educational expansion and persistent inequality in higher education: A cross-national analysis of 36 industrialized countries

Pia N. Blossfeld¹; Silke L. Schneider²

¹ University of Innsbruck; ² GESIS

Societies around the globe have experienced an expansion of education, including higher education (HE), in the last century. Whether this has led to a reduction of educational inequalities, as proponents of modernization theory would have it, has been the subject of debate. While some studies indeed find mostly declining inequalities in access to or success in HE in many countries (Breen et al., 2009, Barone and Ruggera, 2018), others have found mostly persistence (Shavit et al., 2007) or even increasing inequalities (Ortiz/Gervasi and Palomo Lario, 2024). This study contributes to this literature by covering a broader range of countries, more recent cohorts and larger samples, to increase our ability to detect changes over time. Using data from the European Social Survey (rounds 5 to 11) and the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (cycles 1 and 2) and logistic regression models for individual countries, we examine (1) how countries vary in their educational expansion patterns and (2) whether educational inequality has changed across birth cohorts (1949/59-1988/98) in 36 industrialized countries. Our results suggest that, firstly, regardless of the state and speed of educational expansion, type of welfare state, education system or world region, academic children can always clearly distinguish themselves from non-academic children in terms of the likelihood of obtaining a higher education degree. Secondly, there is little evidence for the size of the advantage to shrink across cohorts. This finding suggests that academic families adapt to the education system and changes therein to maintain their social advantages.

Considerable inequality in faculty hiring networks of German universities. Placement power in psychology and political science.

Tobias Grabosch; Mark Lutter; Thomas Heinze

University of Wuppertal

This paper examines the hiring and placement network of German professors in the fields of psychology and political science. It is well known that in the stratified university system of the United States, the capability of departments to place their PhD graduates as professors in academic departments is highly skewed. In contrast, the German university system is considered to be more egalitarian. Focusing on psychology and political science, this paper reveals that the placement network of German universities has a similar degree of inequality as that in the United States. We show that a few influential departments dominate their fields and that the majority of departments have little to no placement power. The paper also discusses whether department size and publication productivity are explanatory factors. The unequal success of departments in placing their PhD graduates as professors raises questions about intellectual diversity in the German university system.

Session 1d

Pandemic Disruptions: Social Transformations in the Wake of COVID-19

Wednesday, October 8, 2025
11.15 – 13.00

Room: P5

Session Chair: Alexander Patzina

Presentations

Social influence and protective behavior during pandemic: Exploring the impact of descriptive norms

Sophia Horn; Michael Mäs

Karlsruhe Institute for Technology (KIT)

During the COVID-19 pandemic disease-spreading models were crucial tools for governments and health agencies. However, these models faced criticism for not adequately capturing the dynamics of protective behavior like vaccination, self-isolating, and mask-wearing. Among the few models that did include behavioral components, theoretical approaches varied significantly. For example, some models assumed that individuals conform to the descriptive norms of their social environment, suggesting that people are more likely to engage in protective behavior when they observe high levels of compliance around them. In contrast, game-theoretic models posited that individuals tend to free-ride on the protective behavior of others, opting not to protect themselves when they perceive others are doing so. To empirically test these competing assumptions about social influence, we used a factorial survey design. Participants were exposed to scenario descriptions that varied in the number of bystanders wearing masks and were asked to evaluate how appropriate they found it to not wear a mask in each scenario. We developed a vignette design to measure each participant's reaction to others' behavior on an individual level allowing us to capture the heterogeneity in social influence. Our findings enable us to estimate influence-response-functions, contributing to the understanding of social norms by examining how the opinion about one's own protective behavior is influenced by the action of others. What is more, these empirically derived influence-response-functions can directly be fed into formal models of disease dynamics. This highlights how sociology can make a substantial contribution to epidemiology by improving the accuracy of disease-spreading models.

Who decides? The dyadic significance of parental attitudes for children's Covid-19 vaccination uptake

Miriam Trübner¹; Alexander Patzina²; Martin Bujard³

¹ Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz; ² Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg; ³ Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung & Universität Heidelberg

The worldwide rise in vaccination hesitancy among parents represents a significant setback for public health. Against this background, we examine the attitudes and decisions of parents in Germany regarding Covid-19 vaccination of their children. Based on wave 2 (2022/23) of the German Family Demography Panel Study FReDA (heterosexual couples with children aged 5-11 (N=1177), and children aged 12-17 (N=617)), we apply logistic regression analyses to examine, first, the association between parents' attitudes towards Covid-19 vaccination on the probability of their children to be vaccinated and, second, the heterogeneity of families with differing views on gender role and diverse childcare arrangements. Results indicate that respondents have predominantly positive attitudes towards the Covid-19 vaccination, but that mothers are slightly more concerned about side effects than fathers. Looking at the intra-couple level, it shows that most, but not all parents agree in their attitudes about the Covid-19 vaccination. The tendency that mothers' decisions are more influential than those of fathers, can be attributed to their generally higher involvement in childcare. However, the results also show that an anti-vaccination stance in most cases impedes vaccinations regardless of whether the mother or the father adopts this attitude. These findings on the dyadic parental decision-making regarding children's vaccination provide important implications for policymakers and health professionals for closing emerging vaccination gaps in children, also regarding other diseases.

From contextual risk to preventive health behavior in a pandemic: A serial mediation analysis

Shannon Taflinger¹; Sebastian Sattler²

¹ University of Cologne; ² Bielefeld University

While research shows that contextual characteristics affect health outcomes, their effect on preventive behaviors is understudied. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between regional infection risk and adherence to COVID-19 preventive behavior, examining frequency of information about the local situation (from news and social contacts) and perceived susceptibility as mediators. We combined official data on county-level seven-day COVID-19 incidence rates, as an indicator of contextual risk, with a representative survey in Germany (N=9,023). Due to previous mixed evidence, we operationalized perceived susceptibility conditional on taking no preventive measures. Serial mediation using structural equation modeling shows that individuals in regions with higher incidence rates engaged in more preventive behavior. The relationship between incidence rates and adherence is serially mediated by information frequency and perceived susceptibility. This study elucidates the complex pathways by which the proximal environment influences health-related information, cognitions, and behavior, further demonstrating the importance of perceived susceptibility in this process

Political trust during the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany – Results from a survey experiment

Hannah Soine

University of Mannheim

This paper examines the dynamics of political trust in Germany during the COVID-19 pandemic. Political trust is crucial for maintaining societal cohesion during crises, as it influences how citizens react to their government's actions in uncertain times. This research extends the understanding of political trust dynamics during crises by accounting for political trust's relational and situational nature. I analyze the rally-around-the-flag effect of the pandemic on political trust that previous research has found, breaking it down for specific political parties and two domains of trust – trust in parties to handle the pandemic and climate change. I use data from a survey experiment implemented in the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey (N=3,164), in which questions about how parties handled COVID-19 and how they handled climate change were asked in varying order. Respondents who were first asked about COVID-19, thereby making it more salient than in the group who got questions about climate change first, reported higher trust in the governing parties CDU/CSU and SPD to handle the pandemic. There is no difference in the evaluation of opposition parties' handling of the pandemic depending on the salience of the pandemic. The SPD and one opposition party are also evaluated as more competent to handle climate change if COVID-19 is made more salient. This implies some limited "spillover" of the rally-around-the-flag effect to domains beyond the immediate crisis. Making climate change more salient by asking about it first did not affect participants' trust in parties to handle climate change.

Session 1e

Mobile, Remote, Flexible? Empirical Perspectives on Changing Work Arrangements

Wednesday, October 8, 2025
11.15 – 13.00

Room: Fakultätssaal

Session Chair: Natascha Nisic

Presentations

Commuting to job (dis)satisfaction? Examining the roles of labour market returns and working conditions using German Panel Data

Stephan Bischof¹; Laura Menze²; Sophie-Charlotte Meyer²

¹ Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung; ² Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin

For the majority of employees, commuting is an integral part of everyday working life, although the time spent commuting to work varies greatly. In this paper, we analyse how differences in daily commuting time relate to job satisfaction. In doing so, we contribute to the literature in two ways: First, while most previous studies have relied on cross-sectional data, we use longitudinal data and focus on intraindividual differences, allowing us to better address selection into commuting and unobserved heterogeneity. Second, the mechanisms through which commuting time influences job satisfaction have rarely been studied. Therefore, referring to economic theories and approaches from work and occupational health psychology, we take a first step and examine the role of two groups of potential mediating factors: labour market returns and working conditions.

Our analyses are based on unique panel data from the German BAuA-Working Time Survey for the years 2015 to 2021. We apply both pooled OLS and fixed effects regression models to account for time-constant unobserved heterogeneity. As potential mediators, we include wages and qualification match as labour market returns as well as emotional exhaustion, social support and time pressure as work-related conditions.

Our findings show that longer commuting time is associated with reduced job satisfaction. Although the labour market returns examined do not seem to account for this relationship, poorer working conditions that go along with longer commutes seem to play an important role for the negative association between commuting time and job satisfaction.

Who benefits from weekend commuting? Subjective well-being among weekend commuters and their coresidential partners

Elias Hofmann¹; Heiko Rüger¹; Nico Stawarz¹; Stefanie Kley²

¹ Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung; ² Universität Hamburg

Weekend commuting (WC) is a form of multilocality in which individuals commute between their primary residence and a secondary residence at their place of work, typically on a weekly basis. WC is often chosen by couple households as it enables partners to balance and pursue both of their careers. However, WC might come with burdens on both commuters and their non-commuting partners, such as extended periods of separation, and commuting-related stress.

This study examines the relationship between the onset of WC and changes in subjective well-being (SWB) for commuters and their coresidential partners. Theoretical considerations suggest that individuals only choose WC if they expect it to enhance their SWB. At the same time, individuals may accept drawbacks in certain areas of life (e.g. partnership, social life) in exchange for benefits in other areas (e.g. work, career). Using distributed fixed-effects regressions and data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), we extend upon the previous literature by focusing on SWB (measured with general life satisfaction) and work satisfaction of weekend commuters and the general life satisfaction of their partners.

First results show that for commuters, the onset of WC is associated with a moderate increase in overall life satisfaction, and a more pronounced increase in job satisfaction. Furthermore, the life satisfaction of non-commuting partners remains largely unchanged. Our findings suggest that WC is a mobility arrangement that allows couples to balance the career and residence preferences of both partners and is therefore, under certain conditions, a suitable alternative to household relocation.

Work where and when you want—just not with us? Field and survey experimental evidence on the post pandemic flexibility stigma from Germany

Lena Hipp¹; Corinna Harsch²; Marcel Knobloch³

¹ WZB Berlin Social Science Center; ² WZB Berlin Social Science Center/ Freie Universität Berlin; ³ University of Potsdam

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced remote work and greater working time flexibility for many employees—practices that largely persisted even after the pandemic officially ended. However, in light of some organizations' recent efforts to bring employees back to the office, it remains unclear how employers perceive candidates who express a desire for flexible work arrangements. Do such applicants suffer from a "flexibility stigma," as suggested by the extensive pre-pandemic literature? Are employers reluctant to hire employees with flexibility requests due to productivity concerns, or is it rather a perceived "lack of fit" that may deter them from hiring workers with such requests? To answer these questions, we proceeded in two steps.

First, we conducted a large-scale, pre-registered field experiment across a broad range of occupations and industries in Germany. We sent over 15,000 comparable unsolicited job applications (fielded in November 2024), in which we randomly varied applicants' gender and parental status, as well as whether they indicated a preference for flexible work (flexible hours or working from home). Our findings show that candidates who request flexible work are less likely to receive a positive employer reaction (i.e., callback or interview invitation vs. no response or rejection) than those who do not. Contrary to our expectations, we find that male applicants are less likely to receive a positive employer reaction, and that gender differences are particularly pronounced when applicants request the possibility to work from home or have flexible hours. However, we do not find evidence that flexibility penalties vary by parental status. While industry-level differences are generally modest, acceptance of remote work is particularly low in male-dominated manufacturing sectors. In contrast, in occupations and industries facing acute skill shortages, applicants requesting flexible arrangements do not experience any measurable disadvantage in their initial contact with employers.

In a second step, we invited the same employers to participate in a factorial survey experiment (FSE), in which they evaluated four vignettes that varied by gender, parental status, flexibility requests, and two productivity characteristics (fielded from May to June 2025). The results from the FSE, along with employer responses from a post-hoc survey, help us understand the mechanisms that lead to biases against workers who request remote work and flexible working hours.

Does increased working from home improve skill matching? Longitudinal evidence from the Australian HILDA survey

Stephan Bischof¹; Inga Laß²; Heiko Rüger¹

¹ Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung; ² Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research

The recent rise in working from home (WFH) has substantially transformed working life by altering job demands, tasks, and the relevance of specific skills such as communication and digital skills. Furthermore, WFH has widened local labour markets, potentially leading to better skill matches. However, the questions of how workers adapt to these new conditions and whether WFH allows them to (more) fully utilise their skills are still largely unanswered.

This study is the first to investigate the association between WFH and individuals' skill matching. We draw on longitudinal data from 23,968 workers from 23 waves of the Australian HILDA Survey (2001-2023), which provides annual information on both the extent of WFH and skill matching. This enables us to analyse how changes in WFH patterns affect individuals' skill matching over time. We apply both pooled OLS (POLS) and fixed-effects (FE) regressions to gauge the role of time-constant unobserved heterogeneity.

Our POLS results indicate that WFH is significantly associated with better skill matching for men independent of the extent of WFH, and for women with the exception of those with very extensive WFH use. In the FE models, the effects mostly attenuate but remain significant. This suggests that POLS effects may be inflated due to selection into WFH arrangements of workers with unobserved characteristics that also promote skill matching (e.g. ability). Overall, both men and women experience a significant improvement in skill matching by WFH, suggesting that WFH could play a crucial role in enhancing matching quality on the labour market.

Sessions 2

Session 2a

Public Opinion in Environmental Activism, Policy, and Justice

Wednesday, October 8, 2025
14.15 – 16.00

Room: P2

Session Chair: Stefanie Kley

Presentations

Public acceptance of different CO2 pricing policies: A factorial survey experiment

Felix Wolter

LMU Munich

Although CO2 pricing is widely regarded as one of the most effective policy tools for tackling climate change, it remains unpopular within the public. Previous research shows that the extent to which CO2 pricing policies are supported by the public depends on how they are implemented. The key variations are the level of the price itself and how the revenues generated for public finance are used. However, the literature investigating how these policies affect public acceptance yields mixed evidence. Against this background, the aim of this study is to investigate public acceptance of different CO2 pricing policies and mechanisms that drive them. Specifically, we seek to investigate whether different pricing schemes affect perceived fairness, acceptance, and how perceived fairness mediates acceptance. A further question is whether different price levels affect the subjectively perceived likelihood of climate-friendly behavioral change for different people (and whether there are mediation effects).

We will employ a factorial survey experiment (FSE), including an experimental variation in the amount of information that respondents receive. The FSE is implemented in an online access panel survey in Germany (N=1,000). The FSE varies the following aspects: attributes of example households presented to survey respondents in vignettes (income, CO2 emissions, and behavioral scope/dimension (e.g. mobility, heating) and costs for reducing these emissions), and characteristics of CO2 pricing schemes (CO2 price, share of redistribution, target, and use of the non-redistributed share).

The data for this study are being collected at the time we submit this abstract, so we cannot report any results.

Who deserves more space? Empirical insights into justice principles in urban transport allocation

Fabian Thiel; Claudia Diehl

University of Konstanz

Urban street space in many cities is dominated by motorized individual transport, with over 60% allocated to cars and much less to cycling or walking. This spatial asymmetry produces notable ecological and social challenges (particularly for those without a private car). However, little is known about how this inequality is perceived and evaluated by the broader population. We address three questions related to a socially just and ecologically sustainable distribution of urban street space: (1) Are people aware of this street space inequality? (2) To what extent is it considered unjust? (3) Under what conditions is there willingness to redistribute space? Drawing on theories of inequality perception, we expect individuals to systematically underestimate the true extent of spatial inequality, with perceptions of fairness shaped by everyday routines, self-interest, and ideological orientation. Political ideology and environmental concern are expected to further influence justice evaluations and support for redistribution. We use data from a nationwide online survey in Germany (n ≈ 1,000). Respondents estimate current and preferred street space allocations, assess allocation scenarios reflecting common justice principles (equality, equity, need), and, in a split-ballot experiment, some receive information about the real distribution before stating their support for redistribution. The findings make an important contribution to understanding misperceptions in urban transport and show how different types of distributions are evaluated by citizens. By linking these outcomes to individual-level predictors such as self-interest and ideological orientation, we can better explain variation in fairness judgments and political support for urban street space redesign.

Pushed by urgency, pulled back by radical actions: Unveiling public perceptions of climate activism

Sebastian Koos¹; Adrian Rinscheid²

¹ University of Konstanz; ² University of St.Gallen

As frustration with slow decarbonization grows, climate activism is becoming more radical. Beyond rallying popular support for their movement, activists aim to increase public support for their demands and foster greater political engagement among citizens. But how do activists' strategic choices shape these outcomes? And how will public support evolve under increasingly adverse climatic conditions? Expanding recent lines of inquiry in environmental sociology, political science, and social psychology, we leverage a preregistered experiment to study support for climate activism among US (n=4,633) and German (n=4,636) residents. Specifically, we compare responses to different forms of climate protest in the present and in a hypothetical—but plausible—future where climate-related losses are increasingly felt. Our results show that radical protest tactics reduce public support relative to conventional tactics, such as demonstrations. Yet under worsening climate conditions, public support for climate activism significantly rises—although support for radical activism remains limited.

Fridays for Future and the Last Generation - a mixed-methods analysis of the perception of peaceful and disruptive forms of climate protest

Sandra Walzenbach¹; Johanna Meyer²

¹ Universität Konstanz; ² Lund University

Fridays for Future and the Last Generation have become central actors in Germany's climate protest movement, united by the aim of accelerating political action on climate change. While both rely on public support to increase pressure on decision-makers, they differ in their strategies: Fridays for Future uses peaceful demonstrations, whereas the Last Generation employs disruptive tactics.

This study examines public perceptions of these contrasting protest forms using a mixed-methods approach. In an explanatory sequential design, we first collected quantitative data from a probability-based sample of 1,047 citizens in Konstanz, followed by qualitative interviews with a subsample of 53 respondents — a strategy that provides a comprehensive view of how different protest forms are received.

Quantitative results show greater public understanding for peaceful protest than for disruptive actions, while both forms are primarily supported by younger individuals who are environmentally concerned and perceive climate change as a serious threat. Qualitative findings suggest that levels of support are shaped by a perceived trade-off between legitimacy and effectiveness. Understanding for the Last Generation often depends on whether their actions are viewed as non-violent. For most interviewees, the (positively perceived) media attention generated by disruptive protest does not outweigh concerns about its legitimacy and effectiveness. Overall, our study reveals polarized views of disruptive protest, with public reactions more consistent with the concept of backfiring than with the radical flank hypothesis.

Session 2b

Displacement and Decision-Making: Refugee Mobility and Settlement Intentions in Times of Conflict

Wednesday, October 8, 2025
14.15 – 16.00

Room: P3

Session Chair: Knut Petzold

Presentations

When home changes overnight: Syrian refugees' settlement intentions after Assad's fall

Luisa Hammer; Kamal Kassam; Yuliya Kosyakova; Katia Gallegos-Torres; Lukas Olbrich; Theresa Koch; Simon Wagner

IAB Nürnberg

On December 8, 2024, Bashar al-Assad's regime unexpectedly collapsed, abruptly altering the political landscape in Syria and reshaping the perceived return prospects for millions of Syrians living abroad. We exploit this unanticipated regime change as a natural experiment to estimate the causal impact of homeland developments on refugees' settlement and return intentions. Drawing on novel data from the newly launched International Mobility Panel of Migrants in Germany (IMPa), whose fieldwork began just days before Assad's fall, we show that the regime collapse significantly affected the expressed settlement intentions of Syrians in Germany. Respondents interviewed after December 8 were less likely to express permanent settlement intentions in Germany, more likely to report emigration considerations, and more likely to express uncertainty about their future in Germany. However, we find no effect on concrete short-term emigration plans, suggesting that increased return aspirations reflect forward-looking intentions rather than immediate behavioral change. Further analyses show that legal security in Germany acts as a push factor facilitating emigration intentions, while social and emotional integration into the host country is associated with a stronger preference to remain

Military conflict intensities at home and the settlement intentions of Ukrainian refugees abroad

Yuliya Kosyakova¹; Andreas Ette²; Silvia Schwanhäuser¹

¹ Institut für Arbeitsmarkt und Berufsforschung (IAB); ² Federal Institute for Population Research

This study provides crucial insights into how military conflict intensities in refugees' home regions influence their intentions to settle abroad. Utilizing the context of Ukrainian refugees in Germany following the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022, and leveraging natural variations in conflict intensity, we uncover significant and nuanced impacts of both short-term and long-term conflict dynamics on refugees' intentions to stay abroad. We find that particularly short-term conflict intensities significantly elevate the likelihood of refugees choosing to settle permanently in Germany. These recent violent events serve as potent deterrents against return migration by amplifying perceptions of insecurity and instability associated with their home regions. This relationship is robust to various model specifications. Extending the model to account for uncertainty about the outcome and duration of the war in Ukraine, implies that the conflict intensity particularly reduces the uncertainty of the decision to stay in Germany instead of returning to Ukraine. In other words, the more intense the conflict situation, the more certain the refugee is to stay in Germany. Our analysis further identifies variability in sensitivity to conflict with males, those with children left behind, and those whose motivations for leaving extend beyond immediate safety concerns—such as economic reasons—are particularly influenced by these military conflict intensities.

Conflict-induced emigration of scientists from Ukraine to internal and international destinations

Michael Zaslavsky¹; Aliakbar Akbaritabar²

¹ University of Wisconsin-Madison; ² Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR)

Current migration theories offer little insight into the potentially negative aspects of scholarly migration as a form of high-skilled migration, with high-skilled migration being largely viewed in a positive light. Yet scholarly migration is not always a tale of freedom, choice, and innovation, as the labels "researchers at risk", "scientists in exile", or "refugee academics" demonstrate. We document the problematic aspects of scholarly migration by investigating the case of Ukrainian and Ukraine-based researchers and the effects of the conflict since 2014. We draw on two large-scale, rich bibliometric datasets, Scopus and OpenAlex, which allow us to identify both internal and international scholarly migration at the subnational level from 2009 to 2022. Results suggest that after 2014 there was significant internal and international outmigration from Eastern Ukrainian regions, with well over 50 per 1,000 scholars leaving the Eastern oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk to both internal and international destinations in the first three years after the start of the conflict. These results highlight the importance of monitoring how science systems change during armed conflict, and complicate current treatments of scholarly migration in the literature as solely driven by economic intentions and exercising one's freedom to move.

Refugee migration and trust in the context of multiple crises

Alexander Patzina¹; Matthias Collischon²; Felix Rahberger³

¹ Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg; ² Institut für Arbeitsmarkt und Berufsforschung (IAB); ³ Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg

Less than a decade after the 2015 refugee crisis, Europe experienced again an unprecedented influx of refugees, this time driven by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent displacement of several million Ukrainians. Against this background, we investigate how refugee migration to Germany influences social trust, which is crucial for social integration and the functioning of societies. To conceptualize how changes in refugee shares in German districts affect social trust, we draw on notions from contact and threat theory. Furthermore, we differentiate between different refugee groups (i.e., refugees from Ukraine and from Africa and Middle East) to enhance our theoretical understanding on the role of cultural proximity and economic competition for social integration. Empirically, we use data from 2017 to 2023 of the Panel Study Labor Market and Social Security that enable us to exploit regional and temporal variation in refugee shares at the district-level. By exploring within-person/within-district/within-year changes in the outcome variable, accounting for unobserved time-invariant differences between individuals and districts, and controlling for national trends in the outcome variables over time, our results suggest: (1) An increasing refugee share on the district-level decreases social trust. (2) Refugees from Middle East and Africa mostly drive this negative effect. (3) The economic downturn and individual level unemployment intensify negative effects of refugee shares on social trust. Consequently, we conclude that the ethnic proximity and a shared value system between the host society and the refugees' origins determine perceived symbolic threats that influence social trust among the host society.

Session 2c

Labor Market Discrimination: Advancing Theory and Empirical Research

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

14.15 – 16.00

Room: P4

Session Chair: Fabian Kalleitner

Presentations

Inside the black box: An analytical look at five micro-level mechanisms of hiring discrimination

Adrian Kunz

Tilburg University

Building on a large body of studies that use correspondence experiments to show discrimination in hiring on a diverse range of grounds, such as ethnicity, race or gender, this paper aims to provide analytical clarity on the different micro-level mechanisms that drive discriminatory hiring outcomes. Moving beyond the distinction between taste-based and statistical discrimination, I propose a theoretical framework that distinguishes five micro-level mechanisms: taste-based, variance-based individual-level, mean-based statistical, mean-variance statistical and prototype-based discrimination. I describe and formalise each mechanism, summarise what we already know about their presence and dominance from existing studies, offer a comparison between them, and identify new avenues for research. In doing so, the paper serves two key objectives. First, I provide analytical detail on the mechanisms that the current literature generally relies on when theoretically describing discriminatory hiring outcomes. Second, I generate a set of testable hypotheses which can be used in future studies. The results of this theoretical exercise show that the mechanisms of taste-based, variance-based individual-level, mean-based statistical, mean-variance statistical and prototype-based discrimination provide distinct explanations. Yet, while some evidence supports taste-based discrimination, empirical support for other mechanisms remains limited. I identify the need to systematically study the proposed mechanisms in comparison to taste-based discrimination using laboratory experiments, factorial survey experiments, and observational designs. This will help assess their relative explanatory power across different hiring contexts and clarify their role in driving discriminatory hiring outcomes.

The organizational context of discrimination: How employer attitudes shape ethnic discrimination in hiring

Martin Neugebauer¹; Andrea Forster²

¹ Karlsruhe University of Education; ² Utrecht University

The existence of ethnic discrimination in the hiring process has been repeatedly confirmed using field experiments that confront real employers with fictitious applicants. However, the conditions that exacerbate or alleviate hiring discrimination have received surprisingly little attention by researchers. One reason for this paucity of research is that field experiments do usually not contain the necessary information to study mechanisms behind discriminatory behavior as they solely collect dichotomous answers from employers next to a few general firm characteristics. For example, the diversity attitudes of recruiting personnel and the openness of organizations towards diversity remain in the dark. Using a unique combination of different data sources, we attempt to study these attitudes as a source of ethnic discrimination in hiring. First, using data from a nation-wide field experiment in Germany, we confirm previous research on ethnic discrimination in hiring by showing a hiring gap of 7 percentage points between German and Turkish applicants. Second, we study the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes of employers and ethnic discrimination. As described above, it is difficult to obtain direct information on employers' attitudes from field experimental data. Therefore, we use three angles to approximate employer attitudes. First, we look at local election results as a proxy for anti-immigrant attitudes. Second, we determine firms' commitment to diversity by evaluating texts from job advertisements using automated text analysis. And, third, we apply a survey questionnaire to a subset of our field experiment sample that gives us the opportunity to study recruiter attitudes directly.

Compensating or deepening gender and race disadvantages? Public preferences on hiring, negotiation, and promotions

Cristóbal Moya¹; Donald Tomaskovic-Devey²; Peter Valet³; Carsten Sauer⁴

¹ DIW Berlin; ² University of Massachusetts Amherst; ³ Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg; ⁴ Bielefeld University

This study examines the legitimacy of inequality-generating mechanisms in organizations—social closure and exploitation—based on gender and race in the US. Drawing on Relational Inequality Theory, we investigate whether the public aligns with existing disadvantages, compensates for them, or disregards them in hiring, negotiation, and promotion contexts.

In Study 1, two survey experiments manipulated gender and race. First, participants acted as organizational decision-makers choosing between two equally qualified candidates for a high-status, masculinized job, and responded to salary negotiation requests. Results revealed a compensatory preference in hiring, favoring women and minority candidates over white men, but no significant differences in salary negotiations. Then, participants evaluated a low-status worker requesting a raise, assessing the fairness of the raise obtained, and whether the worker should negotiate further. Findings indicated support for minority workers to seek further negotiation opportunities, but no differences in wage entitlements. Ideological factors, including progressive views on gender and race, significantly influenced preferences in both experiments.

Study 2 extended this investigation to promotion contexts in a preregistered survey experiment, testing whether compensatory preferences stem from disadvantages causally attributed to organizations. Participants selected between two internal candidates for a managerial promotion and were exposed to different executive team compositions, all-white men or diverse. Results again showed compensatory preferences, while evidencing strong expectations that the executive team would prefer and pay more to white men.

Our findings suggest that while there is public support for compensating opportunity disadvantages, this does not extend to wage negotiations, potentially legitimizing limited inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

Session 2d

Advanced Sociological Methods: Causality and Simulation

Wednesday, October 8, 2025
14.15 – 16.00

Room: P5

Session Chair: Heinz Leitgöb

Presentations

Beyond the main effects: A methodological discussion and systematic review of sociological moderation analyses

Lena Jost; Josef Brüderl; Katrin Auspurg

LMU Munich

Almost all sociological claims are not framed as general laws but rather as conditional claims that are valid in certain contexts but not in others. Moderation analysis is the analytical tool to examine such conditional claims. Thus, moderation analysis contributes to the development of theory and the design of targeted interventions. Given its relevance, moderation analyses should be designed and reported in a clear, meaningful and sound way.

However, recent methodological contributions have raised concerns about the adequacy of current research practices in moderation analyses. Reviews have demonstrated shortcomings in moderation analyses in political science and psychology. Methodological articles from these disciplines, as well as from epidemiology and statistics, have called for more careful consideration of conceptual as well as statistical aspects in moderation analyses.

This article aims to introduce the methodological debate to sociology. First, it synthesizes central claims from the methodological literature on estimand definition, identification, and estimation in moderation analysis. Sociological examples are used to build sociological intuition and to illustrate the challenges and potential solutions. Second, this paper provides a systematic review of moderation analyses recently published in leading sociological journals. This allows us to evaluate the extent to which the methodological recommendations have been implemented in substantive research, as well as to identify areas where further clarification and engagement in methodological discussions are needed.

Bias and bias amplification in treatment effect estimates based on misspecified propensity score models

Gerhard Krug

Institute for Employment Research (IAB)

Nonparametric propensity score methods are increasingly being used in social research to avoid misspecification bias in parametric methods such as linear regression. However, these methods can also be vulnerable to misspecification if the propensity score is estimated using parametric methods. Various methodological innovations have been developed to reduce or eliminate misspecification bias in propensity score methods, but they are underused in sociological research. This study conducts a comprehensive Monte Carlo simulation study to evaluate the performance of these innovations compared to that of standard methods. The results show that while some of the more recently developed extensions or alternatives to propensity score methods can substantially reduce misspecification bias, some are biased even in the absence of misspecification. In addition, most methods are subject to bias amplification due to "hidden dual misspecification", a problem previously overlooked in methodological research. Among the estimators evaluated, entropy balancing was the most successful in both eliminating regular misspecification bias and reducing bias amplification. The covariate balancing propensity score and also augmented inverse probability weighting performed well. This study concludes that these estimators deserve more attention in applied social research.

(Micro-)simulations between analytical and empirical-analytical sociology

Marc Hannappel¹; Sabine Zinn²

¹ University of Koblenz; ² Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung

Computer simulations remain a marginal method in German sociology, with microsimulations in particular receiving little attention in mainstream methodological literature. In contrast, agent-based simulations have gained visibility — largely due to Hedström's „Dissecting the Social“, which established their relevance within the framework of Analytical Sociology. Analytical Sociology seeks to explain social phenomena through mechanism-based models rather than universal laws. It emphasizes the actions and interactions of reflexive agents embedded in social contexts, and it critiques certain applications of traditional survey research for failing to capture the dynamics of social interaction and emergence. Agent-based simulations are central to this approach because they can model complex macro-level patterns as the result of simple, rule-based micro-level behaviours. However, whereas ABM often explores theoretical mechanisms through rule-based behaviour, microsimulations typically focus on empirically grounded, probabilistic modelling of individual-level transitions based on observed data. As such, microsimulations are more closely aligned with empirically oriented methodological frameworks. One such framework is Empirical-Analytical Sociology, which emphasizes theory-driven, transparent, and replicable empirical research. Microsimulation fits particularly well within this framework. It allows for the decomposition of complex phenomena into analytically tractable components (model structure), depends on a high-quality empirical database (simulation population and transition parameters), and relies on explicit theoretical assumptions to guide model design. This presentation will therefore not only introduce the theoretical foundations of microsimulation but also demonstrate how it can be applied to analyse interdependencies between biographical events. By bridging empirical data and formal modelling, microsimulations offer a promising method for understanding dynamic social processes.

Session 2e

Gender Measurement and Gendered Language

Wednesday, October 8, 2025
14.15 – 16.00

Room: Fakultätssaal

Session Chair: Isabel Habicht

Presentations

Gradational gender identification across European gender regimes

Pia Schober; Silke Büchau; Marie-Fleur Philipp

University of Tübingen

This study explores how gender equality and recognition of gender diversity at institutional and normative levels of societies relate to the prevalence of more versus less polarised gender self-concepts. Responding to widespread criticism of binary measures of gender, we conceptualise gender as a multidimensional social structure and draw on gradational measures of femininity and masculinity in the European Social Survey (2023, Round 11). Gradational measures of femininity and masculinity grant individuals more flexibility in selecting an accurate and comprehensive self-definition, while also allowing for more variation for quantitative analyses.

Our analysis includes 40,156 individuals nested in 194 European regions (across 24 countries). We construct a continuous gender polarisation score and a binary variable of non-conforming gender identification, which comprises trans and non-binary individuals as well as cisgender women who feel more masculine than feminine and cisgender men who feel more feminine than masculine.

On average gender polarisation is lowest in the Nordic countries and highest in Eastern European countries. The prevalence of non-conforming gender identification is highest in the Nordic countries (>12%) and lowest in Poland, Germany and Greece (3-5%).

We explain respondents' gradational gender identity with individual-level variables as well as regional-level gender norms and institutions in the European regions. Multilevel regression models show that parental college education and respondents' higher education relate to a less polarised gender identification. Less polarised and non-conforming gender identifications are more prevalent in regions with a higher share of women in political representation and in regions with more egalitarian gender norms.

Categorical and gradational gender measures: Comparing their explanatory power for the pursuit of cultural activities

Gunnar Otte; Gianluca Thorn

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

Although gender comprises various facets, hardly any measuring instruments have been established in survey research beyond the dichotomous measurement of "male" and "female". In current research, the focus is on how third genders can be surveyed, but this leaves the majority of respondents unaffected. Against this background, Westbrook and Saperstein suggested that gender identity should be measured in a gradational way, i.e. people of all genders should be asked how masculine and feminine they consider themselves to be. We applied this instrument in the third wave of the panel study "Cultural education and cultural participation in Germany" in 2025. The gender entered on the birth certificate was queried as well. We first examine the quality of this new measurement approach. Secondly, we investigate the explanatory power of gradational gender identity in comparison with binary gender affiliation for a broad set of outcome variables of cultural consumption at home and outside the home, as well as one's own creative cultural activities. Our general hypothesis is that gender identity produces stronger effects than binary gender categorization. We expect that cultural activities which are more typical for women than for men (e.g., attending dance shows and reading), will be practiced more strongly with an increasingly feminine identity. Conversely, cultural activities with masculine connotations (e.g., attending rock concerts and visiting technology museums) should be practiced more often as masculine identity increases. In addition, the interaction between both gender measures is examined in multivariate regression models to obtain more differentiated results.

Network diffusion of transient behaviours: A case study of gender-inclusive language

Anica Waldendorf

Nuffield College, University of Oxford

How does a new behaviour spread? Numerous studies have investigated diffusion processes and revealed that factors such as network topology and characteristics are central in determining the course of diffusion. Less attention is paid to what is diffusing (i.e. characteristics of that behaviour) in favour of identifying patterns of diffusion. These studies hinge on a key assumption: that adoption is absolute. Either the behaviour is adopted or not. I assume that what is diffusing matters and waive the assumption that the behaviour is absolute. Instead, I propose that there is a class of behaviours where adoption is not absolute but flexible, which makes adoption transient. This in turn could hamper or enable adoption. Flexible adoption could lower the threshold for adoption, making diffusion more likely. Yet it could also create instability as any spread can be reversed before a critical mass is reached. I use gender-inclusive language as a case-study to build the concept of transient adoption and delineate implications this has for diffusion processes. I draw on two waves of qualitative interviews with integrated ego-centric network data for 21 cases. In a second step, I use these insights to set up agent-based models where adoption is not absolute but transient, to test whether relaxing the assumption of absolute adoption is a barrier or enabler for diffusion.

Discrimination when (not) using gendered language? Results of a survey experiment on social bias and scholarship outcomes among academics at German universities

Mark Lutter; Naomi Pech; Lisa Wunsch

University of Wuppertal

Scholarship allocation plays a crucial role in shaping of academic careers. While prior research has examined social biases such as class and gender, less is known about the effects of using vs. not using gendered language in professional contexts. We report findings from a large-scale between-subjects survey experiment with over 10,000 responses, in which academics at German universities evaluated motivation letters for fictitious scholarship applications. The letters varied by applicant gender, class background, and use of gendered language. Respondents assessed style, form, spelling/grammar, persuasiveness, recommendation likelihood, and perceived success. Results indicate that the use of gendered language generally leads to more favorable evaluations, particularly in terms of recommendation likelihood and perceived success. This is also partly true for the rating variables, especially for the ratings on the letter's form and persuasiveness. This discrimination effect is especially strong among post-docs, but not so strong among pre-docs and even absent among professors. Furthermore, applicant gender and class background matter; female applicants receive more favorable ratings than their male counterparts, while those from affluent backgrounds are less likely to be recommended but are perceived as more likely to succeed. Overall, male students, those from higher class backgrounds, or those who do not use gendered language face lower recommendation rates and less favorable letter ratings.

Panel Discussion

Empirical research and evidence-based policy advice

(hosted by JGU Research Unit Interdisciplinary Public Policy [IPP])

Wednesday, October 8, 2025
16.30 – 18.00

Room: P1

Panelists: Herbert Brücker, Lena Hipp,
Juliane Seifert, Katharina Spiess
Moderation: Marita Jacob

The panel discussion will be held in German.

Abstract

This panel will discuss the potential and current relevance of sociological research for evidence-based policy advice. What criteria and standards must social research meet in order to serve as a basis for policy recommendations? What are the prerequisites for evidence-based results to be heard politically and incorporated into political decision-making processes? What are the obstacles to communicating and transferring scientific findings into policy? Why is the transfer more successful in some fields than in others? How do political decision-makers perceive the contribution of sociology to solving practical problems? These questions will be explored using the examples of two highly relevant fields of society, namely the education system and the labor market, and the challenges posed for these fields by contemporary migration processes. The panel will represent the perspectives of science, politics, and policy advice in the fields mentioned above.

Prof. Dr. Herbert Brücker is Professor of Economics at the Humboldt University of Berlin, head of the Department "Migration, Economics and Labor Markets" of the Berlin Institute for Empirical Integration and Migration Research (BIM) and head of the research area "Migration, Integration and International Labor Market Research" at the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) in Nuremberg. He coordinates the IAB-SOEP Migration Sample and the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees together with his partners from SOEP, BAMF and IAB.

Prof. Lena Hipp, Ph.D. is professor of "Social Inequality and Social Policy" at the University of Potsdam and research professor of "Work, Family, and Social Inequality" at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center (WZB). To study social inequalities related to work, gender, and care responsibilities, she draws on a broad repertoire of theoretical and methodological approaches. She has surveyed migrant 24-hour care-work using respondent-driven sampling. She uses experimental and computational approaches in a collaboration with one of the leading international care platforms to understand the sorting and matching processes in markets that are characterized by high trust requirements and, potentially, discrimination against non-traditional caregivers. Lena Hipp regularly engages in policy advising and has served as a member of the Berliner Familienbeirat since 2022. In November 2024, she received the "Research in Responsibility" award from the German Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft and the Leibniz Association for her groundbreaking scientific work.

Juliane Seifert, State Secretary a. D. ("außer Dienst"), served at the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community from 2021 to 2025. Prior to that, she served from 2018 to 2021 as State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Women, Senior Citizens and Youth. She has also worked in various political and administrative roles on a federal and regional level, including as a technical director of the Social Democratic Party or in the state chancellery of Rheinland-Pfalz. She specializes in topics such as social integration, equal opportunities, and social participation; her expertise includes the integration of politics, science, and practice, as well as promoting inclusive and sustainable models of society

Prof. Dr. C. Katharina Spiess is Director of the Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB). She holds the professorship of population economics at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. She studied economics at the University of Mannheim. In 1996, she earned her doctorate degree at Ruhr University in Bochum. In 2000, she moved to DIW Berlin, where she worked at the research-based infrastructure unit of the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) until 2012. In 2005, she completed her habilitation (second thesis) at the Technical University of Berlin.

From 2006 to 2021, she held a University Professorship for Family and Education Economics at Freie Universität Berlin. She headed the Department of Education and Family at the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin) between 2012 and 2021. She was a guest professor at Cornell University, and a visiting scholar at the University of Washington Seattle and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Her research focuses on population studies, particularly on education and family issues. Her work has been published in well-known field journals, such as the Journal for Population Economics, Journal of Health Economics, Labour Economics, Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, and Economics of Education Review. She is a member of various research networks, expert groups, and commissions, including the Scientific Advisory Board for Family Issues at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs or the Advisory Board of the CRETE OECD Centre for Population Dynamics.

Prof. Dr. Marita Jacob is Professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology and Social Psychology at the University of Cologne. Her research focuses on social inequalities in education, employment, and family life. She is particularly interested in how family background, gender, and ethnic origin influence educational decisions, how gender inequalities in the labor market relate to family dynamics, and most recently, how barriers to higher education access can be reduced through interventions such as counseling programs. Her recent project on guidance counseling was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia. The project involved a large-scale field experiment to evaluate the effectiveness of a counseling program offered by universities (both traditional and universities of applied sciences). The research findings directly informed policy recommendations and contributed to the program's expansion to currently 27 universities throughout North Rhine-Westphalia.

Apéro & Poster Session

Wednesday, October 8, 2025	
18.00 – 20.00	
18.00 – 18.30 Short Presentations of all Posters	Room: P1
18.30 – 20.00 Apéro and Poster Session	Room: Lobby

The poster session consists of two parts: a brief, one-minute presentation of all posters in plenary (room P1) and an informal presentation and discussion of the posters in the lobby. The poster session in the lobby will be accompanied by regional delicacies such as Rhine-Hessian wine, federweißer, non- alcoholic beverages, onion tart, Spundekäs, and other snacks.

The abstracts of all poster presentations can be found at the end of the booklet.

Sessions 3

Session 3a

Polarization Reconsidered: Educational Divides, Ideological Alignments, and Media Influence

Thursday, October 9, 2025

09.00 – 10.45

Room: P2

Session Chair: Alexander Patzina

Presentations

Opponents and supporters of the liberal script. Results from a survey conducted in 26 countries from different regions of the world

Jürgen Gerhards

Freie Universität Berlin

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, many believed that this was the final victory of the liberal model of society. But things turned out differently. Today, liberal societies and their institutions are under severe attack from both outside and inside. As part of the Cluster of Excellence “Contestations of the Liberal Script” located at the Freie Universität Berlin, we conducted a survey in 26 countries from different regions of the world to determine supporters and opponents of what we define as the Liberal Script, a theoretically derived bundle of liberal values. The paper is based on a first draft of a book manuscript coauthored with Lukas Antoine, Heiko Giebler, Rasmus Ollroge, and Michael Zürn, and summarizes some of the key findings. The presentation will be structured along the following research questions. (1) What are the core characteristics of the liberal script, and how did we measure them? (2) In which countries around the globe is the liberal script most supported, and where is it most opposed? (3) Which societies are divided and show a high level of polarization, and which are more coherent? (4) Which theories can be used to “explain” the differences in support for the liberal script? (5) And which theories turn out to be better suited to make sense of the differences in support for the liberal script both at the country and individual level.

Polarization is not universal. Trends in attitude and left-right polarization in 28 countries (1990-2022)

Martin Schröder¹; Martin Ulrich²; Moritz Rehm²

¹ Universität des Saarlandes; ² Saarland University

Extreme polarization is undesirable, as it renders democratic consensus impossible. But are societies really becoming increasingly polarized? Using the Integrated Value Survey (191,069 individuals, 28 countries, 1990-2022), this article shows that preferences for redistribution and moral attitudes are not becoming more polarized across countries; on the contrary, moral attitudes and redistribution preferences have even become more homogeneous in many countries. However, the US and other selected countries have experienced more self-sorting into extreme left-right political affiliations. In the US, this stronger sorting into left and right also aligns increasingly with moral attitudes and redistribution preferences. Illustrating what sort of polarization occurs where and when, our study shows for the first time that attitude polarization is not a general secular trend across countries. This advances on existing research, which is typically limited to studying polarization in a single country, for a single attitude, or at a single point in time.

Rising educational divides in attitudes: How cohort polarization can mask age-related polarization

Fabian Kratz

LMU München

The question of whether attitudes become more polarized over time has stimulated significant scientific and political debate. This study is the first to show that polarization processes can occur both across cohorts and with rising age, and that cohort-based polarization may obscure age-related polarization. I introduce the age polarization and cohort polarization hypotheses, which propose that attitudes become increasingly polarized both as individuals age and across successive cohorts. I use multi-cohort panel data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) study and leverage its longest-running attitude measure—concerns about immigration. I show that education-specific differences in immigration concerns intensify both across cohorts and with rising age, and that age-related polarization only becomes apparent when cohort-based polarization is accounted for. These substantial and original findings contribute to debates on polarization processes in attitudes over time and advance the literature on heterogeneity in the liberalizing effect of education.

Why feeling close? Party identification with the AfD over time

Florian K. Kley¹; Holger Lengfeld²; Stephan Poppe²

¹ Leipzig University, Research Institute Social Cohesion; ² Leipzig University, Institute of Sociology

Although the Alternative for Germany (AfD) has evolved into a major political force, there is limited knowledge on a clear-cut comparison of the changing factors over time within the AfD's core clientele.

We use random forest models to identify key determinants of identification with the AfD and their development over time, using nine waves (2014–2022) of the German Socio-Economic Panel. Key predictors are grouped into (1) socio-economic status (education, class, income), (2) economic concerns (personal and macro-economic worries, job-loss fears) and (3) cultural concerns (immigration worries). We rely on partial dependence plots and indicators of variable importance to trace temporal shifts.

Our preliminary results show that socio-economic markers are largely stable and rather weak. Despite an increase in identification with the AfD among the lowest income group, the importance of this variable has continuously decreased, challenging the conclusion of a growing socio-structural divide. The impact of concerns relating to economic developments is relatively weak and has remained fairly consistent. Concerns about cultural threats have become a major issue ever since worries about immigration increased dramatically between 2017 and 2020.

As identification with the AfD is anchored fundamentally in persistent concerns about migration rather than socio-structural factors, this issue-driven appeal has proven stable even in times of declining immigration, forming a resilient core of support that is unlikely to diminish.

Session 3b

New Data Infrastructures for the Social Sciences

(in Cooperation with GESIS, RatSWD, KonsortSWD, NFDI)

Thursday, October 9, 2025

09.00 – 10.45

Room: P3

Session Chair: Gunnar Otte

Presentations

Unlocking digital behavioral data: New user-centered approaches for social science research

Sebastian Stier

GESIS — Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

Following the shutdown of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) by online platforms, social science research relying on platform data has largely come to a standstill. However, the "post-API" age also presents opportunities for innovation and the development of more robust, quality-assured data collection strategies in computational social science. Researchers are increasingly adopting user-centered data collection approaches, in which participants are recruited and provide informed consent for the collection of longitudinal digital behavioral data in combination with (panel) surveys. The key advantage of such research designs is their ability to capture authentic, in-context user behavior as it naturally unfolds, while also enabling the study of individual-level determinants and consequences of digital behavior with established survey instruments.

While the advantages of user-centered data collections are evident, implementing such research designs poses significant challenges. As with all data linkage approaches, obtaining participant consent and securing actual data transfers may introduce sample biases. Collecting user-centered behavioral data further requires the development and ongoing maintenance of custom research software. Moreover, despite informed consent, important challenges regarding research ethics, data privacy and adherence to open science principles remain.

This talk will introduce GESIS's service offerings for user-centered digital behavioral data and illustrate their added value through recent research examples. Participants will get to know the GESIS AppKit and GESIS Web Tracking services and how these can be combined with traditional survey methods utilizing the GESIS Panel.dbd Digital Behavioral Data Sample to create richer datasets.

Research data management made easy – Tools & approaches by KonsortSWD -- NFDI4Society

Christof Wolf; Bernhard Miller

GESIS-Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

Sociology is among the disciplines where researchers most frequently report reusing third-party data (Ambrasat et al. 2022), leveraging these for validating their own data, improving models and instruments, and addressing new questions by combining datasets. However, sociology and other social sciences rank low in publicly providing their own data for reuse. Key barriers include the high effort required for documentation and sharing, lack of recognition for these activities, and insufficient infrastructure (Zenk-Möltgen, et al. 2018). Nonetheless, there is broad consensus, especially in analytical sociology, that data reuse is essential for robust evidence and cumulative knowledge growth. The National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) is a long-term initiative by the German federal and state governments that consolidates existing services for researchers and creates new ones where needed. Its goal is to simplify research data management—from data access to archiving—and reduce the burden on researchers. For the social sciences, KonsortSWD – NFDI4Society serves as the central hub for research data infrastructure within the NFDI. Building on 39 accredited research data centers, NFDI4Society expands services such as data management plans and training materials, and collaborates with other NFDI areas (e.g., NFDI4Earth) to enhance access to environmental and other data for sociology. Services like Stamp for standardized data management planning, Forum4MICA for expertise on tricky data questions, and the Open Data Format illustrate this approach.

Unlocking new data potentials for social science research: Current initiatives of the German Data Forum (RatSWD)

Corinna Kleinert

Leibniz-Institut für Bildungsverläufe (IfBi)

Data offer tremendous potential for advancing social science research, and the global volume of scientifically usable data continues to grow rapidly. The German Data Forum (Rat für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsdaten, RatSWD) plays a pivotal role in making data available for research projects and evidence-based policymaking. Since its foundation in 2004, the RatSWD has improved access to high-quality research data from official, scientific, and private sources. Two types of data have become particularly important over the past years: health data and firm data. Health data are crucial for monitoring and controlling diseases and disease outbreaks and researching social and economic mechanisms related to health and disease as well as social and economic aspects of healthcare. Firm data are already playing an increasingly important role in the research of many disciplines, however, in Germany the limited access restricts the potential for analysis. The RatSWD intensifies efforts to improve access to these types of data by developing new standards and procedures to ease data linkage, enhance data protection, and foster wider data availability.

This presentation will highlight RatSWD's initiatives, discuss practical implications for researchers working with complex new data types, and illustrate how these efforts contribute to expanding conventional data infrastructures.

Data infrastructures for the research of social crisis phenomena

Andrés Saravia¹; Stefan Liebig²

¹WZB Berlin Social Science Center/ Freie Universität Berlin; ²Freie Universität Berlin

Social implications of current and potential crisis phenomena, such as epidemics, natural hazards or armed conflicts are diverse and may heavily challenge modern societies. In order to react adequately to these challenges, policymakers have to rely on evidence based advises of the social sciences. This in turn can only be provided with quality-tested empirical data.

The project 'Vulnerability, preparedness and resilience in crises - data infrastructures for the research of social crisis phenomena', which is part of KonsortSWD – NFDI4Society, aims to improve infrastructures for the research and management of crises and disasters and to strengthen cooperation between science and practice in this area. To achieve this goal, the project has developed an online information platform on data relevant to crises and disasters, has pursued measures to incorporate crisis- and disaster-related content into longitudinal surveys and has organised different events to bring researchers from social sciences and other disciplines such as geography, engineering or medicine as well as practitioners and representatives from ministries and administration together.

The aim of the contribution is to present the project and its current status and to discuss opportunities for cooperation. In particular, the urgency of considering crisis-relevant content in panel studies will be emphasised and joint approaches to implementation will be discussed, shifting empirical social research from an ad hoc push strategy towards a foresighted pull strategy.

Session 3c

Ethnic Discrimination and the Boundaries of Belonging

Thursday, October 9, 2025

09.00 – 10.45

Room: P4

Session Chair: Johanna Gereke

Presentations

The Headscarf and intergroup attitudes of young muslim women: The role of religiosity and experiences of discrimination

David Kretschmer¹; Lars Leszczensky²

¹ Nuffield College, University of Oxford; ² Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main

In Western societies, the Islamic headscarf is often seen as a marker of "otherness," signaling religious minority status and cultural difference. While negative attitudes and discrimination against veiled women are well-documented, less is known about how veiling shapes Muslim women's own attitudes toward religious in-groups and out-groups. This study examines whether Muslim women who wear the headscarf differ in their intergroup attitudes from those who do not and investigates whether differences can be explained by more frequent experiences of discrimination or higher religiosity among veiled women.

We address these questions with data from a survey experiment involving 344 Muslim women aged 16–25 in Germany, one-third of whom regularly wear the headscarf. We assess attitudes toward the religious in- and out-group by letting respondents evaluate experimentally manipulated profiles of fictitious new neighbors with different religious affiliations.

Results show that women who wear the headscarf display a stronger in-group bias than those who do not. They also report experiencing more discrimination and higher religiosity, but this does not explain differences in intergroup attitudes. Further analyses reveal that the stronger in-group bias among veiled women reflects particularly positive attitudes towards highly religious Muslims and greater skepticism towards secular individuals, irrespective of their group affiliation.

These findings highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of intergroup attitudes among Muslim women. While the headscarf is often perceived as a symbol of "otherness", veiled Muslim women are not generally critical of religious out-groups. Instead, they express particularly strong positive attitudes toward highly religious in-group members.

Constructing social threat: The impact of terrorist attacks on identity frames and opinion dynamics in Swiss media (1994–2024)

Anina Schwarzenbach; Livia Zöbeli¹

¹ University of Bern

This study interrogates the construction of social threat through media framing of extremism in Switzerland over a three-decade period (1994–2024). Employing a corpus of 286,660 articles from major Swiss print and online news outlets, the research examines how identity-related frames evolve in response to both global and domestic events, particularly the reverberations following terrorist attacks abroad. Although Switzerland has not experienced large-scale extremist violence, its media discourse is profoundly influenced by immigration debates and European security concerns, rendering it a unique site for analyzing the social construction of threat.

Grounded in framing theory (Goffman 1974; Entman 1993) and informed by theories of moral panic and risk perception (Cohen 1972; Altheide 2002), the study utilizes a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative analyses, including BERTopic-driven topic modeling and a multilingual BERT-based sentiment classifier, are complemented by qualitative content analysis to reveal dynamic shifts in thematic emphasis and affective tone. Findings indicate that security, political, and identity-related frames dominate Swiss media narratives, with significant intensification of identity framing following high-profile terrorist events and heated domestic debates on immigration and extremism.

A comparative evaluation of left- and right-leaning outlets further underscores a convergence in crisis coverage, despite divergent ideological underpinnings. These results underscore the media's role not as a passive conduit but

as an active constructor of social reality, shaping public perceptions and policy discourses around extremism. This research contributes to broader sociological debates on the interplay between media, identity, and the social construction of threat in democratic societies.

Beyond the ethnic majority bias: Is there a bright Muslim boundary in intergroup attitudes among minority groups?

Frank van Tubergen; Stefano Cellini; Christian Czymara

The Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute

A key hypothesis on intergroup relations in Europe posits that Muslim group identity in Europe is a highly salient dimension, weakening cohesion between members of Muslim and non-Muslim groups. To date, however, studies have studied this hypothesis from the perspective of the ethnic majority, simplifying multi-ethnic societies into binary frameworks of an ethnic majority and a single ethnic minority. This majority-centric perspective overlooks the diversity within minority groups and neglects minority-minority dynamics. To address this gap, this study considers the perspective of minority groups and studies their intergroup attitudes. Our analysis uses three large-scale, probability surveys conducted in the Netherlands between 2004 and 2015, encompassing over 15,000 first- and second-generation immigrants from the two largest Muslim groups (Turks, Moroccans) and two large non-Muslim groups (Suriname, Dutch Caribbean). Our findings suggest that there is no ingroup preference among Muslim groups per se. Rather, while Moroccans rate Turks positively, Turks' ratings of Moroccans are relatively low. Similarly, Dutch Caribbeans rated Suriname positively, but the same is not true vice versa. As next steps, we will test how these relationships differ depending on the individual level of religiosity and migrant generation status.

Session 3d

Gendered Pathways: Understanding Career Aspirations

Thursday, October 9, 2025

09.00 – 10.45

Room: P5

Session Chair: Malte Reichelt

Presentations

Unpacking the "people" vs. "things" divide in gendered field of study choice

Benita Combet¹; Jule Hauf²

¹ Universität Bern; ² European University Institute

Despite achieving formal gender equality, women and men often gravitate towards different educational and occupational pathways, particularly along the "people" dimension and the male-typed "things" dimension (e.g. Su and Rong 2009). While women in general prefer socially interactive roles and men roles that involve technological aspects, it has remained unclear what specific characteristics drive these choices. For example, we do not know whether men dislike supporting people emotionally while being indifferent to working in teams. For women, it could be that they do not mind using technical gadgets, but are averse to developing the same devices.

To answer this question, we conducted a large-scale choice experiment with a representative group of Swiss high school students (N ~ 5000). They were presented with hypothetical fields of study that differed in several characteristics corresponding to the dimensions "people" and "things". In addition, we frame these characteristics as requiring skills that are either innate (fixed mindset) or can be acquired (growth mindset), assuming the latter will reduce gender-typed preferences.

Our results show that women have a strong aversion to several traits in the "things" dimension, with the strongest aversion to programming, while they show a preference for analytical thinking. For men, we find neither strong aversions to traits in the "people" dimension, nor large preference differences between traits. Furthermore, framing these traits in terms of a growth mindset increases women's preferences for most traits in the "things" dimension. Conversely, this is not the case for men in the "people" dimension.

Contextualizing the STEM gender gap: Friendship networks, school context, and gender differences in STEM interests

Clara Englert; Hanno Kruse

Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn

Despite similar academic performance, girls exhibit significantly lower interest in STEM subjects than boys. Beyond early socialization processes, the school environment plays a key role in shaping students' STEM interests: On the one hand, friends' and classmates' adherence to gender-normative beliefs can affect adolescents' STEM interests, as gender-atypical interests may be socially sanctioned. On the other hand, organizational and structural factors at the school-level can influence the development of gendered STEM interests. In this study, we conceptualize the gender gap in STEM interests as a relational phenomenon that varies across different educational environments. By bridging two previously separate research strands—one examining peer dynamics as a universal amplifier of gender disparities and the other exploring school-level variations in STEM interest gaps—we provide a more nuanced understanding of how locally specific, gendered STEM peer cultures emerge.

Our empirical analyses are based on the IQB Trends in Student Achievement 2018 study, which contains data on the friendship networks of over 44,000 ninth-graders across 1,462 schools in Germany. First, we quantify and model gendered STEM peer cultures as gender differences in network (auto-)correlation between students' friendship ties and their STEM interests. Next, we examine variation in their prevalence across educational contexts. Finally, we inductively identify the institutional and compositional school features that predict the development of these cultures. By taking a relational and contextualized approach, our study provides both theoretical and practical insights into the key conditions shaping the emergence of gender disparities in STEM interest.

From exposure to belief: Neighborhood female employment and normative beliefs regarding maternal employment

Kerstin Ostermann¹; Marie-Fleur Philipp²; Eileen Peters³

¹ Institute for Employment Research IAB; ² University Tübingen; ³ Hans-Böckler-Stiftung

Individuals' beliefs regarding maternal employment play a pivotal role in reproducing gender inequalities in employment and family life. Understanding their formation is key for developing effective, evidence-based policies to promote gender equality. While prior research has linked gender beliefs to personal characteristics and national policies, the influence of local contexts remains underexplored. This paper investigates how neighborhood-level female employment patterns shape beliefs about maternal full-time work in Germany. We argue that neighborhoods function as socio-cultural reference frames where local norms and opportunity structures reflect and reinforce gendered expectations and normative beliefs. Using the German Panel Study "Labour Market and Social Security" (2011 and 2016) and aggregated administrative data on the level of 1x1km grid cells, we link respondents' beliefs to local female employment shares. Our study (1) introduces a micro-geographical perspective to move beyond broad regional analyses; (2) illuminates how local employment patterns shape normative beliefs regarding maternal employment; and (3) goes beyond common gender ideology measures regarding maternal employment by capturing beliefs regarding the appropriate age of a child at which mothers can return to work. We find that higher rates of marginal employment among female neighbors are positively, and higher rates of full-time employment are negatively associated with support for mothers' later return to full-time work even if we control for the neighborhood's general employment level. The study provides with a rich combination of survey and population data new insights into how exposure to female employment patterns at the neighborhood level shapes individuals' normative beliefs regarding maternal employment.

Session 3e

From Concern to Action: Empirical Findings on Environmental Beliefs and Behavior

Thursday, October 9, 2025
09.00 – 10.45

Room: Fakultätssaal

Session Chair: Miriam Trübner

Presentations

Making sense of climate change perceptions in the last two decades. Evidence from 28 European countries

Richard Nennstiel¹; Olivia Steiert²

¹ University of Bern; ² New School for Social Research

In 2018, climate change discourse shifted dramatically, framing it as a crisis or emergency in political debates, protests, and news. While some observers feared such rhetoric might harm democratic politics, public perceptions of climate change during this shift remain underexplored. This study analyzes Eurobarometer survey data (2002–2023, 28 countries, N=1,229,479) to examine how risk perceptions and the salience of climate change evolved, focusing on changes around 2018–2019.

Multilevel regression analyses reveal that this discursive shift coincided with marked increases in issue salience and perceived risk, though the latter was less pronounced. These changes varied across countries and were influenced by individual factors such as education, gender, age, political ideology, and trust in media. Additionally, group differences in perceptions widened in some countries during the 2018–2019 peak.

Findings suggest that intensified public discourse around climate change may heighten awareness but also polarize perceptions within and across European Union countries, highlighting challenges for fostering collective action.

From risk-class in itself to risk-class for itself? Individual inequalities in the readiness to act in risk societies

Marcus Gercke

Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg

This paper investigates how social class structures individual responses to climate-related risks in contemporary risk societies. Drawing on Ulrich Beck's theory of reflexive modernization, I examine whether rising global environmental risks lead to a dissolution of class-based distinctions—or whether how people perceive risks and respond to them is still characterized by a class gradient.

Two core dimensions of politicized environmental consciousness are analyzed: individuals' perception of climate-related risks and their willingness to bear the costs of environmental protection. Social class is operationalized using the European Socio-Economic Classification (ESeC), enabling a detailed analysis of stratified differences in these key outcomes.

Multilevel models are applied to data from four waves of the International Social Survey Programme (1993–2020) covering 20 countries. The study focuses on classed patterns of environmental concern and cost acceptance as indicators of a potential risk-class for itself—a social collective defined not by shared exposure to environmental hazards, but by a shared awareness of ecological problems and the readiness to act appropriately.

The results contribute to ongoing debates about the social distribution of risks in late modern societies. Do climate-related risks produce new forms of political subjectivity that transcend class lines? Or do class lines still govern who perceives ecological risks, feels responsible, and is willing to act?

The German Longitudinal Environmental Study (GLEN). Research design, data collection, and preliminary results

Andreas Diekmann¹; Katrin Auspurg²; Henning Best³; Christiane Bozoyan²; Claudia Schmiedeberg²

¹ Universities Konstanz and Leipzig; ² LMU München; ³ RPTU Kaiserslautern-Landau

Climate change and the depletion of the Earth's natural resources are among the largest challenges humanity currently faces. In light of this, the German Longitudinal Environmental Study (GLEN) aims at investigating the incentives, restrictions, attitudes, and beliefs that underlie human-environment interactions. In doing so, the GLEN project aims to provide a foundation for evidence-based environmental policy assessments and guidance. The project will build up a large-scale panel study of the adult population in Germany in which the same individuals will be repeatedly observed over time using a standardized and stable online survey instrument. In this presentation, we explain the research design and the data collection process for the recruitment survey and the first waves of the panel. We also present preliminary analyses of environmental attitudes, behavior, and the acceptance of climate policy measures.

Advancing environmental behavior measurement: A survey module for individual CO₂ emissions in the German Longitudinal Environmental Study (GLEN)

Felix Ries¹; Tom Behringer²

¹ Leipzig University; ² Rheinland-Pfälzische Technische Universität Kaiserslautern-Landau (RPTU)

Traditional surveys on environmental behavior often rely on self-reported actions like recycling or purchasing eco-friendly products. While informative, such measures provide limited insight into broader behavioral domains significantly impacting individual CO₂ emissions. This study presents a survey module designed to comprehensively capture individual CO₂ emissions across four key domains: mobility, housing, diet, and consumption.

Integrated into the 12-year German Longitudinal Environmental Study (GLEN), the module enables detailed tracking of individual environmental impacts over time. It captures key life events, such as job transitions and school departures, to analyze how CO₂ emissions evolve across life stages. Additionally, it examines the influence of external factors, such as policy changes, shifting CO₂ prices, and natural disasters, providing insights into the interaction between individual behavior and systemic changes. Linking these data to attitudinal measures further allows an exploration of how values, beliefs, and norms shape environmental behavior.

Compared to existing surveys, this CO₂ module is more detailed, capturing lifestyle changes and technological investments. Unlike commercial CO₂ calculators, which often lack transparency, it explicitly documents estimation principles, assumptions, and data sources, ensuring replicability and reliability.

By integrating behavioral, attitudinal, and contextual data, this module facilitates a systematic analysis of individual-level environmental impacts over time. Its design offers a novel framework for understanding environmental

behavior dynamics and their relationship to inequality, spatial contexts, and policy shifts. Data collection for the first panel wave will begin in spring 2025, allowing initial results to be presented.

Awards

Dissertation Award and Replication Award Ceremony

Thursday, October 9, 2025
11.15 – 12.30

Room: P1

Dissertation Award

For the fourth time, the Academy of Sociology is awarding the best dissertation in the field of analytical-empirical sociology a prize of 1500 Euro.

Replication Award

For the first time, the Academy of Sociology is awarding the best sociological replication study a prize of 1500 Euro. This award is the first of its kind in sociology anywhere in the world.

Sessions 4

Session 4a

Social Inequality: Institutional Structures, Segregation and Social Closure

Thursday, October 9, 2025
13.45 – 15.30

Room: P2

Session Chair: Mark Lutter

Presentations

Residential segregation in Europe: A comparative study of spatial segregation patterns in urban areas across 30 countries

Tobias Rüttenauer¹; Kasimir Dederichs²; David Kretschmer²

¹ University College London; ² Nuffield College, University of Oxford

This study addresses two questions: (i) How does segregation vary across European urban areas, and how much of this variation occurs at the local vs. national level? (ii) Which urban and country characteristics are systematically linked to segregation? Earlier studies were limited by inconsistent group definitions (e.g., immigrant status vs. citizenship), outdated data (mostly pre-2011), cross-country differences in spatial units, aspatial metrics, and limited geographic scope. Against this backdrop, we use harmonized 1x1 km grid-level 2021 census data to calculate spatially weighted Dissimilarity Indices for all 711 Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) in 30 European countries. We complement this with rich data on population, housing, economy, education, and immigration policies at the FUA and country level. Results reveal that, on average, FUAs in Western- and Northern European countries exhibit higher segregation than those in Eastern and Southern Europe but that there is also substantial within country variation. To identify correlates of segregation, we run specification curve analyses across 120 million multilevel regression models with meaningful predictor combinations. At the urban level, larger populations, lower density, smaller immigrant shares, fewer non-EU immigrants, lower homeownership, and lower housing turnover are associated with higher levels of segregation. At the country level, higher segregation is linked to lower economic inequality, while

migration policy shows no consistent relationship. These findings offer new comparative insights into segregation patterns across Europe and are discussed in light of classic and contemporary segregation theories.

School segregation and increasing ethnic diversity: A social closure perspective on the role of demographic and institutional change in 50 countries

Hanno Kruse

University of Bonn

This study examines how rising ethnic diversity affects school segregation in advanced industrial societies, arguing that segregation must be understood along two dimensions: segmenting segregation (across schools of similar quality) and stratifying segregation (across schools of differing quality). Drawing on a social closure framework, the analysis emphasizes how institutional mechanisms—such as between-school tracking, private schooling, and admissions tied to residence—mediate access to high-status schools and reproduce educational inequality. Using data from six waves of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) across 50 countries (2006–2022), the study tests four hypotheses concerning the effects of demographic change and the role of institutional structures. The results reveal that while overall ethnic segregation remains stable or declines, stratifying segregation increases as diversity grows. Minority students become more concentrated in lower-quality schools, while higher-tier schools remain relatively homogenous. Exposure to diversity thus rises most in the lower strata, reinforcing vertical separation despite broader integration. Systems with stronger institutional gatekeeping mechanisms show more pronounced stratifying effects. Additionally, there is evidence that increased diversity leads to modest institutional adaptations, particularly a rise in private schooling. These findings challenge conventional accounts that treat segregation as a single-dimensional process and underscore the importance of distinguishing between types of segregation in examining the impact of demographic change.

The Great Gatsby curve over the long run: Economic inequality and intergenerational reproduction across 20th century birth cohorts in 33 Western countries

Markus Gangl

Goethe University Frankfurt am Main

The paper uses harmonized and cross-nationally comparative survey data from seven large-scale international survey programs and a novel class of cohort-level inequality measures to evaluate the Great Gatsby hypothesis of a negative relationship between economic inequality and intergenerational socioeconomic mobility. Unlike in earlier single-country studies that mostly failed to confirm the existence of a Great Gatsby curve in the temporal dimension, the hypothesized association robustly emerges in the present analysis that is drawing on samples of up to one million respondents from 33 affluent Western countries. Across birth cohorts 1925–1994, four different measures of respondents' social origins and 15 different measures of respondents' socioeconomic attainment, empirical estimates from hybrid two-way country- and birth cohort-fixed effects fixed slopes (cFES) multilevel regression models provide consistent support for the notion that rising inequality is followed by a higher degree of transmission of socioeconomic advantages across generations. The temporal pattern of results suggests that parental opportunity hoarding as well as socially differential investment in response to changing incentives create the Great Gatsby curve association, whereas historical luck does not make a substantively relevant contribution.

More cracks with a bigger puzzle? Socio-economic differences in income sufficiency within fragmented social protection systems

Heta Pöyliö

European University Institute

Social protection systems in Europe have evolved over time to address poverty, inequality, and various social risks. These systems, designed to support vulnerable populations, have become complex, while aiming to enhance their coverage. This, in turn, has increased the inequalities in take-up and access to social benefits, weakening their poverty-alleviation mechanisms. The persistent poverty rates in Europe highlight further the systems' inability to fully address inequality and promote sufficient livelihoods. This paper provides a system-based approach rather than focusing on individual behavior or administrative issues related to the inequalities within the social transfer systems.

The paper examines the level of fragmentation of European social protection systems, i.e. 'the benefit puzzle', and how it contributes to income inequality and poverty risk. By using Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) micro-level data, it explores whether higher fragmentation correlates with lower income adequacy, particularly among groups reliant on transfers such as single mothers and unemployed individuals. In addition to the comparative perspective, socio-economic disparities in the impact of the benefit puzzle on incomes are examined to bring forth evidence on how the complexity of current welfare systems may be linked to persistent inequalities in societies.

Session 4b

The Role of Genetics in Educational Inequalities

Thursday, October 9, 2025

Room: P3

13.45 – 15.30

Session Chair: Martin Neugebauer

Presentations

Social stratification, parental aspirations, and children's achievements: New evidence based on reactive gene-environment correlation

Christoph Spörlein¹; Felix Bittmann²; Wiebke Schulz³

¹ Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf; ² Leibniz-Institut für Bildungsforschung und Bildungsinformation; ³ Universität Bremen

Parental educational aspirations play an important role in structuring and perpetuating social inequality in secondary-school choice and hence educational attainment. Parents base their aspirations largely on prior educational achievement which possesses a genetic component. We ask whether and to what extent parents react to genetically influenced educational achievement in educational aspiration formation. Thus, we rely on genetically sensitive research designs, namely a reactive gene-environment correlation (rGE), to examine the relative contribution of family-of-origin characteristics that capture educational norms and resource availability as well as the importance of child ability and its perception by parents. Secondly, we ask to what extent parental reactivity varies across parental social backgrounds. This article relies on data from the German TwinLife study and bivariate ACE models. Our findings based on ACE models provide support for the idea that parental aspirations are a function of children's genomes, an example of reactive rGE. While our findings support the notion that shared family environmental differences play a substantial role, they are surpassed by the relevance of genetic differences in contributing to grade differences and parental deliberations regarding aspired school career. The sources of the correlation between child grades and parental aspirations differed by social background. The correlation between grades and aspirations among non-tertiary-educated families was largely attributed to shared family environmental factors, whereas among tertiary-educated families, genetic differences emerged as the primary driver. These findings highlight the importance of using genetically sensitive data to uncover the presence and extent of potentially confounding rGE in studies of educational inequality.

Genetic associations with educational attainment: An analysis across the rural-urban gap

Josue Teran Linarte; Christoph Spörlein

Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf

In this study, we investigate the interplay of gene and environment in shaping educational outcomes, focusing on the urban-rural educational gap in the United States. We examine whether the expression of genetic endowments for educational outcomes is moderated by urban and rural environment, and simultaneously by parent's socioeconomic status (SES). Furthermore, we aim to disentangle potential social mechanisms mediating these relationships, providing in a second step an analysis of the role of individual aspirations and school quality. This research is part of a growing literature in sociology that support the importance of gene-environmental interaction and the persistence of rural-urban educational gaps.

Are there such things as talent subjects? Genetic and environmental influences on participation and performance in music, art, and sports

Dave Balzer; Nico Sonntag

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

Our contribution addresses a current debate among educators and policymakers about whether so-called “talent subjects” (e.g., music, art, and physical education) reward natural aptitude more than classroom effort, thereby challenging the meritocratic ideal more than grading in core subjects such as German and mathematics.

In psychology, talent is understood as a relatively stable, and partly innate disposition for high performance in specific domains. Talent represents a potential that, under favorable conditions, can translate into exceptional achievement. While genetic factors play an important role, the relationship between genes and performance is not deterministic; environmental factors such as family and school socialization are crucial.

Talent subjects are often perceived as “minor” or “non-core” compared to cognitively oriented core subjects, yet they significantly shape educational trajectories and life opportunities.

Our contribution examines participation and performance in talent subjects. We first outline the variation in institutional regulations across Germany. Since education policy is set at the federal state level, the Länder have considerable autonomy in defining the curricular status and obligations of these subjects.

Using German TwinLife data we then apply the Classical Twin Design using the ACE model to disentangle additive genetic (A), common environmental (C), and unique environmental (E) influences on both participation and academic performance. Monozygotic twins, who share identical genetics, are compared to dizygotic twins with lower genetic similarity, allowing us to estimate the relative importance of genetic versus environmental factors in these outcomes.

Our empirical approach aims to clarify whether talent subjects are indeed distinctive regarding pronounced genetic influences.

Session 4c

Occupational Aspirations and Labor Market Outcomes

Thursday, October 9, 2025

13.45 – 15.30

Room: P4

Session Chair: Hannah Soiné

Presentations

Students' occupational aspirations: Macro-conditions and the reconfiguration of status striving

Thomas Zimmermann; Birgit Becker; Robert Vief

Goethe University Frankfurt / IDeA (Individual Development and Adaptive Education of Children at Risk)

Social inequality's reproduction remains a central concern in sociology. This study analyses how macro-level contexts shape socioeconomic gaps in adolescents' occupational aspirations, distinguishing between absolute status levels (ISEI scores) and relative positions within national status hierarchies (ridit scores). Building on theories of status maintenance and upward striving, we argue that national opportunity and incentive structures—such as educational tracking, intergenerational mobility, prosperity, and inequality—condition both the level and social distribution of occupational ambition.

Using PISA 2018 data from 385,397 15-year-old students in 68 countries, we estimate country fixed-effects linear models with cross-level interactions between parental SES and macro-contextual indicators. Results confirm a robust SES gradient in aspirations, but also reveal significant contextual variation: ambition gaps narrow when educational systems track later, mobility rates are higher, prosperity is lower, or income inequality is greater.

This attenuation results from two distinct mechanisms: upward shifts in absolute aspirations among low-SES youth and—more unexpectedly—declines in both absolute and relative aspirations among high-SES youth under high inequality. Relative ambitions among disadvantaged students remain largely stable, indicating that closing gaps in relative terms occurs primarily through downward adjustment at the top.

Our findings contribute to status attainment research by showing that national contexts not only enable upward striving but can also dampen elite ambition. This suggests a reconfiguration of status striving under conditions of structural constraint, with implications for theories of aspiration formation, inequality, and social mobility.

Educational upgrading and earnings inequality by social origin in Germany

Steffen Schindler

University of Bamberg

Acquiring a further higher-level formal educational credential after having obtained a first (school-leaving or vocational) education degree is very common in the German education system. In this paper, we ask to what extent these processes of educational upgrading over the life course influence the association between social origins and earnings at occupational maturity. We discuss different mechanism that are related to educational upgrading and that contribute to the development of earnings differences between social classes of origin in addition to differences in the initial level of education. We expect that, if at all, educational upgrading has a reinforcing influence on earnings inequality by social origin. Our analyses are based on the adult cohort of the German National Educational Panel Study (NEPS). We consider persons born in the 1970s, for which we can observe earnings at the age of 40. We conduct decomposition analyses based on fully multiply imputed data. We find that – even though educational upgrading is associated with individual earnings premiums – it has only a small influence on earnings differences of persons from different social classes of origin at occupational maturity. These findings are driven by social differences in upgrading before labor market entry, while differences in upgrading after labor market entry do not account for earnings differences by social background. In contrast to the minor explanatory contribution of socially selective educational upgrading patterns, social inequality in the initial levels of education accounts for a substantive share of these earnings differentials.

Starting weak and declining strongly? Tertiary graduates chances on accessing the income middle class in the US and Germany

Florian K. Kley

Leipzig University, Research Institute Social Cohesion

This study investigates whether graduates with a tertiary education who start their careers in jobs below their level of qualification (overeducated) are disadvantaged when it comes to accessing the income middle class (IMC) in the United States and Germany. Drawing on panel data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation and the German Socio-Economic Panel, this study examines graduates who entered the labor market between 1991 and 2019. Event history techniques are used to analyze the impact of overeducation on initial and subsequent entries into the IMC during the first years of employment, while a multiverse approach is employed to examine transitions to various income thresholds. Additionally, the effect of the share of tertiary education on the chances of the overeducated reaching the IMC is assessed using a two-stage framework. Preliminary findings reveal clear disadvantages for overeducated job starters in the US, especially when initially entering the IMC, while later cohorts additionally face weaker chances of catching up. In Germany, overeducated job starters in the early 1990s exhibited even slightly higher transition rates, while this advantage diminished in later cohorts. Cross-country interactions confirm substantially stronger disadvantages in the US, while in both countries, higher shares of highly educated individuals are associated with more pronounced disadvantages for the overeducated. The findings suggest that overeducation may be seen as an already existing, or emerging burden for graduates' path to the IMC. Labor market and qualification related measures are recommended to support job starters to avoid getting stuck in overeducation.

Does mandatory service shape men's occupational choices? Evidence from the suspension of conscription across Europe

Maik Hamjediers; Leandro Iván Canzio

European University Institute

Recent geopolitical developments have reignited debates on conscription's potential to strengthen military forces and address labor shortages through civilian service alternatives. However, the effects of conscription on the allocation of labor across occupations -- especially in the light of conscription occurring at the key transition from school to work and into adulthood as well as only one gender being nearly exclusively the subject to conscription - are rather unknown. This study examines the impact of conscription on men's occupational choices, focusing on three pathways: entry into military careers, transferable skills for civilian jobs, and promoting work in male-dominated occupations. Using European Labour Force Survey data (1983-2021), we exploit variation across birth cohorts in conscription and participation in military service induced by its suspension in 11 European countries between 1995 and 2011. Preliminary results indicate that conscription reduced men's likelihood of working in male-dominated occupations in some countries but not in others. This research indicates how conscription is linked to occupational sorting and occupational segregation and contributes to the broader discussions on mandatory service programs and their societal consequences.

Session 4d

Navigating Family Ties: Closeness, Conflict, and Intergenerational Wellbeing

Thursday, October 9, 2025

13.45 – 15.30

Room: P5

Session Chair: Marie-Fleur Philipp

Presentations

Beyond boundaries: A multiverse analysis of social distance, religiosity, and partner preferences in Turkey

Reinhard Schunck¹; Johanna Gereke²; Ozan Aksoy³; Joshua Hellyer²; Emily Hellriegel¹

¹ Bergische Universität Wuppertal; ² Mannheim Centre for European Social Research, University of Mannheim; ³ University College London, UK

Social boundaries play a crucial role in shaping intergroup relations, particularly in intimate domains like marriage formation, where the acceptance of an out-group member signifies the crossing of social divides. While existing research has extensively examined ethnic and racial boundaries in Western societies, the role of religiosity in shaping marital boundaries between religious and secular groups remains underexplored, especially in Muslim-majority societies. Bringing together theoretical considerations from the study of social distance and those from the study of partnership formation and spouse selection, this study examines how perceived religiosity, socio-economic status, and physical attractiveness influence the willingness to accept an individual as a marriage partner for a family member in Turkey. Using a factorial survey experiment embedded within a large representative face-to-face sample of the Turkish population, we analyze whether—and under what conditions—boundaries between religious and secular groups can be bridged through resource exchange. Our findings reveal persistent, but partly asymmetric religious–secular boundaries, with secular respondents showing stronger boundaries towards religious persons than vice versa. The boundaries are, moreover, moderated by socio-economic status and facial attractiveness, indicating that persons are willing to cross boundaries in exchange for valued resources. Moreover, gendered patterns emerge, reflecting distinct expectations for male and female partners, with the strongest boundaries being shown towards religious men. This study contributes to our understanding of boundary-making processes in intimate social contexts, highlighting how religiosity influences marriage decisions and shapes patterns of social integration and cohesion in contemporary Turkey.

From baby bliss to couple strain. Exploring the pathways linking parenthood to reduced relationship satisfaction

Matthias Pollmann-Schult

University of Siegen

Objective: This study examines three key pathways in the association between the transition to parenthood and declines relationship satisfaction.

Background: Although declines in relationship satisfaction among new parents are well documented, research regarding the underlying mechanisms remains limited. This study investigates three commonly proposed pathways: gendered shifts in housework and childcare responsibilities and the resulting perceptions of unfairness, increases in negative couple behaviors (relationship conflict), and decreases in positive couple interactions (emotional intimacy and appreciation).

Method: The study used data on 4,108 respondents from 14 waves of the German Family Panel (pairfam), a nationally representative survey that was conducted annually between 2008 and 2022. To explore the mediating factors linking the transition to parenthood to declines in relationship satisfaction, fixed effects multiple mediation regression models were used.

Results: After the transition to parenthood, relationship satisfaction declined persistently among both men and women. These declines were largely attributed to increases in negative couple behaviors as well as decreases in positive couple interactions. Among women—but not for men—these declines were also linked to increases in the housework and childcare duties. **Conclusion:** These findings highlight the pivotal role of both positive and negative couple interactions and behaviors in shaping relationship satisfaction after the transition to parenthood.

I can't relate to you! Children's subjective poverty experience and their perception on the parent-child relationship in the German context.

Annika Stein

GESIS – Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

The enduring negative effects of economic deprivation on children as theorized in the family stress model are well established. However, the model merely assumes children to be passively affected by poverty via their parents. It thereby ignores children's active role in the family dynamics and in the parent-child-relationship in situations of financial adversity.

To fill this gap, I recognize children as social actors, who themselves experience poverty, and as social agents, who co-construct the parent-child relationship within the family's socioeconomic context. Within the family stress model, I argue that child outcomes are not only affected by disruptive parenting behavior resulting from economically induced psychological distress, but that children's subjective experience of poverty simultaneously affects parents' psychological distress and parenting behavior. As a result, I assume children's perception of the parent-child relationship to depend on their perceived poverty level. This influence is likely to be influenced by the parent's psychological distress and the amount of time the parent and child spend together.

I investigate the research question within the German context which exemplifies the external environment of an extensive family-centered welfare state. To identify the unique pathways of the effect mechanisms, I test my hypotheses using structural equation modelling. For this purpose, I complement the German Family Panel pairfam (2009-2021) with rich data from parenting and child interviews. Preliminary results indicate that children's subjective poverty level influences their perception of the parent-child relationship directly, as well as through its impact on parental psychological distress and parenting behavior.

Relationship difficulty is associated with poorer mental health in later life

Lea Ellwardt¹; Theo Van Tilburg²

¹ University of Cologne; ² Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Objectives. Integration into social networks is an important promotor of well-being and aging healthily, yet the dark side of social networks includes encounters with network members that are perceived as unpleasant, demanding, or difficult. This study investigates the association of relationship difficulty in older adults' core networks with the mental health outcomes of loneliness, depression, and anxiety.

Methods. Survey data were collected from the Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam (LASA) on relationship difficulty in personal networks and mental health. The sample included 892 respondents (mean age = 73; range = 61–100). The analytical models used two-step estimation with inverse-probability weights for testing differences in the three mental outcomes between older adults with and without difficult relationships. Differences were tested using cross-sectional and longitudinal mental health observations.

Results. The presence of relationship difficulty was significantly associated with poorer mental health on all three conditions in the cross-sectional models. Lagged effects were significant on depression only and weakest on anxiety.

Discussion. For some older adults, instances where they feel pressured into upholding and continuing difficult relationships can be linked to higher incidences of adverse mental health outcomes. As such, social integration can be a double-edged sword, and research and practice should consider its potentially negative impacts.

Session 4e

Analytical-Empirical Sociology and Sociological Practice

(in Cooperation with Berufsverband für Soziologie in Deutschland [BSiD])

Thursday, October 9, 2025
13.45 – 15.30

Room: Fakultätssaal

Language: German

Abstract

The analytical-empirical approach in sociology is not only relevant for sociological research but also shapes specific curricula in various academic degree programs where sociology is taught. This session explores whether and how analytical-empirical sociology prepares students for professional practice and what competencies are particularly important in the world of work. Panelists from academia and professional practice will discuss—together with the audience—the implications of a specific scientific approach for sociological teaching and professional practice. The session is organized in cooperation with the *Berufsverband für Soziologie in Deutschland e.V.* (BSiD, German Association for Sociology in Practice).

Panelists:

Prof. Dr. Elisabeth M. Krekel (Former Head of the Department for Vocational Education Research and Monitoring at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) and Honorary Professor at Bremen University of Applied Sciences)

Dr. Katrin Späte (German Association for Sociologists in Practice, BSiD)

Dr. Kerstin Lorek (Deutsche Bundesbank)

Sebastian Stahlhofen (Talk Online, Business Development Director)

Jonas Jung (Student, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz)

Moderation:

Prof. Dr. Martin Abraham (Friedrich-Alexander Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg)

Keynote Lecture

Jeannie E. Brand : Uncovering College Effect Heterogeneity

Thursday, October 9, 2025
16.00 – 17.00

Room: P1
This lecture will be presented digitally.

Abstract

This talk reviews recent advances in causal inference, focusing on uncovering treatment effect heterogeneity. Uncovering sources of effect heterogeneity is key for understanding the implications of the distribution of scarce resources, effectively assigning treatments to maximize average outcomes, and generalizing to populations beyond those under study. The talk focusses on propensity and covariate-based partitioning strategies and tree-based methods for assessing effect heterogeneity. To demonstrate methods for assessing effect heterogeneity, I draw on an empirical application of estimating the heterogeneous effects of completing a four-year college degree in the U.S. on reducing socioeconomic disadvantage over the career.

Jennie E. Brand is Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Professor of Statistics and Data Science (by courtesy), and Co-Director of the Center for Social Statistics (CSS) at UCLA. She is the past President of the Association of Population Centers and, beginning in August 2025, the President of the International Sociological Association Research Committee on Social Stratification and Mobility (RC28). Prof. Brand studies social stratification and inequality, mobility, social demography, education, and methods for causal inference. Her current research agenda encompasses three main areas: access to and the impact of higher education; the socioeconomic and social-psychological consequences of disruptive events, such as job displacement; and causal inference and the application and innovation of quantitative methods for panel data. Recent work explores causal inference and machine learning for the social sciences.

AS Business Meeting

Thursday, October 9, 2025
17.00 – 18.00

Room: P1

All members of the Academy of Sociology as well as all conference participants who are not (yet) members are cordially invited to attend the business meeting. The Academy's Board of Directors reports on current membership developments, the organization's recent and future activities and news from analytical-empirical sociology. Board members answer questions and discuss suggestions from the audience.

Sessions 5

Session 5a

Friday, October 10, 2025
09.00 – 10.45

Room: P2

Session Chair: Jürgen Gerhards

Presentations

Students' motives for restricting academic freedom: Viewpoint discrimination trumps professional academic standards and pro-social concerns

Claudia Diehl¹; Matthias Revers²; Richard Traunmüller³; Nils Weidmann¹; Alexander Wuttke⁴

¹ University of Konstanz; ² University of Hamburg; ³ University of Mannheim; ⁴ LMU Munich

We advance the understanding of so-called 'cancel culture' at the university by presenting the results of three survey experiments among university students. Designed in an 'adversarial collaboration' among researchers with competing perspectives, these experiments disentangle whether students' preferences for curtailing academic freedom are based on viewpoint discrimination, professional academic standards, or pro-social concerns. Our findings show that a substantive share of university students support viewpoint-based restrictions of academic discourse. While they also apply academic and pro-social criteria, they do so only selectively for 'conservative' viewpoints. These results have important implications, as students' demands may have contributed to the current perception of universities as unfree environments, which is often invoked in recent political attacks against academic freedom.

The differentiation of dimensions of antisemitism and criticism of Israel in Germany after October 7, 2023

Marcus Eisentraut¹; Christian Czymara²; Pascal Kolkwitz-Anstötz³; Eldad Davidov¹; Peter Schmidt⁴

¹ University of Cologne; ² The Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute; ³ GESIS — Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences; ⁴ Justus Liebig University Gießen

The distinction between antisemitism and legitimate criticism of Israel has become increasingly contested, particularly following the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. This study examines how different dimensions of antisemitism—classical, secondary, and Israel-related—manifest in contemporary Germany and whether these categories remain conceptually distinct.

Using survey data from a quota sample of 2,082 respondents in 2024, we investigate key predictors of antisemitism, including religious fundamentalism, authoritarianism, and conspiracy beliefs. Our findings indicate that the boundaries between subdimensions like classical and Israel-related antisemitism have become increasingly blurred, with Israel-related narratives often serving as a vehicle for traditional antisemitic tropes.

Political ideology also plays a crucial role: left-wing respondents tend to reject classical antisemitism but may endorse Israel-related antisemitism when framed within anti-imperialist discourse. Conversely, right-wing individuals more frequently express classical antisemitic stereotypes while simultaneously supporting Israel as part of a nationalist or anti-Muslim agenda.

The study highlights strong correlations between antisemitism and authoritarianism, as well as reinforcing previous findings on the role of conspiracy ideologies. Our results emphasize the need for a nuanced approach to differentiate between a) legitimate criticism of Israeli policies and antisemitic rhetoric and b) the different dimensions of antisemitism. Policymakers and researchers must refine existing measures to capture the evolving nature of antisemitism and ensure that efforts to combat it remain effective in the current socio-political landscape.

Pro-Palestine protest at German universities: Where antisemitism starts?

Thomas Hinz

Universität Konstanz

This presentation reaches out for the delineation of pro-Palestinian protests and possible antisemitic attitudes on the part of protesters. It begins with an oft-repeated statement that protest against Israeli policy or government is not per se antisemitic - i.e., it is not automatically an expression of hatred against Jews or Israel as the Jewish state. However, in light of the development of the Hamas-Israel war after October 7, the current anti-Israel protests on many university campuses often displayed – at least to most media observers – strong antisemitic attitudes, especially when highly ambiguous elements questioning the legitimacy of the State of Israel ("from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free") were used to mobilize participation in the protests. One key aim of this presentation is to analyze the extent to which antisemitism is a trigger for current protests. Data from two recent student survey studies in Germany will be used. Results indicate that Israel-related antisemitism is a reality among students in Germany: about 15 percent of students share this modern form of antisemitism. Pro-Palestinian protest is particularly fueled among these students with pronounced resentment.

Perceptions of ethnic discrimination and the integration paradox - findings from the 2023 InRa-employee survey carried out among public authority employees

Deike Ohse; Holger Lengfeld

Leipzig University

This paper examines the relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions of ethnic discrimination among employees holding a migration background in German federal authorities, contributing to the debate on the 'integration paradox'. While the paradox suggests that higher integrated individuals report more ethnic discrimination due to greater awareness and exposure, assimilation theory posits the opposite: increasing status leads to greater social acceptance and thus lower (perceived) ethnic discrimination. To test these assumptions, we use data from the InRa employee survey 2023 (N = 1,925), a survey carried out in four German federal authorities where employees have professional contact with citizens. We examine two status indicators—educational level and occupational status—alongside factors such as opportunity structures and awareness of discrimination. Findings show that educational level does not significantly affect perceptions of discrimination, contradicting both the integration paradox and the assumptions of assimilation theory. In contrast, occupational status proves to be a relevant factor: employees in higher-status roles report fewer experiences of racial discrimination. This finding supports the integration paradox's emphasis on opportunity structures—lower- and mid-level employees, who typically have more direct contact with the public, are more likely to perceive discrimination. Contrary to assumptions of assimilation theory, increased contact with mainstream society does not reduce perceived discrimination. Additionally, awareness of racism does not mediate the relationship between education and perceived discrimination in this specific occupational context. The study provides novel insights into how workplace-specific dynamics shape the perception of discrimination and challenges the generalizability of integration paradox mechanisms beyond the general public.

Session 5b

Digital Transformations and Social Divides

Friday, October 10, 2025

09.00 – 10.45

Room: P3

Session Chair: Fabian Kratz

Presentations

Social inequality in the digital transformation: Risks and potentials of mobile health technologies for social disparities in health lifestyles

Julia Tuppatt¹; Tim Sawert²

¹ Universität Leipzig; ² Universität Mainz

The digital transformation affects key dimensions of social inequality, including health. Socioeconomic status (SES) remains a strong predictor of health outcomes and behaviors, with lower-SES individuals engaging less in health-promoting activities such as physical activity. Mobile health (mHealth) technologies — such as fitness apps and wearables — are often seen as tools to foster healthier lifestyles. However, their effects on health inequalities remain contested: while they may promote behavior change across groups, theories of the digital divide suggest that such innovations often benefit more advantaged populations to a greater extent.

This study draws on newly collected longitudinal data from the GESIS Panel (2023–2024) to examine whether mHealth use in the area of physical activity is socially stratified (digital divide level 2), whether it is associated with increased physical activity (behavioral effect), and whether this effect varies by SES (digital divide level 3). The analytical sample comprises over 12,000 observations from more than 5,000 respondents aged 18–70 in Germany.

Findings show a clear educational gradient in mHealth use, particularly among younger cohorts. Fixed effects regressions reveal that adopting mHealth technologies is associated with a significant increase in physical activity. However, this positive effect does not vary by SES: both high- and low-SES users benefit equally.

While mHealth technologies appear to support healthier behavior regardless of social position, their unequal uptake may still contribute to widening health disparities. Sociological research should further explore the structural and subjective barriers to mHealth adoption to inform inclusive digital health strategies.

280 characters of bias: Left vs. right followership and the likelihood of sexist statements on X (Twitter)

Andri Rutschmann¹; Sascha Grehl²

¹ Department of Politics and Public Administration, Constance University, Germany; ² Institute for Sociology, Leipzig University, Germany

Social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter) play a central role in contemporary communication, not only facilitating interactions but also amplifying societal issues such as sexism. Given that harmful online behaviors can have real-world consequences, this study explores factors influencing individuals' decisions to post sexist content. Specifically, we investigate how political orientation and social embeddedness mediate sexist behavior on social media. Using over 5 million tweets from more than 50,000 unique German X accounts, we assigned users political orientation scores based on their following of politicians, influencers, and media outlets. We then classified their recent tweets as sexist or non-sexist using supervised machine learning techniques—including Lasso Linear Regression, Support Vector Machines, Random Forest, XGBoost, and a state-of-the-art large language model (LLM).

Our findings reveal three main insights: First, individuals with stronger right-wing orientations posted sexist tweets at higher rates, consistent with conservative ideological associations with traditional gender roles. Second, social embeddedness significantly deterred sexist posting; users with larger followings were less likely to share sexist content, likely due to reputational concerns. Finally, we found an interaction effect where the deterrent impact of having more followers was weaker for right-leaning users, suggesting reduced normative pressure within their networks.

This study contributes to understanding how political ideologies and social structures shape online behavior. By highlighting these dynamics, our findings provide practical insights for targeted interventions aimed at reducing sexist and harmful content online.

Distinct group or usual suspects? The social profile of crypto owners

Barbara Binder; Nora Müller

GESIS — Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

This study examines whether cryptocurrency investors differ meaningfully from conventional asset holders or replicate familiar patterns of financial participation. Drawing on an online survey of adults in Germany (N = 1,207), we investigate the socio-demographic, attitudinal, and ideological determinants of cryptocurrency ownership. Using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), we derive latent constructs for general crypto attitudes, antisemitic beliefs, conspiracy thinking, and institutional trust. These dimensions—alongside risk tolerance, political self-placement, views on social inequality, and IHS-transformed wealth proxies—are included in logistic regression models predicting crypto ownership.

Our results confirm findings on sociodemographic determinants of cryptocurrency ownership and expand the state of research on other key predictors, particularly regarding different values and ideological attitudes. Gender and risk tolerance are robust determinants of crypto ownership, even when taking into account a wide array of attitudes and ideological beliefs. Antisemitic attitudes, beliefs in conspiracy theories and a lack of trust in institutions are strong predictors of cryptocurrency ownership. Traditional wealth indicators, by contrast, show little explanatory power.

Crypto ownership appears to be shaped less by traditional economic resources and more by a combination of demographic factors, values and ideological attitudes. This reinforces the notion of cryptocurrencies as a socially meaningful and ideologically charged financial behavior — not just an investment strategy. This supports the idea of a heterogeneous investor base. Our findings also suggest that crypto assets capture dimensions of wealth not reflected in conventional asset categories and should be explicitly included in future wealth surveys.

A golden era for open ended questions? Using LLMs for complex text classification tasks

Ansgar Hudde¹; Shannon Taflinger²

¹ University of Cologne; ² Department für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie

Open-ended questions in quantitative surveys offer a cost-effective method to gather rich data from large, representative samples. While collecting such data is straightforward, analysis traditionally presents a dilemma: employ costly qualitative methods requiring extensive human coding, or use computational approaches that may only scratch the surface. Large Language Models (LLMs) provide a promising alternative that could potentially combine qualitative depth with computational efficiency.

We examine young Americans' narratives about dating across party-political lines from a quota-representative survey of approximately 1,400 US Americans aged 20-32. This dataset provides an ideal test case for LLMs, requiring nuanced coding that captures subtle distinctions in attitudes, reasoning, and emotional responses.

Our research aims to: (1) Evaluate LLM accuracy in coding complex survey responses compared to human coders, (2) Assess whether misclassification patterns differ between LLMs and humans, (3) Determine if research conclusions differ based on LLMs versus human-coded data.

We find that advanced LLMs slightly outperform human coders and that research conclusions in an applied example are identical, whether we use a benchmark-dataset or datasets coded by either student assistants or advanced LLMs. While our findings may interest diverse groups, our target audience is applied social science researchers who may have open-text data or are considering collecting such data but hesitate due to analysis costs. We particularly aim to inform qualitative researchers wanting to leverage larger samples and quantitative researchers recognizing the value of qualitative insights. Our guidance focuses on approaches implementable with standard computers and widespread technical and statistical skills.

Session 5c

Religion, Culture, and Collective Meaning-Making in Times of Change

Friday, October 10, 2025

09.00 – 10.45

Room: P4

Session Chair: Dave Balzer

Presentations

Bending the bars of the iron cage: Institutional innovation in the female monastic economy

Malte Doehne; Katja Rost

University of Zurich

Max Weber's description of Western modernity as prioritizing rationality, efficiency, and control draws heavily on his observations of the male monastic economy. However, women's monasteries also had a vital part in shaping medieval society, a role broadly overlooked in Weber's account. From the twelfth century onwards, they proliferated at remarkable rates, particularly in urbanizing regions where wealth accumulation and growing socioeconomic disparities intersected with broad efforts at internal Church reform. Their geographic concentration in urban spaces, encouraged by economic and political circumstances of the time, favored locally embedded institutions, close networks, and support relationships that created zones of female autonomy and accomplishment. We synthesize historical accounts with ecological analyses of a database of 8,629 monastery foundings spanning 1000–1900 CE to reconstruct two pathways for the proliferation of female monasticism. Thus, we illuminate how these institutions not only empowered women as economic actors but also contributed to the diversification of precapitalist organizational forms. Their legacy endures in contemporary institutions such as hospitals, schools, and NGOs, where stakeholder-oriented governance and mission-driven service continue to shape economic and civic life. By integrating female monasticism into a broader sociological framework, our findings challenge conventional narratives of capitalist development and highlight the gendered dimensions of institutional innovation.

The changing religious cleavage. Religion and electoral behavior in Germany

Jan-Philip Steinmann¹; Gert Pickel²

¹ Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony; ² Leipzig University

This study examines the influence of religious factors on electoral behavior. Since the mid-1980s, a key finding of electoral research in Germany has been the transformation of the religious cleavage. Previously marked by a denominational conflict line, differences between Catholic and Protestant voters, it has increasingly shifted toward a religious-secular conflict line, separating church-affiliated voters from the unaffiliated or less religious. This study revisits the transformation of the religious cleavage and investigates whether it now primarily runs between those who attribute truth to all religions and those who recognize only their own. This potential new conflict line between inclusive and exclusive religious claims highlights the internal differentiation within the Christian electorate.

The analysis is based on data from the 2019 KONID Survey ("Configurations of Individual and Collective Religious Identities and their Potential for Civil Society") and confirms that a denominational conflict line no longer plays a decisive role in voting behavior. A religious-secular conflict line still influences the decision to vote for a Christian party or to abstain but has no relevance in choosing an extreme right-wing party. Only the conflict line between inclusive and exclusive religious claims affects the decision to vote for an extreme right-wing or a Christian party, as well as the decision not to vote. Decomposition analyses show that voting differences between Christians with inclusive vs. exclusive religious claims stem largely from right-wing populist attitudes and perceived religious disadvantage among the latter. Overall, the findings suggest a renewed transformation of the religious cleavage in Germany.

Curtains Up: How Ukrainians Turned to Theater During the War

Yevhen Voronin

University of Wuppertal

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has brought uncertainty to the lives of Ukrainian citizens. Despite the traumatic experiences caused by the outbreak of the war, Ukrainian theaters got a new life, benefiting from the unprecedented popularity, as noted by representatives of the theatrical community. This paper investigates the potential rising popularity of Ukrainian theaters and provides supportive evidence using Google Trends data on search interest. After that, we employ structural topic modeling (STM) on social media data from ten theaters on Instagram to investigate the main thematic focuses associated with theater-going. The main themes include theaters as spaces of passion, fascination, and deep gratitude toward theaters, troupes, performances and defenders, as well as (self-)reflection, support and solidarity, and socialization/bonding. Furthermore, this paper discusses how theater-going offers individuals an opportunity to escape the web of negative events, construct civic identities, and embrace authenticity amidst the challenges of wartime.

Session 5d

Gender and the Labor Market

Friday, October 10, 2025
09.00 – 10.45

Room: P5

Session Chair: Katrin Auspurg

Presentations

Unpacking gender differences in unemployment scarring across different contexts

Sven Ehmes

Heidelberg University

Unemployment can have long-term negative effects on individuals' careers, commonly referred to as scarring effects. While research has explored these effects, the role of gender remains less understood. This study examines gendered wage scarring through a comparative approach, integrating signalling theory with institutional and gender culture theory. It hypothesises that male breadwinner norms intensify penalties for unemployed men, while inadequate social security systems disproportionately disadvantage unemployed women. In contrast, egalitarian societies with comprehensive social security systems mitigate gender disparities in scarring effects. Using household panel data from the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) across 29 countries, combined with country-level data on gender culture and unemployment benefit systems, the study employs multilevel models to analyse wage scars in re-employment. Findings suggest that strong male breadwinner norms amplify wage scarring for men, while lower benefit coverage and restrictive eligibility requirements exacerbate economic disadvantages for women. This research highlights the interaction between cultural norms and welfare state institutions in shaping gendered labour market inequalities, emphasising the need for gender-sensitive policies that address both normative and institutional barriers to gender equality in employment.

Digitalization, ICT skill demand, and gender inequality in the labor market: A new longitudinal measure

Isabel Gebhardt; Timon Drewes; Malte Reichelt

Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg

Technological change and digitalization (TC&D) are reshaping labor markets, with rising information and communications technology (ICT) skill demands extending far beyond the IT sector. While some expected these developments to reduce gender inequalities, recent evidence suggests otherwise: progress toward gender equity in

employment and earnings has stalled since the 1990s—precisely when digitalization accelerated. This project investigates how, and under what conditions, TC&D influence gendered employment trajectories and wage outcomes. Building on Relational Inequality Theory (RIT), we examine how technology-driven productivity gains are differentially translated into rewards for men and women within organizations. Our central focus is the development of a novel, longitudinal measure of ICT skill demand at the occupational level. Using advanced machine learning techniques—including NLP, object detection (YOLO), and fine-tuned language models (JobBERT)—we analyze a large corpus of digitized job vacancy advertisements (1975–2024). These data are mapped to the KldB 2010 occupational classification and linked to administrative employment biographies from the German Federal Employment Agency. This linkage enables us to track wage levels and gender composition within occupations over time, allowing us to examine whether rising ICT demands lead to equal gains for men and women and how occupational gender dynamics shift in response to digitalization. Preliminary findings and a detailed presentation of our measurement approach will be shared. The resulting dataset will be made publicly available, offering a valuable resource for future research on digitalization and inequality.

Pretty qualified? The role of attractiveness, information, and stereotypes in ethnic hiring discrimination

Johanna Gereke¹; Joshua Hellyer²; Reinhard Schunck³; Emily Hellriegel³; Eva Zschirnt⁴; Susanne Veit⁵

¹ Mannheim Centre for European Social Research, University of Mannheim; ² Uni Mannheim; ³ Uni Wuppertal; ⁴ University of Amsterdam; ⁵ German Center for integration and Migration Research

Ethnic discrimination remains a persistent challenge in European labor markets, limiting employment opportunities for immigrants and their descendants. While extensive research has documented ethnic penalties in hiring, less is known about how physical attractiveness interacts with ethnicity to influence labor market outcomes. Prior studies indicate that attractive applicants often receive preferential treatment, but it is unclear whether this "beauty premium" applies equally across ethnic groups. This study fills this gap through a large-scale field experiment in the German labor market, a setting in which applicants are expected to include photos on their résumés. Exploiting this custom, nearly 4,000 fictitious job applications were submitted, varying applicants' ethnic background, gender, attractiveness, and information about their prior performance. Our results show evidence of an ethnic hierarchy: Applicants of Turkish descent face significant discrimination, as do men with a Greek background, while Danish-heritage applicants face no discrimination relative to the ethnic majority. While there is a modest beauty premium in overall callback rates, this premium does not close the German-Turkish ethnic gap. This study contributes to the literature on labor market discrimination and status characteristics, illustrating how seemingly advantageous traits can reinforce ethnic stratification rather than mitigating it.

Informing about gender inequality: Beliefs about the gender pay gap and support for gender equality policies

Jule Adriaans¹; Sandra Bohmann²; Ole Brüggemann³; Fabian Kalleitner⁴; Cristóbal Moya²

¹ Bielefeld University; ² DIW Berlin; ³ European University Institute; ⁴ Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

Despite persistent gender disparities in labor market outcomes, gender equality policies—particularly affirmative action—remain contentious. Prior research suggests that public opposition to such policies may stem from an underestimation of the gender pay gap. However, evidence shows that informing individuals about the unadjusted gender pay gap has only minor effects on policy preferences, likely due to statistical discrimination, wherein wage disparities are attributed to women's choices rather than actual discrimination. This study investigates whether different types of gender pay gaps influence support for gender equality policies. We conducted a pre-registered survey experiment in Germany in December 2024 where we exposed participants to information on gender pay gaps that varied by size (high vs. low) and type (unadjusted vs. job-adjusted). We hypothesized that individuals will be more likely to support gender equality policies when presented with a large pay gap (H1) and that a within-job-adjusted pay gap will have a stronger effect than an unadjusted gap (H2). Preliminary results indicate that information can change individual's perceived gender pay gaps and fairness beliefs, but the impact on policy preferences is limited. The strongest effect is observed when participants receive within-job-adjusted pay gap information, supporting H2 and the idea that respondents might take into account the type of gender pay gap for their policy demand. Combined with additional analyses, these findings suggest that while information can shape fairness perceptions, broader interventions may be needed to drive substantive policy support.

Session 5e

Survey Experiments: Improving Theory-Driven Research Designs

Friday, October 10, 2025
09.00 – 10.45

Room: Fakultätssaal

Session Chair: Nico Sonntag

Presentations

The social foundations of political hostility: Disentangling political and social identities through a factorial survey experiment

Nelly Buntfuß

TU Chemnitz

Increased hostility between supporters of different parties is often attributed to a rising importance of political identities, but it may be more deeply rooted in social structures.

This phenomenon -- referred to as social sorting -- is increasingly being discussed as a driver of political polarization. This study seeks to expand our understanding of

the extent to which negative affect is actually political and to which extent this political hostility has a socio-structural underpinning. In order to discriminate between the relative effects of different political and, in reality, often correlated social characteristics, I conducted a factorial survey experiment randomizing partisanship, issue positions, social class, gender, and, region in Germany.

By showing respondents more or less "sorted" profiles, this study examines whether profiles with fewer cross-cutting attributes provoke greater negative affect and, in turn, create social distance. The findings will deepen our understanding of how political and social identities interact to shape affective polarization.

How (not) to fail at identifying ethnic & racial discrimination in survey experiments

Sebastian Wenz

GESIS -- Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

My contribution is twofold: First, I suggest and defend a general definition of failure based on the estimand concept (Lundberg et al., 2021). Secondly, I discuss three ways of how survey experiments on ethnic or racial discrimination potentially—and, in fact, more or less often—fail. For all three I discuss possible solutions.

Based on Lundberg et al. (2021), I call any empirical study a failure or failed, whenever either the empirical estimand or the estimation strategy or both are inadequate to learn about the theoretical estimand.

I discuss three ways of how survey experiments on ethnic or racial discrimination potentially fail: First, experimental studies on ethnic discrimination that use names run into the problem of confounding ethnic discrimination with social class discrimination. I illustrate the problem using DAGs. I discuss different solutions but focus on the selection of names that hold the social class signal constant.

Secondly, the common practice of analyzing simple random samples is unlikely to provide unbiased estimates of discrimination as it takes place in segregated markets (Heckman, 1998), be it labor markets, education systems, or housing markets. As a solution, researchers may sample/analyze only those units that are in the situation in question or weight units accordingly.

Thirdly, studies that assess discrimination at only one point along the performance distribution or using an otherwise non-representative sample of candidates are severely limited: without making further assumptions, they neither allow inference about the average level or direction of individual discrimination nor can they say anything about group discrimination.

The tax-welfare nexus: Explaining public support for welfare reforms

Fabian Kalleitner¹; Bernhard Kittel²

¹ LMU Munich; ² University of Vienna

Fiscal consolidation continues to be a key topic in political discourse, as governments navigate the tension between public support for welfare benefits and calls for a smaller state. This study examines how individuals react to messages about fiscal deficits, drawing on data from a novel pre-registered factorial survey experiment conducted in Austria in 2025. Specifically, we analyze under what conditions individuals prefer revenue-expanding reforms over welfare retrenchment. To explain these preferences, we focus on two key political instruments used to contextualize welfare reforms during periods of fiscal pressure: (1) the stated source of the budget deficit (i.e., which policy area is blamed) and (2) the (in)transparency of its consequences (i.e., how clearly tax hikes or benefit cuts are communicated). Our results show that support for reforms is sensitive to cues about the deficit's origin. While general statements about reform size have little effect, transparent communication of consequences reduces support. Overall, support for fiscal reform depends not only on the type of measure but also on its distributive effects, perceived origins, and the clarity with which outcomes are presented. These findings underscore the importance of elite cues and media framing, showing that how a reform is presented can be as decisive as its content in shaping public opinion.

Predicting ethnic discrimination with vignette experiments? A field validation from the German labour market and some general considerations

Knut Petzold

Hochschule Zittau/Görlitz

Vignette experiments are increasingly used to investigate ethnic, religious or gender-based discrimination. Since hypothetical descriptions of people are presented, the method is considered suitable for collecting sensitive information in an ethically justifiable and unobtrusive manner. Response behaviour reflecting discriminatory intentions can be causally attributed to the characteristics presented. However, the application is based on the assumption that the results obtained through vignette experiments allow conclusions to be drawn about actual discriminatory behavior in real situations, which has rarely been tested so far. We challenge this assumption as the results of a vignette experiment are being validated using a respective field experiment. By the example of international university graduates in the German labor market, who apply for job offers at an online-platform, a correspondence test among employers in different industries and labor market segments provides the behavioral benchmark data. We investigate to what extent discrimination effects in employers' responses observed in the field experiment can be replicated in a vignette experiment among the same employers, while ensuring the greatest possible comparability across both experimental conditions. The results show that the effects can only be replicated inconsistently. We discuss this in the context of the current state of research and in the light of general theoretical considerations in order to derive methodological implications for future applications of vignette experiments when measuring ethnic discrimination.

Panel Discussion

Communicating Sociological Findings in the Media

Friday, October 10, 2025
11.15 – 12.45

Room: P1

Panelists: Dirk Baier, Mike S. Schäfer, Kathrin Kühn, Gerald Wagner
Moderation: Holger Lengfeld

The panel discussion will be held in German.

Abstract

In addition to research and teaching, the “third mission” of universities is becoming increasingly important, namely the transfer of scientific knowledge to the public. Traditionally, the mass media act as a filter that reports on small parts of a field’s scientific output. With the help of social media, such as podcasts, blogs, or short messaging services, some contemporary scientists are beginning to reach a wider audience directly. This panel will discuss how sociology compares with other disciplines when it comes to transferring its findings to the public. How do journalists decide which disciplines to refer to in their science reporting, especially when it comes to subjects that are investigated by several disciplines, for example education, labor, family, migration, or the environment? To what extent, and why, is sociology perceived in German quality media as subject matter for the “feuilleton” (i.e., the culture section) rather than the science section? How should scientific findings be communicated to arouse interest in the media and its consumers? How is the public perception and impact of science changing due to the trend towards unfiltered “open access” to research output? What challenges arise from the fact that scientific findings may contradict each other, meet scientific quality criteria to varying degrees, and increasingly compete with content generated by AI?

Prof. Dr. Dirk Baier studied sociology at the University of Chemnitz. He then worked on a research project on right-wing extremism. Between 2005 and 2015, he was initially a research associate and then deputy director of the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony, where he conducted empirical projects on youth crime and the perception of crime, among other things. Since 2015, he has been head of the Institute for Delinquency and Crime Prevention at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences; since 2024, he has also been Professor of Criminology at the University of Zurich. His work focuses on the topics of crime, violence and extremism.

Prof. Dr. Mike S. Schäfer is Full Professor of Science Communication and Head of Department at IKMZ – the Department of Communication and Media Research of the University of Zurich. He is also Director of the university’s Center of Higher Education and Science Studies (CHESS) and PI of the Swiss Science Barometer. Schäfer’s work focuses on public communication and public perceptions of science and technology, particularly on the issues of AI and climate change, as well as on science-related populism and conspiracy theories.

Dr. Kathrin Kühn is a science editor and presenter for the public audio broadcaster Deutschlandfunk (her shows include *Systemfragen* and *Forschung aktuell*). She studied journalism and completed her doctorate on automated relevance decisions for podcasting. Her work focuses, among others, on polarization, right-wing extremism, and socio-economic disadvantages. Additionally, Kathrin Kühn gives workshops for young journalists on the relevance of individuals’ socialization in journalistic reporting. Before joining Deutschlandfunk in 2021, she worked as a news journalist at WDR, beginning in 2003.

Dr. Gerald Wagner writes about society and politics as a freelance journalist for newspapers (among others, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*). He studied history, philosophy, and German language and literature, as well as political science, and gained a doctorate in sociology.

Prof. Dr. Holger Lengfeld is Full Professor of Sociology, Institutions, and Social Change at Leipzig University and a senior researcher at the government-funded Research Institute for Social Cohesion (RISC). His research focuses on political sociology, social cohesion, and inequality. Most recently, he led a research team on ethnic discrimination in German public authorities. His professional passion lies in communicating sociological findings to the public.

Panel Discussion

From DEAL to DOA? The Future of Scientific Journal Publishing

Friday, October 10, 2025
14.00 – 15.30

Room: P1

Panelists: Ralf Depping, Ulrich Kohler, Benjamin Seyd
Moderation: Josef Brüderl

The panel discussion will be held in German.

Abstract

For sociology and sociologists, scientific journals have only continued to grow in importance in recent decades. The process of double-blind peer review is designed to ensure scientific quality standards, and publishing in international peer-reviewed journals is considered crucial for career advancement in academia.

With the digitalization of publishing and the rise of the open science movement, open access (OA) publications have also gained in importance. Many research funding organizations now require research projects to publish their results OA. In addition, research has shown that OA publications have a higher impact. As a result, scholarly publishing is undergoing a transition to OA. More and more journals are making all their articles OA, which is called Gold Open Access (GOA) – entirely free for readers, but with potential costs for authors.

In the past, articles were published behind a paywall and could only be accessed if readers paid a subscription fee. Now, many journals publish their articles openly, but the authors themselves have to pay an article processing charge (APC). There is an ongoing process of concentration by which journals are increasingly becoming part of the portfolios of a small number of large publishers, increasing the power of the publishers. This has resulted in – among other things – quite substantial APCs, often four figure sums.

In Germany, after lengthy negotiations, the long-standing subscription model has recently been replaced by the DEAL agreement between several major publishers (Springer Nature, Wiley and Elsevier) and an alliance of German scientific organizations. Universities and other institutions which have signed up to DEAL provide researchers with free access to the full texts of a large number of journals. The APCs are passed on to the universities and, in some cases, to the researchers as the authors of the publications. Thus, the status quo is that scientists edit, review, and write articles for free. Then, depending on their university's policy, they may have to pay the frequently high APCs if their articles are published. At the same time, the publishers make a profit.

This situation has led to increasing calls for researchers to work with libraries and non-commercial publishers to operate journals with Diamond Open Access (DOA) themselves: Going even further than GOA, this model involves articles being published, distributed, and preserved with no fees for either readers or authors.

These developments give rise to numerous pressing questions: How successful and fair are the DEAL contracts and what future do they have? How precarious is the situation for journals which are neither DEAL members nor OA? How does sociology compare with other disciplines in terms of its publication models? What are the prospects and hurdles facing those established subscription or hybrid journals which are committed to transitioning to DOA? What are the challenges and advantages of newly founded DOA journals? What do you need to bear in mind if you want to set up such a journal?

Ralf Depping studied sociology, media and communication science, and philosophy at the University of Göttingen. He is Head of Department for Research and Publication Support at the University and City Library of Cologne. He is co-responsible for SocioHub, the *Fachinformationsdienst* (FID) Soziologie, which is funded by the DFG and run by the University and City Library of Cologne together with the GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences. Among other things, SocioHub hosts SOCIOS, an open peer review platform for preprints in all areas of the social sciences, and advises scientists on founding and publishing open access journals.

Prof. Dr. Ulrich Kohler is professor of Methods of Empirical Social Research at the University of Potsdam. Since 2013, he has been the editor of *Survey Research Methods* (SRM), the official peer-reviewed journal of the European Survey Research Association (ESRA). SRM provides full open access to articles without processing charges for authors ("Diamond Open Access"). It is indexed in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), Scopus, and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). The journal signed the Transparency and Openness Promotion Guidelines of the Center for Open Science (COS) and adapted its policies to these guidelines as early as 2015 (DOI: 10.18148/srm/2015.v9i3.6256).

Benjamin Seyd is a researcher at the Max Weber Centre at the University of Erfurt and the managing editor of the Berlin Journal of Sociology. He is co-speaker of the network of social science and humanities journals (SoGeZ!).

Prof. Dr. Josef Brüderl holds the Chair for Quantitative Inequality and Family Research at the Institute for Sociology at LMU Munich. He has launched an initiative for publishing in open access journals and for founding journals with Diamond Open Access.

Poster Session

Wednesday, October 8, 2025 18.00 – 20.00	
18.00 – 18.30 Short Presentations of all Posters	Room: P1
18.30 – 20.00 Apéro and Poster Session	Room: Lobby

Presentations

EarthLinks - Advancing flexible linking of Earth observation data with social indicators

Dennis Abel; Stefan Jünger; Jonas Lieth; Amelie Veit

GESIS — Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

A growing interest in the social sciences in Earth observation data has led to a broad spectrum of publications in recent years. They range from studying environmental attitudes and behavior, economic development, conflicts and causes of flight, and electoral behavior. However, social science researchers also face many obstacles in applying and using these data, resulting from 1) a lack of technical expertise, 2) a lack of knowledge of data sources and how to access them, 3) unfamiliarity with complex data formats, such as high-resolution, longitudinal raster datacubes, and 4) lack of expertise in integrating the data into existing social science datasets. Despite the increased interest in the data, for the majority of researchers in the social sciences, EO data represents a black box after all. In this session, we present our "gxc" tool which aims to close the gap and create an automated interface to EO data for social science research. The project's goal is creating an open-source tool to link time- and space-sensitive social science datasets with data from Earth observation programs based on a Shiny App in R. The project advances the automatization of these data integration processes between social science data and EO data based on an open-source and user-friendly tool. The workflow will be exemplified on the basis of a research project on the effects of flooding exposure on climate change opinion.

Simulation experiments as experimental policy

Petra Ahrweiler

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz

This paper explores the potential of simulation experiments as anticipatory tools for political planning in complex domains such as research and innovation policy. It argues that modern policymaking must navigate the tension between the need for intervention and the unpredictability of outcomes. Unlike real-world political actions, which function as uncontrolled experiments within complex social systems, computer-based simulations allow for the systematic exploration of "what-if" scenarios. Central to this approach is agent-based modelling (ABM), where individual agents - such as firms, universities, and research institutions - interact within simulated environments governed by theoretical and empirical rules. These simulations generate emergent macro-level behaviors, enabling the study of cooperation, learning, and adaptation.

The paper underscores the importance of integrating sociological theory, qualitative fieldwork, and quantitative data to create realistic and policy-relevant models, termed "sociotopes." The paper illustrates this with the SKIN model (Simulating Knowledge Dynamics in Innovation Networks), used by the European Commission to assess policy alternatives under the Seventh Framework Programme. The model revealed, for instance, that increasing SME participation significantly enhanced knowledge flows, and that the innovation network remained resilient to thematic funding shifts.

While simulations do not offer precise forecasts, they support weak prediction by highlighting trends and possible outcomes, thus aiding strategic foresight and iterative policy learning. Positioned between theory, laboratory science, and real-world application, simulation experiments provide a structured and reflexive means to anticipate and shape future developments in complex policy environments.

Is working from home changing the meaning of work?

Sebastian Bähr¹; Matthias Collischon¹; Bernad Batinic²

¹ Institut für Arbeitsmarkt und Berufsforschung (IAB); ² JKU Linz

Especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, working from home (WFH) has become a common practice in the workplace. This raises if WFH changes non-monetary benefits of work, such as job quality or social contacts. Thus, in this article, we investigate how working from home affects Jahoda's latent functions of employment as well as job quality measures. To this end, we use panel data from the German Panel Study Labour Market and Social Security (PASS) and estimate the effects of changing work patterns on the aforementioned outcomes. Our findings reveal basically no effects of WFH on job quality measures and latent benefits. This, in contrast to anecdotal evidence, implies that WFH does not harm psychological well-being.

Socioeconomic status and beneficial browsing behavior – analyses based on linked survey and web tracking data

Barbara Binder

GESIS — Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

Do individuals from different socioeconomic status (SES) groups use the internet differently? Drawing on a linked dataset based on the ALLBUS 2023 survey and a supplementary web tracking dataset (ALLBUS 2023 DBD Add-On), the analysis investigates whether higher socioeconomic status (SES) is associated with greater engagement in beneficial browsing - defined as online behavior related to education, careers, business and finance.

The sample includes 104 ALLBUS respondents with approximately 320,000 tracked website visits, which were classified into content-based categories, such as "education," "healthy living," "personal finance," alongside categories like "shopping," or "video gaming". I examine whether SES is associated with the share of time spent in beneficial browsing and if this relationship is moderated by participants' digital affinity, e.g. their digital literacy or attitudes towards technologies and privacy.

Preliminary findings suggest that – controlling for student status – education and age are not significantly associated with beneficial internet use. Instead, subjective social status and digital literacy (measured via computer know-how) are positively related to beneficial browsing behavior. Migration background is negatively associated with productive internet use, while attitudes toward technology and privacy concerns do not show a significant relationship.

The findings underscore the importance of perceived social positioning and digital skills – rather than structural SES – in shaping who engages more in beneficial internet use. They challenge common assumptions about socioeconomic disparities in the returns from digital technology use and highlight the need for further research based on combined survey and behavioral data.

Penalized for nonconformity? Evidence from a survey experiment on the ideal worker norm in Japan

Hironobu Bito¹; Wataru Yoshida²

¹ Tokyo Metropolitan University; ² National Institute of Population and Social Security Research

Despite advancements in work-family policies (WFPs) in many countries, actual usage—particularly among men—remains limited. In Japan, this gap between policy and practice, often termed the "flexibility gap" (Chung, 2020), is especially pronounced. It is frequently attributed to strong cultural norms that define the "ideal worker" as someone always available, working long hours, and prioritizing work over family. Employees who deviate from this ideal may anticipate penalties, particularly in promotion decisions.

This study examines whether violations of the ideal worker norm affect promotion evaluations in Japanese firms. We conducted a randomized conjoint survey experiment with 2,000 respondents (1,000 HR personnel and 1,000 line managers), who evaluated fictional candidates for managerial roles. Candidate profiles were randomly varied across attributes including gender, prior use of WFPs (e.g., parental leave and reduced working hours), current working hours. We also experimentally manipulated whether the organization supported WFPs and whether one or two candidates would be promoted.

Results partially support for the presence of penalties associated with deviation from the ideal worker norm. Candidates currently working shorter hours were rated less favorably, while those working overtime were rated more positively. However, past use of WFPs had no significant effect. No differences emerged based on candidate gender, number of promotion slots, evaluator role, or organizational support for WFPs.

Exploratory analyses showed respondents who had used WFPs or were unmarried were more likely to penalize similar candidates, while those in more flexible environments were less punitive. These findings suggest internalized norms and misperceptions may sustain the flexibility gap.

Decomposing the gender reservation wage gap in subsidized employment

Nadja Bömmel

Institute for Employment Research IAB

The reservation wage constitutes a key concept for the understanding of factors being relevant for the transition from unemployment into employment. Former literature shows that the individual assessment of the reservation wage depends on multiple factors on the individual level but can also be altered by the prevailing labor market conditions or the social security system. An important individual level factor is gender. Just like for labor market participation and wages, the literature also shows a gender gap in reservation wages. To explore the determinants of the reservation wage gap, I use decomposition methods and data from the panel survey "Lebensqualität und Teilhabe" containing information on participants of the wage subsidy program "Eingliederung von Langzeitarbeitslosen".

Preliminary results of the Oaxaca-Blinder Decomposition indicate that a major part (over 80%) of the gender reservation wage gap can be explained by personal characteristics, characteristics of the household, children, labour market experience, attitudes toward work, job search, and characteristics of the current subsidized employment. The latter appear to be most important (with almost 69%).

Also, it shows that there is no significant correlation between the reservation wage and the probability of being employed after the wage subsidy program, whereas reporting a higher reservation wage is correlated with receiving a higher wage if employed after the program.

Artificial intelligence, human agency and decision-making in water management systems

Blanca Luque Capellas

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz

Water management systems can be understood as socio-ecological-technological systems, where social dimensions (such as institutions or perceptions), ecological dimensions (such as climate or water resources) and technological dimensions (such as infrastructures or software) interact. In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has been increasingly introduced as a tool to support actions and decision-making to respond to climate change-related droughts. Previous research states that integrating AI into socio-technical systems implies changes in decision-making processes, while the importance of collective agency and decision-making for fostering changes in socio-ecological systems has been widely discussed in sustainability science. However, there seem to be only fewer contributions dealing with the interaction of AI integration for water management, with human agency and decision-making. And even fewer contributions based on empirical data.

The PhD project presented aims to fill this gap by answering the question: How does AI integration for automated or supported decision-making interact with human agency and social decision-making in the context of climate change adaptation to droughts through water management?

The methodology applied aims to collect empirical data based on a case study, comparing water management systems within a climate change-related drought, before and after the implementation of AI technologies for surveilling citizens' water consumption.

Life course effects of low-SES background – Social origin effects on educational and occupational attainment in Australia and Germany

Hans Dietrich

Institute for Employment Research (IAB)

The current research literature indicates intergenerational transmission of disadvantaged social positions is still a key factor for the maintenance of social inequality in western societies. However, educational returns and their trend over time show more variation across countries, so that they have increased in some countries (for instance the USA; Goldin and Katz 2008), while they have declined or remained stable in others (for instance in many European countries; Muller and Gangl 2003). Mastekaasa & Birkelund (2022) favor parental education instead of paternal status,

occupation or income for Sweden. However, modern states might differ with respect to the appropriateness of indicators applied identifying social origin.

We employ longitudinal household panel-data (HILDA for Australia and GSOEP for Germany) and follow up individuals from age 16 to age 30. Empirical results indicate, offspring's status- and wage-positions seem to be less correlated in Australia compared to Germany and as models of status attainment in general assume. Compared to Germany the findings for Australia indicate a more pronounced age-dynamic concept for both social origin and offspring's socioeconomic status, whilst in Germany a severe school tracking does not only reduce intergenerational mobility, but is also stricter regarding the turn of individual life courses.

Further on, especially for Australia, we observe indications for a parental division regarding their impact on offspring's socioeconomic status reproduction: Fathers' income and mothers' education and status contribute to intergenerational transmission.

Selecting items suitable to use as deprivation indicators: Evidence for the Case of Germany

Halil Duran

GESIS — Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

According to Townsend (1979: 31) "Deprivation refers to the inability to afford a range of items and activities that are widely viewed as key conditions for participation in the society to which one belongs" (Lanau 2023: 335). In 2012, EU Member States adopted a 13-item scale to measure the material and social deprivation for the whole population on an annual basis (Guio et al. 2012: 9; 111). One key challenge regarding the measurement of deprivation is the selection of a suitable number and composition of items. Previous research has shown how measuring deprivation rates could be implemented more efficiently and with minimal information loss using adaptive testing (Bailey&Guio2022; Bailey 2020). Though the issue with adaptive testing is threefold, most importantly it does not solve the issue of updating the item list regarding social and technological transitions. This paper in contrast uses a different approach, namely classification trees (Breiman et al. 1984), using a data-driven analysis approach. The advantages of classification trees against adaptive testing for e.g. is that all the households will get the same items, the ordering of the items will be given for the questionnaire through the variable importance measure and the algorithm is easy to interpret and traceable (white box algorithm). The descriptive goal is to find out, how many items will be needed to capture similar deprivation rates as with the full set of deprivation items. Therefore I use data of the German Panel Survey of Social Security (PASS) from 2006/07 to 2018 with a set of 21 items.

Gender, parenthood, and labor market discrimination: A meta-analysis

Isabel Habicht¹; Eva Zschirnt²; Jessica Daikeler³

¹ Bergische Universität Wuppertal; ² Harvard University; ³ GESIS-Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences

Discrimination against vulnerable groups remains persistent in labor markets despite anti-discrimination legislation. While prior meta-analyses have documented hiring discrimination based on gender and ethnicity, parenthood—particularly in its intersection with gender—remains an understudied factor. This study addresses this gap by conducting the first meta-analysis of experimental correspondence studies on gendered hiring discrimination against parents.

Drawing on 20 eligible studies covering 208 experimental conditions, we investigate whether parents, especially mothers, face discrimination in hiring decisions compared to childless applicants. We further explore whether discrimination varies by applicant gender, occupational characteristics, country context, and over time. The meta-analysis was preregistered on the OSF, and data were collected and coded for moderators, including study characteristics (publication year, publication type), research design (country, study period, sample size), applicant characteristics (gender, parental status, number/age of children), and occupational characteristics (sector, qualification level, gender composition).

Preliminary findings indicate a decline in parenthood discrimination in hiring over time. Subgroup analyses are planned to test whether discrimination persists by gender and across specific contexts, such as countries with weaker family-friendly policies, male-dominated occupations, or among highly qualified applicants.

This meta-analysis provides critical insights into how gender and parenthood intersect in hiring discrimination and informs debates on policy, workplace practices, and persistent structural inequalities affecting working parents.

Digital activity space research: A conceptual framework

Marc Hannappel

University of Koblenz

„Activity Space Research “(ASR) focuses on individuals’ spatial behavior across the entirety of their urban environment. Thus, ASR serves as a complementary approach to studies on residential segregation and its contextual effects. Similar to segregation research, which assumes that residential locations are unequally distributed across the urban space depending on individuals’ socio-structural characteristics, ASR is based on the premise that movement patterns and locations visited are not randomly distributed either. Rather, they reflect perception, interpretation, and behavioral patterns typically correlated with specific sociodemographic attributes. Recently, new technologies have opened up promising avenues for revitalizing ASR.

This poster will present a research design for capturing and analyzing digital activity spaces. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative tracking data were combined with qualitative observations in an exploratory study involving university students. A smartphone app was used to collect GPS-based movement data and identify student “hotspots.” This data was linked to individual lifestyle indicators and supplemented with qualitative observations at the locations in question. Although not representative, our findings suggest that movement profiles and spatial preferences can be described along lifestyle-related lines. Overall, the observed locations show a strong fit between lifestyle typologies and spatial practices, suggesting that activity spaces reflect deeper patterns of social differentiation.

Convergence of disciplinary structures at German universities? Methodology and empirical results at system and organizational levels.

Thomas Heinze; Rafael Josek

Bergische Universität Wuppertal

The current global situation is characterized by a fundamental tension. On the one hand, there is a tremendous amount of disinformation and information bubbles generated by social media. This development is endangering the democratically constituted communities of many developed countries. On the other hand, research and science have a very high status compared to earlier historical periods and contribute significantly to solving medical, social and economic problems. In this context, universities play an important role as actors in the modern knowledge society. They act as trustees in the production, verification, safeguarding and dissemination of knowledge.

Even though universities play an important role in modern knowledge societies, they are insufficiently researched from an analytical-empirical perspective. For example, little is known about the diversity of the internal subject structure of universities and, at an aggregated level, the diversity of entire university systems. Despite being a well-known concept both in population ecology and neo-institutional organization theory, isomorphism (or structural similarity) has been conceptualized and empirically examined by very few studies only. This paper examines organizational isomorphism in German higher education, using the Relative Specialization Index (RESP).

Drawing on a comprehensive data set that includes professorial staff, students, as well as basic and grant funding, the paper shows, first, that German public universities' disciplinary structures have become more isomorphic in the last three decades. Second, the paper shows in an exemplary fashion how particular universities have changed their disciplinary profiles during the observation period (1995-2020).

Scientific validity in the face of complexity: Producing knowledge across epistemic worlds

Jessica Nuske

Universität Bremen

In the face of intensifying societal challenges - ranging from climate change to democratic erosion - sociology is increasingly called upon not only to describe social phenomena but to inform policy and contribute to practical solutions. In response, co-produced research has gained traction as a mode of inquiry that involves academic and societal actors collaboratively across the research process. However, this shift raises fundamental epistemological and methodological questions: What constitutes valid knowledge in contexts that span multiple epistemic communities? And what forms of influence - particularly in policy - and should such research exert? This paper proposes a sociologically grounded reconceptualization of research validity in collaborative research, understood as a situated and negotiated achievement. Drawing on Science and Technology Studies, particularly the concept of boundary objects, it is argued that research quality must be assessed not only by internal consistency or rigour, but by the

ability to foster epistemic collaboration across institutional and disciplinary divides. Boundary objects serve as mediators that enable cooperation without requiring consensus, thus sustaining both epistemic integrity and pluralism. The paper further advances a reflexive understanding of impact, shifting focus from instrumental outcomes to the structuring of communicative interfaces between science and society. Validity and impact, under this framework, are interdependent and processual - requiring transparency, reflexivity, and attention to the social conditions of knowledge production. This approach contributes to the methodological renewal of sociology in the face of complexity.

Empowering through proximity: How female neighbors serve as network ties and role models for refugee women

Kerstin Ostermann; Sebastian Bähr

Institute for Employment Research IAB

While the fundamental link between place and inequality is well investigated, causal studies on neighborhood effects are limited. Using nationwide administrative data from Germany and a quasi-experimental identification approach, we investigate how employed network ties and role models in the residential neighborhood shape individual-level employment. In exploiting variation over time, within cities and between 1 × 1 kilometer grid cells, we provide a causal estimate of gendered neighborhood employment effects on refugee women's employment probability. Results support direct job referral effects of full-time employed female neighbors, which is most potent for other neighborhood women from refugee countries. Analyses of locally prevalent female work norms show a positive one-off effect of higher part-time employment shares of native neighbors indicating that neighbors serve as role models only before other structures are settled. In analyzing neighborhood effects by sex and nationality, our study reveals that even weak neighborhood ties can provide valuable resources for disadvantaged social groups in the labor market. Hence, the study stresses the necessity to break down dichotomies such as gender and ethnicity when not only explaining but also finding alternative pathways for circumventing combined hurdles of intersectionality.

Gendered housework dynamics before and after moving in together: An event study of German couples

Maximilian Schiele

IAB

This study investigates how the division of housework changes when heterosexual couples in Germany move in together. Using 1999–2017 data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), we apply an event study design to analyze how household formation influences gender disparities in unpaid domestic labor. Our results reveal that gender inequalities in housework are already present before cohabitation, with single women performing significantly more housework than single men. However, these disparities increase markedly following the transition to shared living. The additional burden on women appears to continuously increase in the years after moving in together. While around half of the overall increase can be explained by the presence of children, a substantial share remains even after controlling for parenthood, indicating that cohabitation itself drives a significant shift in domestic labor allocation. Furthermore, we find that the effect is more pronounced among individuals with lower educational attainment. These findings support an integrated perspective: gender norms shape pre-cohabitation behaviors, while household bargaining mechanisms—amplified by differences in labor market participation and childrearing expectations—further entrench inequality.

Dropping out after Gender-Typed Compromises? How Deviations from Gendered Aspirations Shape Study Persistence

Carina Toussaint

Institute for Employment Research (IAB)

Higher education dropout continues to pose significant individual and societal challenges. While prior research shows that mismatches between aspirations and study choices increase the risk of dropout, little is known about the specific role of *gender-typed compromises* - that is, deviations from gendered field aspirations during the transition to higher education. Drawing on Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise as well as gender

role theory, this study examines how gender-conforming and gender-atypical compromises affect study persistence. Using data from the German National Educational Panel Study (NEPS SC4, $N \approx 3,000$), compromises are identified by comparing the gender composition of aspired and actual study fields. Field-level characteristics are derived from NEPS SC5 and the German Microcensus. Results from entropy-balanced discrete-time event history models show that students who deviate from their gendered aspirations face an elevated dropout risk. The effect varies by gender: women are more likely to drop out after gender-atypical compromises, while men are more vulnerable after gender-conforming compromises. These findings highlight how conformity to gender norms during educational transitions shapes persistence in higher education.

Cultural omnivorousness in the domains of music, film and literature: evidence for a partial overlap

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Contemporary research on the social side of cultural taste highlights a notable trend of cultural omnivorous taste among socially privileged groups. However, social stratification of taste encompasses different cultural domains, such as music, film or literature. But are omnivores in music also more likely to be omnivores in film and literary taste, and otherwise? Motivated to contribute to the debates on comparability in omnivore studies, this study tests the assumption of overlap of the omnivorous taste, using the KuBiPaD I survey data from Germany. Employing latent profile analysis, this study offers empirical insights revealing a partial overlap. The results show that it is common for omnivores in one domain to be omnivores as well as paucivores in other domains. The co-occurrence of omnivorousness in one domain and univorousness in another one is rare. When comparing the social stratification of omnivorous classes, three domains demonstrate dissimilarities. In the end, the overlap hypothesis is only partially supported, which encourages future research to select cultural domains to study omnivorousness more thoughtfully.

AI risks in the news: A study of newspaper reporting on large language models and artificial intelligence

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In November 2022, the release of ChatGPT and other large language models (LLMs) marked a new era in the widespread use of artificial intelligence and natural language processing applications. This study explores how the discourse surrounding LLMs evolved following the release of ChatGPT, which became a topic of discussion in both traditional and social media. While some individuals lauded the benefits of LLMs, others raised concerns about potential negative impacts, such as spreading false information, perpetuating biases, affecting the job market, and compromising privacy. This study investigates how traditional media discussions evolved after the launch of LLMs to a wider public and whether different news outlets addressed the associated risks of LLM adoption in distinctive ways. Using a dataset of over 13,000 articles and 42,000 paragraphs from major newspapers in Germany, the UK, and the US, this research explores trends and thematic shifts in media coverage. A classification approach leveraging the open-weight Llama model was employed to identify discussions of risks and harms, while BERTopic was used for topic modeling to uncover prevalent themes. The findings show a sharp increase in AI-related discussions following ChatGPT's release, with peaks in early 2023. Liberal-leaning outlets, such as The Guardian, were more critical on average than conservative ones, like The Times. Distinct themes of AI-related risks were identified, including misinformation, job displacement, privacy concerns, and ethical challenges.

Gender Differences in Return Migrants' Labor Market Outcomes. Couples in a High Income Country

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Economic labor market theories are ambiguous when it comes to the returns to return migration. Migrants' home country labor markets could either pay a premium on the human capital acquired through stays abroad or they could punish the lack of home country work experience. To what extent is the answer conditioned by migrants' gender? We contribute to the literature on labor market outcomes of return migrants in various ways. First, we examine return migrants to Germany, representing high-income countries which are seldom studied as countries of emigration let alone as countries of return migration. Second, we ask whether the returns to returning vary by

gender. Meanwhile, we consider gender differences in labor market participation. Third, we examine gender differences in several potential outcomes including the likelihood of employment, the intensity of employment, salary, and occupational status. We draw on data from the German Emigration and Remigration Panel Study (GERPS) for return migrants and use the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) as reference for non-migrants. We use multivariate analysis methods and entropy balancing to identify the effect of return migration on labor market outcomes. Preliminary findings indicate that the average employment rate of return migrants is similar to non-migrants unless they are women. Among those employed after return, wages and working hours are higher than among non-migrants and the difference is higher among men than women. Finally, the occupational prestige of return migrants is marginally lower than among non-migrants and there are no gender differences.
