

Dr. Linus Albert Westheuser

Max Planck Institute for Political and Social Science

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Born: June 19, 1989—Berlin, Germany

Specialisation

Political Sociology, Inequality, Class, Morality, Cleavage Politics, Populism, Qualitative Methods

Education and Academic Career

- since 2026 SENIOR RESEARCHER, Max Planck Institute for Political and Social Research. Head of Research Area "Social and Political Conflict".
- 2022-25 POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER, Department of Social Sciences, Humboldt University Berlin.
- 2021 POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, Swiss Government Excellence Fellowship, Department of Political Science, University of Zurich.
- 2022 DOCTORATE in Political Science and Sociology, Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence.
Thesis: *Pre-Political Bases of a New Cleavage. Social Identity, Moral Economy, and Classed Politics in Germany*. Passed with the highest distinction.
- VISITING RESEARCHER: London School of Economics (International Inequalities Institute), Berlin Graduate School of Social Sciences, Potsdam Centre for Citizenship and Social Pluralism.
- 2016 M.A. in Social Sciences, Humboldt University. Thesis: *Mobilizing Against Asylum Seekers: Grievances, Opportunities, and Discourse*.
STUDENT EXCHANGES: École Normale Supérieure de Cachan; Université de Lomé, Togo.
- 2013 B.A. in Social Sciences and Philosophy, Humboldt University. Thesis: *Homology and Practice: Theorizing a Faultline in Pierre Bourdieu's Social Theory*.
STUDENT EXCHANGE: King's College London.
- 2008 ABITUR, Altes Gymnasium Oldenburg.
- 2007 HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, Balboa High School, San Francisco, USA.

Publications

BOOK(S)

- 2023 Mau, Steffen, Thomas Lux and Linus Westheuser (2023): Triggerpunkte. Konsens und Konflikt in der Gegenwartsgesellschaft. Berlin: Suhrkamp. [\(LINK\)](#).
- 2026 EN: Trigger Points. Inequality and Political Polarization in Contemporary Society. Bristol: Bristol University Press. [\(LINK\)](#).
FR: *forthcoming at Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de L'Homme*.

Under Contract:

- "Moral Roots of a New Political Cleavage. Working and Middle Class Lives and the Transformation of Political Conflict in Germany". Under contract at Oxford University Press.
- "Discourses About Work and Working People in European Social Democracy, 1945-2025." (with Koen Damhuis, Paulus Wagner and Susi Meret). Under contract at Cambridge University Press.

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS

- forthcoming Mau, Steffen, Thomas Lux and Linus Westheuser (forthcoming): Four Arenas of Inequality Conflict. Four Arenas of Inequality Conflict. Social Inequality and Political Divides over Redistribution, Migration, Diversity and Climate Change. *Journal of the British Academy*.
- forthcoming Lux, Thomas, Steffen Mau and Linus Westheuser (forthcoming): Bodenständige gegen Weltoffene? Lebensführung und Polarisierung in Deutschland. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*.
- 2025 Westheuser, Linus and Linda Beck (2025): Moral Disapproval. The Political Consciousness of the Demobilized Working Class. *Critical Sociology*, Online First. [\(LINK\)](#).
- 2025 Westheuser, Linus (2025): Boundaries and Cleavages. Elements of a Cultural Sociology of Political Divides. *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology* 12(3), 289–313. [\(LINK\)](#).
- 2025 Westheuser, Linus, Steffen Mau and Thomas Lux (2025): Das Klima der Ungleichheit. Zur sozialen Struktur von Klimakonflikten. *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 35(2), 339–354. [\(LINK\)](#).
- 2025 Westheuser, Linus and Delia Zollinger (2025): Cleavage Theory Meets Bourdieu. Studying the Role of Group Identities in Cleavage Formation. *European Political Science Review* 17(1), 110–127. [\(LINK\)](#).
- 2024 Damhuis, Koen and Linus Westheuser (2024): Cleavage Politics in Ordinary Reasoning. How Common Sense Divides. *European Societies* 26(4), 1195–1231. [\(LINK\)](#).
- 2024 Mau, Steffen, Thomas Lux and Linus Westheuser (2024): 'Ja, aber'. Gesellschaftliche Konflikte verstehen", *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 76, 207–220. [\(LINK\)](#).
- 2024 Westheuser, Linus and Pierre Ostiguy (2024): The Sociocultural Approach to Populism: Toward a Cultural Class Analysis of Populist Appeals. In: *Elgar Research Handbook of Populism*, eds. Stavrakakis, Yannis and Giorgos Katsambekis. Edward Elgar.
- 2022 Beck, Linda and Linus Westheuser (2022): Verletzte Ansprüche. Zur Grammatik des politischen Bewusstseins von ArbeiterInnen. *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 32(2), 279–316 [\(LINK\)](#).
- 2022 Westheuser, Linus and Donatella della Porta (2022): Class Without Consciousness. The Politics of Demobilized Class Societies. *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 32(2), 165–172 [\(LINK\)](#).
- 2020 Westheuser, Linus (2020): Populism as Symbolic Class Struggle. Metaphor, Homology, and English Ale, *Participation and Conflict* 13(1): 256-283, [\(LINK\)](#).
- 2015 Westheuser, Linus (2015): Männer, Frauen und Stefan Hirschauer: Undoing Gender zwischen Praxeologie und rhetorischer Modernisierung. *GENDER – Zeitschrift für Gesellschaft, Geschlecht*

und Kultur 3: 109-125 ([LINK](#)).

SPECIAL ISSUE

2022 Westheuser, Linus and Donatella della Porta (2022): Class Without Consciousness: The Politics of Demobilized Class Societies. *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 32(2). ([LINK](#)).

SCIENTIFIC REPORT

2024 "Class consciousness and voting. Class as a political compass?" (with Thomas Lux), Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Foundation. [[LINK](#)] DE: "Klassenbewusstsein und Wahlentscheidung. Klasse als politischer Kompass?" [[LINK](#)]

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

2025 "The German Left Has Lost its Monopoly on Class Consciousness" (with Thomas Lux), *LSE European Politics Blog* ([LINK](#)).

2024 "Migration as a Trigger Point?" (with Steffen Mau and Thomas Lux), *German Research* 1(2024) ([LINK](#)).

2024 "Quanto conta la classe? Struttura e concezioni in mutamento." (with Donatella della Porta), *Parole-Chiave* 11.

2022 "This is not America: Politische Polarisierung in Deutschland als Schimäre", *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen* 35(2), 422-427 ([LINK](#)).

2020 "The Symbolic Politics of Populism Reflects the Class Alliances it Attempts to Assemble.", *LSE British Politics and Policy Blog* ([LINK](#)).

2019 "The Tea Party, Occupy Wall Street, and the Great Recession", *Mobilization* 24(4): 531-2. ([LINK](#))

2018 "Doing Gender". *Gender Glossary*, ([LINK](#)).

2012 "‘Obviously I’m Not a D**k, Right?’ Positioning Male Identities on the Mediated Conversational Floor of a Dating Show". *Soziologiemagazin*, 2: 125-136 ([LINK](#)).

WORK IN PROGRESS

"Why do public debates escalate? Trigger points and the moral dynamics of ‘hot politics’" (with Steffen Mau and Thomas Lux). Revise and resubmit.

— "The Moral Economy of Fuel Prices. Interpretive Struggles Around Justice and Blame in the Energy Crisis" (with Till Hilmar). Working paper.

— "Toward a Second Wave of Climate Social Policy." (with Michael Pahle, Simon Feindt, Laura Iozzelli and Antonia Schwarz). Working paper.

— "Class Interest, Identity, and Political Attitudes" (with Thomas Lux and Alma Below). Working paper.

DATA SETS

2024 Mau, Steffen; Lux, Thomas; Westheuser, Linus. Survey Ungleichheit und Konflikt. GESIS, Köln. ZA8826 Datenfile Version 1.0.0. doi:10.4232/1.14419 ([LINK](#)).

2025 Mau, Steffen; Lux, Thomas; Westheuser, Linus. Triggerpunkte: Konsens und Konflikt in der Gegenwartsgesellschaft. Transkripte der Fokusgruppeninterviews. doi:10.1594/PANGAEA.975394 ([LINK](#))

Selected conferences & invited lectures

- 2026 British Journal of Sociology Conference, London School of Economics.
2026 Oxford/Berlin Joint Workshop: "Group Identities and Democracy".
2026 Invited Lecture "Working Class Politics in the 21st Century", University of Heidelberg.
2026 Invited Lecture "Cultural Dynamics of Working Class Politics", Harvard University.
2025 Invited Lecture "Change Fatigue and Conflicts over Transformation", University of Tübingen.
2025 ECPR Joint Sessions, Prague.
2024 Invited Lecture "Moral Roots of a New Cleavage", University of Oslo.
2024 Invited Lecture "The Politics of Common Sense" University of Duisburg-Essen.
2024 Conference of Europeanists (CES), Lyon.
2024 Invited Lecture "Arenas of Inequality Conflicts", University of Bergen.
2024 British Journal of Sociology Conference, London School of Economics.
2024 ECPR Joint Sessions, Lüneburg.
2024 Invited Lecture "Climate Change as Class Conflict?", University of Dortmund.
2024 Invited Lecture "TU Berlin Climate Lecture", Technical University Berlin.
2023 Workshop "How Divided Is Europe?", University of Frankfurt.
2023 Invited Lecture "Workers' Consciousness in Times of Demobilization", University of Münster.
2023 Workshop "Exploring the Operational Logic of Morality", University of Tübingen.
2022 Workshop "Cleavage Politics in the 21st Century", University of Zurich.
2022 Conference of Europeanists (CES), Lisbon.
2022 German Sociological Association (DGS), Bielefeld.
2021 European Graduate Network, SciencesPo Paris.
2021 German Political Science Association (DVPW).
2020 Invited Lecture "Classed Identities and the New Cleavage", University of Zurich.
2020 Workshop "Solidarity Across Differences", University of Cambridge.
2020 ECPR Joint Sessions, Toulouse.
2020 Political Studies Association (PSA), Edinburgh.
2019 European Graduate Network, London School of Economics.
2019 Workshop "The Cultural Side of Populism", Scuola Normale Superiore.
2018 Workshop "Moral Boundaries", University of Tübingen.
2017 Workshop "Party Realignment, Crisis, and Varieties of Populism", Scuola Normale Superiore.
2017 European Sociological Association (ESA), Athens.
2016 International Sociological Association (ISA), Vienna.

Teaching

- 2024-25 "Listening to People: Interviewing Techniques in Political Sociology" (32 teaching hours), Humboldt University Berlin
2023-24 "Moral Economy: (De-)Legitimations of Inequality" (32 teaching hours), Humboldt University
2022-23 "Polarization of Public Opinion: Qualitative Approaches" (30 teaching hours), Humboldt University Berlin (module, main instructor: Thomas Lux).
2018 "Classical Sociological Theory" (30 teaching hours), University of Potsdam.

Service to the profession

CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

- 2025 Conference: "Moral Economies of the Polycrisis. Conflict, Critique and Legitimation in Critical Times" (with Till Hilmar and Laura Lüth). University of Hamburg.
- 2025 Conference Panel: "Veränderungspioniere und Veränderungerschöpfte. Zur Soziologie der Wahrnehmung sozialen Wandels" (with Julian Heide, Thomas Lux and Katja Schmidt). German Sociological Association Conference.
- 2022 Conference Panel: "New Conflicts and Cleavage Formation in Western Europe", Council of European Studies, Lisbon (with Aljoscha Jacobi).
- 2019 Large International Conference: "Class Without Consciousness. The Politics of Fragmented Class Identities", Scuola Normale Superiore (with Donatella della Porta).
- ongoing Academic discussion events with Clara Mattei (Tulsa), Anton Jäger (Oxford), Pierre Ostiguy (Valparaiso), Michael Pahle (PIK Potsdam) and others.

PEER REVIEW

British Journal of Sociology, European Societies, West European Politics, European Political Science Review, Critical Sociology, European Politics and Society, Zeitschrift für Soziologie, Berliner Journal für Soziologie

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

- 2025 Elected Member of the Governing Council of Humboldt University Berlin.
- 2023 Advisor: Research Project "A Cartography of the Working Class", Friedrich Ebert Foundation
- 2023- Member PhD Examination Committees: Daan Delespaul (KU Leuven); Pablo Beytia, Gordana Angelichin-Zhura, Christine Gerber (Humboldt University Berlin); Katja Schmidt (German Institute of Economic Research, DIW)
- 2023 Jury Member: Karin Lohr Prize for Student Theses, Humboldt University Berlin
- 2022- Examiner at M.A. and B.A. level
- 2018-21 Contact Officer for International Visitors at Scuola Normale Superiore
- 2018 Co-convenor Florence Intersectionality Group (FIG)
- 2017-21 European Graduate Network Representative

Transfer and Consultancy

Economic Policy Council, Social Democratic Party (SPD), permanent member
Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; Federal Ministry for the Environment
National leadership of SPD, Bündnis90/Die Grünen, Die Linke; Social Democratic Parties of Switzerland (SP), Sweden (SAP) and Czech Republic (SOCDEM)
German Trade Union Council (DGB), IG Metall, IG BAU, Ver.di
Federal Agency for Civic Education, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Austrian Chamber of Labour, Karl Renner Institute, Bruno Kreisky Forum, Fiscal Future, Das Progressive Zentrum, Agora Energiewende, Clean Energy Wire
Diakonie, Arbeiterwohlfahrt, Network of State Anti-Discrimination Agencies

Grants & Honors

2026	Grant: Research Network “Qualitative Studies of Public Opinion. Understanding the Crises of Democratic Politics.” German Research Foundation (67,000€)
2024	Prize “Best Political Book” for <i>Triggerpunkte</i> , Friedrich Ebert Foundation (10,000€)
2024	“Top 100 Scientists”, Der Tagesspiegel
2023	Best Non-Fiction 2023 by DIE ZEIT/Deutschlandfunk Kultur and Welt/Neue Zürcher Zeitung
2022	PhD thesis shortlisted for the German Study Award (<i>Deutscher Studienpreis</i>)
2021	Swiss Government Excellence Postdoctoral Fellowship
2016-21	Full PhD Scholarship, Scuola Normale Superiore
2008-11	Scholarship, German Academic Scholarship Foundation (<i>Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes</i>)
2010	Essay Prize, <i>Soziologie Heute</i>
2008	State Prize, High School History Competition of the German President

References

Prof. Steffen Mau, Max Planck Institute for Political and Social Science, mau@mmg.mpg.de
Prof. Donatella della Porta, Scuola Normale Superiore, donatella.dellaporta@sns.it
Prof. Magne Flemmen, University of Oslo, magne.flemmen@sosgeo.uio.no