

# Dr. Linus Albert Westheuser

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Born: June 19, 1989—Berlin, Germany

## Specialisation

Macrosociology, Political Sociology of Class, Inequality and Morality; Transformation of Political Cleavages; Social Group Identities; Qualitative Studies

## Education and Academic Career

- since 2026 SENIOR RESEARCHER, Max Planck Institute for Political and Social Research, Göttingen.  
Head of Research Area *Social and Political Conflict*.
- since 2026 AFFILIATED RESEARCHER, WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Center for Civil Society Research.
- 2022-25 POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER, Humboldt University Berlin, Chair of Macrosociology.  
DFG Project *New Inequalities, New Cleavages? A Political Sociology of Contemporary Society*.
- 2021 POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, Swiss Government Excellence Fellow, University of Zurich,  
Department of Political Science.
- 2022 DOCTORATE in Political Science and Sociology, Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence.  
Thesis title: *Pre-Political Bases of a New Cleavage. Social Identity, Moral Economy and Classed Politics in Germany*. Jury: Donatella della Porta, Mike Savage, Steffen Mau. Highest distinction.
- 2020 VISITING RESEARCHER: London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).
- 2016 MASTER OF ARTS in Social Sciences, Humboldt University.  
EXCHANGE STAYS: Université de Lomé; École Normale Supérieure de Cachan.
- 2013 BACHELOR OF ARTS in Social Sciences and Philosophy, Humboldt University.  
EXCHANGE YEAR: King's College London.
- 2008 ABITUR, Altes Gymnasium Oldenburg.
- 2007 HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, Balboa High School, San Francisco.

## Publications

### BOOK(S)

2023 Mau, Steffen, Thomas Lux and **Linus Westheuser** (2023): *Triggerpunkte. Konsens und Konflikt in der Gegenwartsgesellschaft*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Transl. EN: Bristol University Press; FR: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de L'Homme.

In preparation:

**Westheuser, Linus**: *Moral Roots of a New Political Divide. Working and Middle Class Lives and the Transformation of Political Conflict*. Accepted at Oxford University Press. (Manuscript submission September 2026).

Damhuis, Koen, Paulus Wagner, **Linus Westheuser** and Susi Meret: *Discourses About Work and Working People in European Social Democracy, 1945-2025*. Under contract at Cambridge University Press. (Manuscript submitted)

### PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS

forthcoming **Westheuser, Linus**, Koen Damhuis, Michèle Lamont, Stephanie Ternullo: Cultural Dynamics of Working Class Politics in Europe and the US. Accepted at *Annual Review of Political Science*.

forthcoming Abou-Chadi, Tarik and **Linus Westheuser** (forthcoming): Beyond the Right-Wing Working Class. Correcting a Persistent Political Myth. *Journal of the British Academy*.

2026 **Westheuser, Linus**, Thomas Lux and Steffen Mau (2026): Why Do Public Debates Escalate? Trigger Points and the Moral Dynamics of "Hot Politics". *British Journal of Sociology*, Online First.

2026 Lux, Thomas, Steffen Mau and **Linus Westheuser** (2026): 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 (eds.) (2022): Class Without Consciousness: The Politics of Demobilized Class Societies. *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 32(2). ([LINK](#)).
- SCIENTIFIC REPORT
- 2024 **Westheuser, Linus** and Thomas Lux: Class consciousness and voting. Class as a political compass? Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Foundation. ([LINK](#))
- DE: Klassenbewusstsein und Wahlentscheidung. Klasse als politischer Kompass? ([LINK](#))
- OTHER PUBLICATIONS
- 2025 "Die Erosion des Politischen in der Mitte ist eine Gefahr für die Demokratie." In: Ebner von Eschenbach et al. (Hg.): *Erwachsenenbildung zwischen Partizipation und Exklusion*. Opladen: Barbara Budrich.
- 2025 "The German Left Has Lost its Monopoly on Class Consciousness" (with Thomas Lux), *LSE European Politics Blog* ([LINK](#)).
- 2024 "Leute ohne akademischen Hintergrund sitzen kaum noch mit am Tisch". Politische Ungleichheit und die soziale Krise des Parteiensystems (with Lea Elsässer). *Soziopolis*.
- 2024 "Migration as a Trigger Point?" (with Steffen Mau and Thomas Lux), *German Research* 1(2024)
- 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](#))

## WORK IN PROGRESS

"The Imagined Conservative Majority. Misperceptions of Public Opinion in Germany" (with Steffen Mau and Thomas Lux). Under Review.

"Change Fatigue. The Social Structure and Political Consequences of Feeling Overwhelmed by Social Change" (with Thomas Lux, Julian Heide, Katja Schmidt and Steffen Mau). Under Review.

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

"Class Identity, Class Antagonism and Voting for the Left and Right" (with Thomas Lux and Alma Below). Working paper.

"Embracing Conflict to Overcome the Crisis of the European Green Deal." (with Michael Pahle, Simon Feindt, Laura Iozzelli and Antonia Schwarz). 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

DGS German Sociological Association: 2014, 2020, 2022, 2025, 2026

ECPR Joint Sessions: Prague (2025), Lüneburg (2024), Toulouse (2020)

CES Council of European Studies Conference: Lyon (2024), Reykjavik (2023), Lisbon (2022)

BJS British Journal of Sociology Conference: London School of Economics (2024, 2026)

GradNet: European Graduate Network: London (2019), Paris (2021)

DVPW German Political Science Association: Online (2021)

PSA Political Studies Association: Edinburgh (2020)

ESA European Sociological Association: Athens (2017)

ISA International Sociological Association: Vienna (2016)

- 2026 Workshop: "Group Identities and Democracy". Berlin/Oxford Joint Workshop.
- 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 Transformation Conflicts", University of Tübingen.
- 2024 Invited Lecture "Moral Roots of a New Cleavage", University of Oslo.
- 2024 Invited Lecture "Four Arenas of Inequality Conflict", University of Bergen.
- 2024 Invited Lecture "The Politics of Common Sense" University of Duisburg-Essen.
- 2024 Invited Lecture "Climate Change as Class Conflict?", University of Dortmund.
- 2024 Invited Lecture "Inequality and the Roots of Climate Conflict", TU Berlin.
- 2023 Invited Lecture "Workers' Consciousness in Times of Demobilization", University of Münster.
- 2023 Workshop "How Divided Is Europe?", University of Frankfurt.

- 2023 Workshop "Exploring the Operational Logic of Morality", University of Tübingen.
- 2022 Workshop "Cleavage Politics in the 21st Century", University of Zurich.
- 2020 Invited Lecture "Classed Identities and the New Cleavage", University of Zurich.
- 2020 Workshop "Solidarity Across Differences", University of Cambridge.
- 2019 Conference "Class Without Consciousness", Scuola Normale Superiore.
- 2019 Workshop "The Cultural Side of Populism", Scuola Normale Superiore.
- 2018 Workshop "Moral Boundaries", University of Tübingen.
- 2017 Workshop "Party Realignment and Varieties of Populism", Scuola Normale Superiore.

## Teaching and supervision

### COURSES TAUGHT

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

### SUPERVISED MA THESES

Nelly Reinstorf: „In Vielfalt ohne Angst“: Eine qualitative Analyse lokaler Deutungskämpfe im Konflikt um die Unterbringung geflüchteter Menschen.

Hannah Lindner: „Wir hüpfen auf der Wiese und allen geht es gut“. Zu Möglichkeits- und Wirklichkeitssinn in der sozialökologischen Transformation am Beispiel von ÖPNV-Beschäftigten.

Elisabeth Hanak: Die BSW-Wähler:innenschaft und ihre Wahrnehmung des politischen Raums.

Cosima Adams: Zwischen empirischer Realität und subjektiver Konstruktion: Die gefühlte Wahrheit der Polarisierung.

Teresa Schich: Entfremdungserfahrungen im Kontext von Bildungsaufstiegen. Eine qualitative Untersuchung der Perspektiven von Bildungsaufsteiger\*innen und ihren Eltern.

Ferdinand Kolkwitz: Normalisierung und Normdekonstruktion im Diskurs über Transgeschlechtlichkeit um 1980 im Vergleich zur Gegenwart.

Aron Mikus: Genossenschaften als Akteure des sozialen Wandels? Der Fall der Gólya-Genossenschaft.

Florian Feick: Soziale Position und Lebensstil: Eine empirische Untersuchung von Bourdieus Homologie-These im Deutschland des 21. Jahrhunderts.

Matthias Danyeli: Betriebsratspraxis im Zeitalter des Klimawandels. Eine Untersuchung des Habitus von Betriebsräten im Kontext klimawandelbezogener Herausforderungen.

#### PHD EXAMINATION COMMITTEES

Dominika Tronina (Humboldt University)

Daan Delespaul (KU Leuven)

Zoe Perko (Humboldt University)

Pablo Beytia (Humboldt University)

Gordana Angelichin-Zhura (Humboldt University)

Christine Gerber (Humboldt University)

Katja Schmidt (German Institute of Economic Research, DIW)

#### Service to the profession

##### CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

- 2025 International 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 Veränderungserschöpfte. 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 International Conference: "Class Without Consciousness. The Politics of Fragmented Class Identities", Scuola Normale Superiore (with Donatella della Porta).
- ongoing Organized public academic events, e.g. with Clara Mattei (Tulsa), Anton Jäger (Oxford), Pierre Ostiguy (Valparaiso), Michael Pahle (PIK Potsdam).

##### PEER REVIEW

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

##### PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

- 2026 Head of Research Stream "New Class Politics", Progressive Politics Research Network.
- 2025 Elected Member of the Governing Council (*Konzipil*) of Humboldt University Berlin.
- 2023 Scientific Advisor: "Cartography of the Working Class", Friedrich Ebert Foundation.
- 2023 Jury Member, Karin Lohr Prize for Student Theses, Humboldt University.
- 2018-21 International Officer, Scuola Normale Superiore.
- 2018 Co-founder Florence Intersectionality Group (FIG).
- 2017-21 European Graduate Network Representative.

## Transfer and Consultancy

### 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 (bpb), Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut (WSI)  
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

### BYLINES AND INTERVIEWS

DIE ZEIT, Der Spiegel, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Tagesspiegel, taz, FOCUS, Der Freitag, RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland, Jacobin, Surplus Magazin, Luxemburg, Arbeit und Wirtschaft, Soziopolis, spw, El Confidencial  
ZDF berlin direkt, Kulturzeit, Deutschlandfunk, NDR, WDR, BR, hr2, rbb Kultur, fluxFM, Lage der Nation, Das neue Berlin, Mittelweg 36 Podcast, New Books Network

## Grants & Honors

- 2026 Grant: Research Network “Qualitative Studies of Public Opinion. Understanding the Crises of Democratic Politics.” German Research Foundation (DFG) (61,000€)
- 2024 Prize “Best Political Book” for *Triggerpunkte*, Friedrich Ebert Foundation (10,000€)
- 2024 Listed “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 (*Deutscher Studienpreis*)
- 2021 Swiss Government Excellence Postdoctoral Fellowship, partly declined (40,000€)
- 2016-21 Full PhD Scholarship, Scuola Normale Superiore (65,000€)
- 2008-11 Scholarship, German Academic Foundation (*Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes*)
- 2010 Essay Prize, *Soziologie Heute*
- 2008 State Prize, High School History Competition of the German President

## References

Prof. Steffen Mau, Max Planck Institute for Political and Social Science, [steffen.mau@ips.mpg.de](mailto:steffen.mau@ips.mpg.de)  
Prof. Donatella della Porta, Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence, [donatella.dellaporta@sns.it](mailto:donatella.dellaporta@sns.it)  
Prof. Magne Flemmen, University of Oslo, [magne.flemmen@sosgeo.uio.no](mailto:magne.flemmen@sosgeo.uio.no)