The Politics of Inequality is a Cluster of Excellence at the University of Konstanz within the framework of the Excellence Strategy of the federal and state governments.

Our researchers investigate inequality in areas such as education, employment, and political rights. We study how people perceive these inequalities, how they lead to collective mobilization, and how political actors respond to them.

More information:
– inequality.uni.kn

Conference website
– inequality.uni.kn/opening-conference

Get in touch with the organizers:
– events.inequality@uni-konstanz.de
Cluster of Excellence
The Politics of Inequality

Meet Our Speakers
At the beginning of this year, our Cluster of Excellence “The Politics of Inequality” launched into its task: to analyze the political dimension of inequality, its political causes and consequences. The cluster’s research areas – Perception, Participation, and Policies – also form the backbone of our opening conference. We are interested in how individuals subjectively perceive inequality, how collective actors such as parties, interest groups and movements mobilize in response to inequality, and how these mobilization efforts influence policy-making processes – or not.

This opening conference is the first of many opportunities for us to exchange ideas and insights about these questions. We start with a festive public event: a public lecture – in German – by renowned economist Marcel Fratzscher, followed by a roundtable discussion and reception at the Konzil Konstanz. On the following days, three sessions on our research areas introduce our approach and research program to the scientific community, combining keynote talks from members of our Scientific Advisory Committee with invited talks from guest speakers and cluster members. For your convenience, this booklet provides biographical information on our speakers, chairs, and discussants, as well as some general information on our Cluster of Excellence.

We are enormously happy and very grateful that you are joining us for our opening conference, the first of many “Politics of Inequality” meetings to come!

Marius R. Busemeyer
Speaker
Cluster of Excellence “The Politics of Inequality”
Katrin Auspurg is a Professor of Sociology with a specialty in quantitative empirical research at Ludwig Maximilian University (LMU) Munich.

Prof. Auspurg obtained a diploma in Sociology at LMU Munich in 2006, followed by Ph.D. studies in Sociology at the University of Konstanz, which she finished in 2010. She held positions at the University of Konstanz, the University of Essex, becoming a full professor of Sociology at Goethe University Frankfurt in 2014. In 2015, she accepted a professorship at LMU Munich.

Since 2017, Katrin Auspurg functions as Speaker of the Open Science Center at LMU Munich, and sits on the board of the German Academy of Sociology. Her research focuses on quantitative methods, social inequalities, analytical sociology and the sociology of science.

Christian Breunig is a Professor of Comparative Politics at the University of Konstanz.

In 2007, he received his doctorate at the University of Washington in Seattle. After a postdoctoral fellowship at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in Cologne, he became Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto in 2008, where he obtained tenure as an Associated professor in 2012. That same year, Christian Breunig was called to a professorship at the Department of Politics and Public Administration of the University of Konstanz, where he has been teaching since.

Prof. Breunig directs the German Policy Agendas project, which is part of the Comparative Agendas Project (CAP). His CAP contribution recently won a Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Data Set Award of the American Political Science Association. He is a principal investigator in the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’.

His research concentrates on public policy in advanced democracies, comparative political economy, political methodology, and budgetary politics.
Friedrich Breyer is a Professor of Economic and Social Policy at the University of Konstanz.

Prof. Breyer received his doctorate at Heidelberg University in 1978. In 1983, he became professor of Economics, taking up his current position, the Chair of Economic and Social Policy at the Department of Economics of the University of Konstanz in 1992. Since 2000, he has also been Research Professor at the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) Berlin.

Prof. Breyer's service to the field encompasses many areas, among them his long-standing (since 2013) board membership at the Thurgau Institute of Economics (TWI), his membership in the German Ministry of Economic Affairs' Advisory Group, and his service as treasurer and board member of the Verein für Socialpolitik. He is a principal investigator in the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’.

In his research, Friedrich Breyer focuses on the economy of social security, health economics and economical political theory.

Marius R. Busemeyer is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Konstanz.

After his studies at Heidelberg University and Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Marius R. Busemeyer received a doctorate in political science at Heidelberg University in 2006. Following a stay at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in Cologne, he moved to Konstanz in 2011 to take up a professorship at the Department of Politics and Public Administration, where he teaches policy analysis and political theory.

Prof. Busemeyer has been appointed a member of the Young Academy of Europe, and co-chairs the political economy section of the German Political Science Association (DVPW). In 2015, his book ‘Skills and Inequality’ won the Stein Rokkan Prize for Comparative Social Science Research. He serves as Speaker of the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’ at the University of Konstanz.

Marius R. Busemeyer’s research focuses on comparative political economy and welfare state research, education and social policy, public spending, theories of institutional change and, more recently, public opinion on the welfare state.
Miriam Butt

Miriam Butt is a Professor of General and Computational Linguistics at the University of Konstanz.

After her studies at Wellesley College and Stanford University, Miriam Butt received her Ph.D. in Linguistics at Stanford in 1993. She worked as a Research Scientist at the Universities of Tübingen, Stuttgart and finally Konstanz. Completing a lecturership at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST), she took up her professorship at the University of Konstanz in 2003.

Prof. Butt is a member of the Editorial Board of Series on Studies in Constraint-Based Linguistics (CSLI Publications) and Editor at Large at CSLI Publications. She is a principal investigator in the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’. Her research focuses on South Asian languages, especially Urdu, taking both synchronic and historical aspects into account. Occasionally, she works on other languages including German.

Lars-Erik Cederman

Lars-Erik Cederman is a Professor of International Conflict Research at ETH Zurich.

He holds an M.Sc. in Engineering Physics from the University of Uppsala and an M.A. in International Relations from the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva. In 1994, he obtained his Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Michigan. Since then he taught at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, at Oxford, UCLA, and Harvard. In 2003 he joined the ETH, taking up his current position in Zurich.

For his 1997 book ‘Emergent Actors in World Politics’ Prof. Cederman received the 1998 Edgar S. Furniss Book Award, while 2013’s ‘Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War’, which he co-authored with Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Halvard Buhaug, won numerous awards. He is a member of the Advisory Committee to the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’.

Lars-Erik Cederman's research focuses on computational modelling, International Relations theory, nationalism, integration and disintegration processes as well as historical sociology.
Claudia Diehl

Claudia Diehl received her doctorate in Sociology from the University of Mannheim in 2001. She took up her professorship at the Department of Sociology in Konstanz in 2013.

Since 2012, Prof. Diehl has been a member of the Scientific Advisory Board for family-related questions at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. In 2015, she joined the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration. She serves the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’ as Co-Speaker.

Claudia Diehl's research focuses on integration processes of immigrants, ethnic boundaries and phenomena of international migration. She conducted several large surveys among recent immigrant to Europe and Germany. Currently she is a visiting professor at the Munk School for Global Affairs and Public Policy in Toronto.

Paula England

Paula England is a Professor of Sociology at New York University (NYU).

Paula England received her Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Chicago in 1975. She has taught at several universities in the U.S. before taking up her professorship at NYU in 2011. She received the NYU’s Silver Professorship in Arts and Science in 2016.

Prof. England is a member of the National Academy of Science and Frances Perkins Fellow of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. From 2014 to 2015, she served as president of the American Sociological Association (ASA). She has received numerous awards for her contributions to science, including the ASA’s Jessie Bernard Award for Distinguished Scholarship on Gender, the ASA ‘Sociology of the Family’ section’s Distinguished Career Award, and the Population Association of America’s Harriet Presser Award.

Paula England’s research focuses on changing family structures, gender and labour markets, sexual behaviour, and interdisciplinary integration.
Marcel Fratzscher

Marcel Fratzscher is a Professor of Macroeconomics at Humboldt University Berlin and serves as President of the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin). After studying at Kiel, Oxford, and Harvard Universities, he received his Ph.D. at the European University Institute in Florence. After diverse positions at the European Central Bank, he took up his current positions at DIW and Humboldt University in 2013.

Prof. Fratzscher won several awards, e.g. the Excellence Award in Global Economic Affairs for work on global financial linkages and monetary policy in Kiel, and the Kurt Rothschild Award for Economic Journalism and Research. In 2013, he was called to the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Technology’s Scientific Advisory Board. He is a member of the U.N. High-Level Advisory Board on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Hertie School of Governance Board of Trustees, and the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council. His recent book ‘The Germany Illusion’, published in 2018, analyzes the role of Germany in Europe.

Prof. Fratzscher’s research focuses on macroeconomics, inequality and European integration.

Aina Gallego

Aina Gallego is an Associate Professor at the Barcelona Institute of International Studies and Research Associate at the Institute of Political Economy and Governance.

After studying Political Science at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, she received her doctorate in 2008. Aina Gallego then held positions at the Spanish High Research Council and at Stanford University, before she became Assistant Professor at the Barcelona Institute of International Studies in 2014. She obtained tenure as an Associate Professor in 2018.

Prof. Gallego’s book ‘Unequal Political Participation Worldwide’ won the Choice Outstanding Academic Title of the Association of College and Research Libraries and several best article awards.

Her research focuses on comparative politics, research methods and the political representation of the poor.
Thomas Hinz

Thomas Hinz is a Professor of Empirical Social Research with a Focus on Survey Research at the Department of Sociology at the University of Konstanz.

In 1997, he received his doctorate at Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, which is also where he habilitated in Sociology in 2003. In 2004 he took up his professorship at the University of Konstanz. Prof. Hinz worked as a guest researcher at the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB Berlin) in 2015 and 2016. In 2016, he was also visiting researcher at NYU. He is a principal investigator in the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’.

His research focuses on survey experiments, methods of empirical social research, labour market sociology, social inequality as well as organizational and economic sociology. He is currently involved in research on gender and class-specific job preferences.

Katharina Holzinger

Katharina Holzinger is a Professor of International Politics and Conflict Management at the University of Konstanz.

After studies at Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, Katharina Holzinger received her doctorate at the University of Augsburg in 1993 and her habilitation at the University of Bamberg in 2002. She took up a professorship in Political Science and directorship at the Centre for Globalisation and Governance at the University of Hamburg in 2004, moving to her current position in Konstanz three years later.

Prof. Holzinger is member of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences (HdAW) sits on the advisory board of the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB), as well as the Gutenberg Forschungskolleg. She is a principal investigator in the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’.

Her current research focuses on traditional governance in Africa and indigenous peoples around the world and their relation to internal conflict and democracy. She is also interested in communicative methods of conflict management.
Christian Joppke

Christian Joppke is a Professor of Sociology and the Director of the Institute of Sociology at the University of Bern.

After studies at the Free University of Berlin and University of Mannheim, Christian Joppke received his doctorate at the University of California at Berkeley in 1989. He was appointed Assistant Professor at the University of Southern California in 1990 and thereafter held professorships in at the European University Institute Florence, the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, the University of Bremen and the American University of Paris. In 2011, he accepted his current position in Bern. In 2013, he was named Honorary Professor at the University of Aarhus. He has also acted as a Recurrent Visiting Professor at the European University Institute in Florence. Furthermore, he is a member of the Advisory Committee to the Cluster of Excellence 'The Politics of Inequality'.

Christian Joppke's research focuses on comparative political sociology, social and political theory, citizenship and immigration, religion, ethnicity, state and social movements.

Bettina Kohlrausch

Bettina Kohlrausch is a Professor of Educational Sociology at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences of Paderborn University.

After her studies in Sociology at the University of Bonn, Bettina Kohlrausch received her doctorate at the University of Bremen in 2007, where she had held a Fellowship at the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS). Besides research positions at the University of Hannover and at SOFI Göttingen, she also obtained a Visiting Postdoctoral Fellowship at the London School of Economics and a Guest Fellowship at the European University Institute in Florence. In 2015, she was Visiting Professor at the German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW). She accepted a professorship at the University of Paderborn in 2016.

Bettina Kohlrausch is a member of the German parliaments Enquete Commission on 'Vocational Training in the Digital Workplace'. Her research focuses on educational pathways, transition systems, education as part of social policy, labour market and new social inequalities.
Moritz Kuhn

Moritz Kuhn is a Professor of Macroeconomics at the Department of Economics at the University of Bonn.

In 2010, Moritz Kuhn received his Ph.D. in Economics at the University of Mannheim. He became an Assistant Professor at the University of Bonn in 2010, an Associate Professor in 2014, and took up his current professorship in 2019.

In 2012, Moritz Kuhn joined the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) at the University of Bonn as a Research Fellow. He has been Research Affiliate at the Center for Economic Policy Research since 2015, and since 2017 he has been a Research Fellow at the CESifo group at Ludwig Maximilian University Munich.

Prof. Kuhn’s research focuses on labour economics and business cycle fluctuations, as well as income and wealth inequality.

Leslie McCall

Leslie McCall is Presidential Professor of Sociology and Political Science at the City University of New York (CUNY). She is also Associate Director at the CUNY Stone Center dealing with socio-economic inequality.

After studies at Brown University and the University of Wisconsin, Leslie McCall received her doctorate at the University of Wisconsin in Sociology in 1995. She held positions at Rutgers and Northwestern Universities, accepting a full professorship at the latter institution in 2013. 2017 saw her move to City University and take up her current position.

In 2006, Prof. McCall became a Fellow at the Center for the Study of Poverty & Inequality of Stanford University. She has been a member of the Sociological Research Association since 2011, and of the Social Inequality Advisory Committee of the Russell Sage Foundation since 2017. She is also a member of the Advisory Committee to the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’.

Prof. McCall’s research focuses on social theories, methods and social inequality, public opinion of different social classes and the social gender.
Ulf Mörkenstam

Ulf Mörkenstam is Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science, Stockholm University.

His main research interests are political theory and policy analysis with a specific focus on Sámi politics and the rights of indigenous peoples. He has written extensively on Swedish state’s policy towards the Sámi in Sweden and was principal investigator for the first two ever election studies conducted in conjunction to the elections to the Swedish Sámediggi [Sámi Parliament] in 2013 and 2017. He is currently principal investigator for three larger research projects: “Who are ‘We, the People’? Popular sovereignty in national constitutions and the challenge of indigenous peoples”, “The Sámi Parliament Election 2017”, and “The Sámi audiovisual collection – films and TV programs in archives and on line”. He is also project leader for the Swedish part of the comparative Norwegian/Swedish project “The Limits of Sámi Politics: Inside and Outside of the Sámi Polity”.

Keith Payne

Keith Payne is a Professor of Psychology and Neurosciences at the Faculty of Psychology of the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill.

Keith Payne received his Ph.D. in Social Psychology at Washington University Saint Louis in 2002. After Assistant Professorships at Ohio State University in Columbus and UNC Chapel Hill, he became Associate Professor at the latter institution in 2010 and accepted a full professorship in 2014.

In 2008, Keith Payne won the SAGE Young Scholars Award and the International Social Cognition Network Early Career Award. He is an Elected Fellow of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology and the Society for Experimental Social Psychology. Furthermore, he is a member of the Advisory Committee to the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’.

Prof. Payne’s research focuses on inequality, attitudes and beliefs, the perception of humans, clichés and prejudices as well as social cognition.
Florian Ranft

Florian Ranft is a Policy Fellow and Head of the Structural Change Programme at Das Progressive Zentrum, a Berlin-based think tank.

He studied Political Science and Government at the University of Potsdam and obtained his doctorate at Ernst Moritz Arndt University of Greifswald in 2015.

Dr. Ranft worked as Senior Project Consultant at the Peace Research Institute in Frankfurt, and as Senior Research Analyst at the Centre for Progressive Policy in London. He was also head Head of Policy and International at Policy Network in London. In 2018, Florian Ranft took up his current position at Das Progressive Zentrum.

His research topics are structural change regarding inclusive growth and the future of work, political sociology and international politics.

Chris Reed

Chris Reed is a Professor of Computer Science and Philosophy at the University of Dundee. He is also head of the Center for Argument Technology. Prof. Reed had leading positions in several technology firms. He is one of the founding editors of the ‘Journal of Argument & Computation’ and co-investigator at the ‘Bulit Environment for Social Inclusion through the Digital Economy’ (BESiDE) project on the structure of conversations and manipulation of information transmitted.

His research focuses on theory, praxis and commercialisation of argument technology.
Susanne Strauß

Susanne Strauß is a Professor of Sociology with a focus on Gender Studies at the University of Konstanz.

After studies at the London School of Economics and the University of Hamburg, she received her doctorate at the Graduate School of Social Sciences at the University of Bremen in 2007. Subsequently, she spent several years at the University of Tübingen. In 2012, she joined the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) Berlin as a guest researcher. She took up a full professorship in Konstanz in 2014. She is a principal investigator in the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’.

In her research, Prof. Strauß specializes in gender inequalities in the labour market and educational system and cross-country comparisons regarding the division of labour between couples in paid employment and unpaid work as care work or volunteering.

Nils B. Weidmann

Nils B. Weidmann is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Konstanz.

After studies at the University of Freiburg and ETH Zurich, Nils B. Weidmann received his Ph.D. at ETH in 2009. He then spent time at Princeton as a Postdoctoral Research Associate, at Yale as Postdoctoral Associate and Lecturer at Yale, and at the Peace Research Institute in Oslo as a Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellow. He took up his professorship in Konstanz in 2012.

Nils B. Weidmann was awarded the ETH medal for an outstanding dissertation in 2010, and a Sofja Kovalevskaja Award by the Alexander von Humbold Foundation in 2012. His book ‘The Internet and Political Protest in Autocracies’ (co-author Espen Geelmuyden Röd) was published just recently. Prof. Weidmann is co-speaker of the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’.

His research focuses on information and communication technology and political mobilization, inequality and political violence, event data collection and methodology.
Christina Zuber is Assistant Professor for German Politics and Public Administration at the University of Konstanz.

In 2012, Christina Zuber obtained her doctorate at the University of Köln, where she had studied Political Science, Slavic Studies and Philosophy. From 2013, she worked at diverse institutions including the Universities of Lucerne, Zurich, and Bremen, the Centre for Democracy Studies in Aarau, the Institute for Minority Rights in Bolzano, and the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. In 2015, Christina Zuber moved to Konstanz for her current position at the University’s Department of Politics and Public Administration.

Her thesis ‘Beyond Outbidding. Explaining Ethnic Party Behaviour in Competition’ received the ASN Best Doctoral Student Papers Award. She also received the LUKS Award for Teaching Excellence in 2018. She is a principal investigator in the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Politics of Inequality’.

Prof. Zuber’s general background is in Comparative Politics, while her research interests lie in federalism, immigration, party politics and South-East European countries.
About Us

“The Politics of Inequality” is an interdisciplinary Cluster of Excellence at the University of Konstanz.

It has been funded by the Excellence Strategy of the German federal and state governments since January 2019.

What we do

Researchers at the Cluster study how people perceive inequality, how this leads to collective mobilization, and how policy-makers respond to it. The following questions are tackled in the Cluster’s research areas:

Research Area I: Perceptions
Some inequalities are perceived as problematic, while others receive little attention. Researchers in the Cluster investigate how these different perceptions of inequality, which are often formed and transformed through political communication and linguistic framing, shape political preferences, e.g. for redistribution.

Research Area II: Participation
Political preferences lead to diverse political responses including conventional and non-conventional, sometimes even violent forms. Research projects in the Cluster focus on the conditions that lead to mobilization and political participation. Social media and other aspects of digitalization receive special attention.

Research Area III: Policies
Political responses to inequality and related political demands are diverse and selective. Researchers in the Cluster analyze why some inequalities and political claims evoke policy responses while others do not. They also study the impact of these responses on structural inequalities.

Three domains of inequality are in the focus of the Cluster’s investigations in all three research areas:
1. education and information, 2. income and wealth, and 3. rights and privileges.

Who we are

37 Principal Investigators (PIs) and numerous doctoral and post-doctoral researchers from different disciplines including political science, sociology, economics, linguistics, psychology and education studies collaborate in the Cluster.

PIs can jointly apply for projects. External researchers at various levels of the academic career are annually invited to join this endeavor as fellows. Joint research ventures with the Cluster’s partner organizations in Germany, Europe, and abroad provide new ideas and access to innovative data.

The Cluster is headed by Marius Busemeyer (speaker), Claudia Diehl and Nils Weidmann (co-speakers).

Find us
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