



DYNAMICS

Research Training Group

NEWSLETTER

Issue 7 2025

***The Dynamics of
Demography,
Democratic Processes,
and Public Policy***

***DFG Research Training Group
DYNAMICS***

***Department of Social Sciences
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Dear DYNAMICS Community,

As we look back on an energizing and eventful year, one thing stands out above all else: our outstanding community. The commitment, creativity, and curiosity of everyone in our program continue to make this an inspiring place to work, learn, and grow. Whether in seminars or informal gatherings, the sense of collaboration remains one of our greatest strengths.

We are especially delighted to welcome Felix Haass, Assistant Professor for Comparative Politics at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, as a new Principal Investigator. Felix has jumped right in, teaching a course for our doctoral researchers this fall. We are excited to have him on board.

Our program has had an impressive year of research achievements, with numerous conference presentations and publications showcasing the exciting work being done by our doctoral researchers. Many of our doctoral researchers spent time abroad, sharing their projects, building new collaborations, and representing our program internationally.

You will also meet our new cohort in this issue—an exceptional group of doctoral researchers. We are thrilled to introduce them and cannot wait to see what they will accomplish. And of course, you'll find impressions from our holiday party, as well as highlights from the many conferences and events that shaped the past months. We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

***Warm regards,
The DYNAMICS Team***

MEET OUR NEW DOCTORAL STUDENTS



***Our sixth Cohort on their welcome day
(missing from this picture is Andrés González Ide).***

ANTONELLO BOCCAGNA

Antonello Boccagna joined the research training group “The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy” (Dynamics) as a PhD candidate in September 2025.

Prior to joining DYNAMICS, Antonello completed his Double Degree in the M.Sc. in Economics and Management of Government and International Organizations at Bocconi University in Milan and the M.A. in Public Policy at The Hertie School in Berlin. He received a B.Sc. in International Economics and Finance at Bocconi University in Milan.

Antonello’s research focus is on migration policies and their influence on migration routes, public opinion and political trust towards the government. Methodologically, he is interested in quantitative research, causal inference and Bayesian statistics.



NORA CHIRIKURE

Nora Chirikure is a PhD candidate at the Research Training Group “The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy” (DYNAMICS). She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences (Politics, Philosophy & Economics) from Erasmus University Rotterdam and a Master’s degree in Economics and Management Science from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

Before starting her PhD, she worked as a Research Fellow and Project Coordinator at the Africa Policy Research Institute (APRI), where she conducted research on sovereign debt, digital governance, and African credit ratings, and coordinated high-level policy dialogues. She also has professional experience with the International Alumni Centre (Bosch Foundation), cultural and research collectives in Berlin, and has co-founded the Isusu Ffena Collective.

Her research interests include inclusive governance strategies that promote social cohesion, the role of free media in challenging misleading narratives, and how institutions and collective action can address issues related to urban commons management. She is particularly interested in fragmented urban areas, biodiversity, and the provision of public goods. Her current research projects involve field experimental work in Lebanon, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe, where she examines cooperation, governance, and social cohesion in conflict-affected and resource-constrained settings. In her dissertation project, she examines how institutions in fragmented urban areas can foster cooperation and improve governance. Using videos that depict residents successfully solving everyday challenges, she tests whether such portrayals increase participation in local governance and strengthen perceptions of efficacy and accountability.



SOFÍA GARCÍA DURRER

Sofía García Durrer holds a Bachelor of Science in Economics and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, with a Minor in Sociology, from the University of Mannheim, as well as a Master of Public Policy from the Hertie School. During her studies, she completed exchange semesters at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona and the Stockholm School of Economics.

She has gained professional experience at the Latin American Department of KfW German Development Bank, at Colombia's think tank Fundación Interra, where she published research notes on decentralization and the care economy, and at Stay Stiftung, where she supported impact evaluations of small-scale programs and projects. She also worked at Colombia's National Planning Department, focusing on social policy, decentralization, and labor inclusion.

In addition, Sofía has held research assistant positions at the GIGA Institute, the National Education Panel (NEPS) at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center, and the Center for Political Economy of Reforms at the University of Mannheim. In her Master's thesis, she explored how perceptions of unfairness in the division of paid and unpaid labor within couples influence the probability of union dissolution in Germany.

Her research interests include international development, gender and (micro-)economics, social and family policy, and computational social sciences. She is particularly interested in the care economy and how public policies shape couple dynamics and the division of work within households.

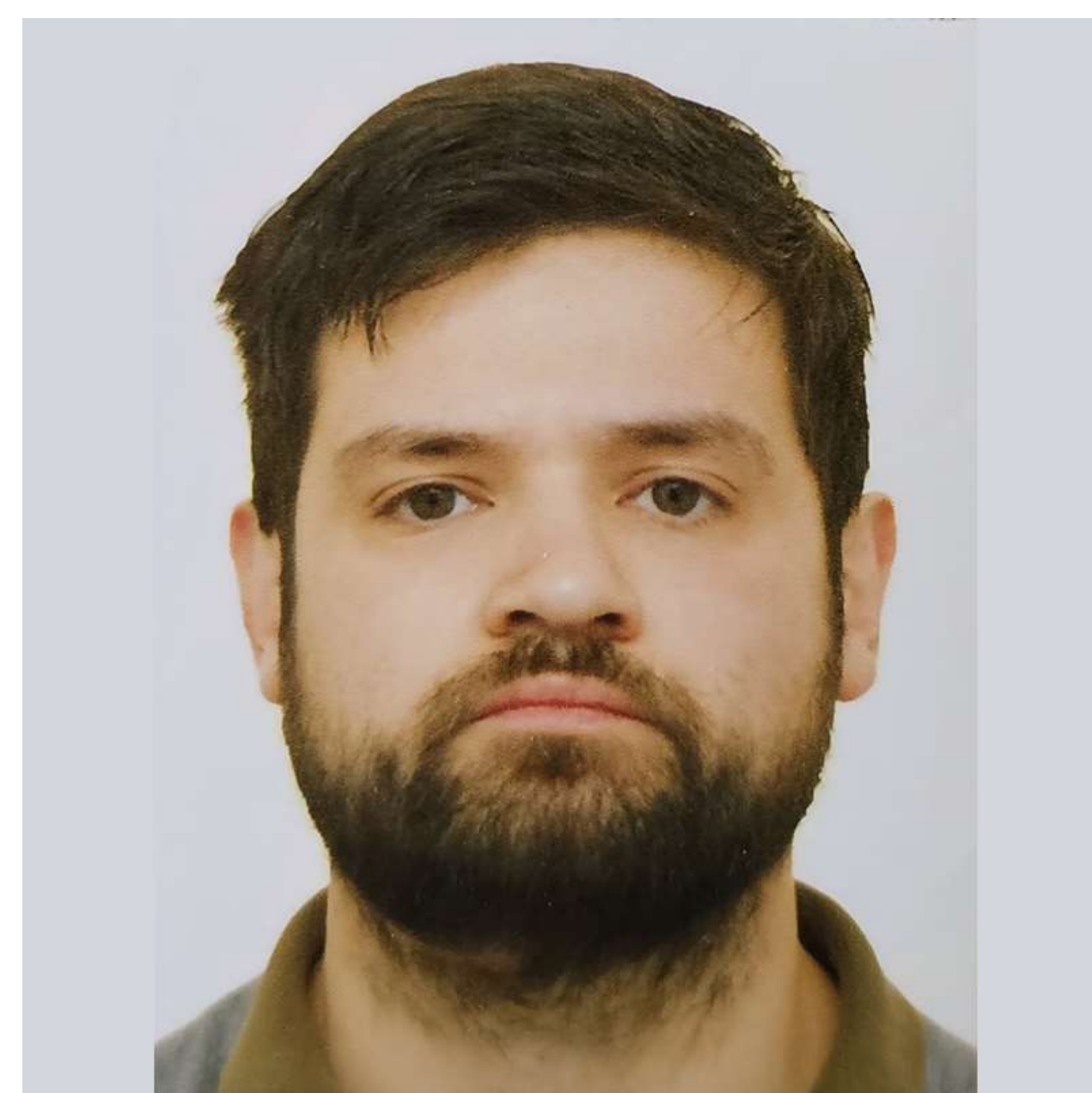


ANDRÉS GONZÁLES IDE

Andrés González Ide holds a B.A. and M.A. in Sociology from the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, where his master's thesis examined the dynamics of social change in approval of the Chilean political system from 1995 to 2018 through the estimation of Age-Period-Cohort models.

He has participated in diverse research projects in Chile, with experience in the design, analysis, and interpretation of quantitative data. At the Centre for Social Conflict and Cohesion Studies (COES), he worked as a research assistant for the Longitudinal Social Survey of Chile (ELSOC), where he was responsible for preparing technical and results reports, as well as collaborating in and coordinating academic publications. He has co-authored publications in journals such as Electoral Studies and the Journal of Latin American Religions, and presented his work at national and international conferences. He has also served as a teaching assistant in courses on multilevel modelling, causal inference, and statistical methods for the social sciences.

His research interests focus on how public opinion, as well as political attitudes and preferences, are shaped by social stratification, mental health, immigration, and security. He is also interested in methodological research, particularly in the application and development of advanced quantitative techniques for the social sciences.



JULIUS KÖLZER

Julius Kölzer is a PhD candidate at the Research Training Group "The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy" (DYNAMICS).

His research interests lie at the intersection of political geography, comparative and historical political economy, and cleavage politics. In his dissertation project, he examines how and why different forms of geographic inequalities shape electoral behavior and political attitudes. Methodologically, he specializes in quantitative methods utilizing observational data and spatial and geo-referenced survey data, and is interested in the application of quasi-experimental designs.

Julius holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in Political Science and Sociology from Kiel University and studied abroad at the University of Zurich. Before joining DYNAMICS as a doctoral candidate, he worked as a Research Assistant at the Chairs of Comparative Political Politics at Kiel University, in the Research Center for International Financial Markets at the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, at the Chair for German Politics at the Technical University Darmstadt, and in the Cluster of Excellence "*The Politics of Inequality*" at the University of Konstanz. He also worked in the data and visualization division at *Zeit Online*.



ZOE CELINA KRÜGER

Zoe Celina Krüger is a PhD candidate at the Research Training Group DYNAMICS ("The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy"). Her research explores key issues in political economy, with a particular focus on inequality, redistribution, and labour market transformations.

Zoe holds a Master of Philosophy from the University of Oxford, where she studied how technological change influences preferences for the welfare state. She previously earned a Bachelor's degree in Communication Science from the University of Amsterdam, specializing in political communication. As part of her undergraduate studies, she received a scholarship to spend a semester at the Institut d'études politiques de Paris.

In addition to her academic work, Zoe has gained professional experience for instance through her involvement with the European Citizens' Initiative 'Voters Without Borders' and as a journalist at the media start-up 'Buzzard'.



DANIEL KUHLEN

Daniel Kuhlen is a Doctoral Candidate at the Research Training Group DYNAMICS.

His research focuses on democratic backsliding, with particular attention to how performance legitimacy may drive support for authoritarian regimes and policies. In his dissertation project, he examines the effects of authoritarian crime crackdowns on public safety, voters' behaviour, and democratic backsliding. Methodologically, he specializes in (quasi-) experimental methods, geospatial analysis, and remote sensing.

Daniel holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in Social Sciences from Humboldt University Berlin and studied abroad at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. Before starting his PhD, he worked as a research assistant at the Chair of German Politics (Prof. Dr. Jochen Müller) at Humboldt University, the Chair of German Politics and Comparison of Political Systems (Prof. Dr. Christian Stecker) at the Technical University Darmstadt, and the Chair of Political Science Research Methods at the Technical University Chemnitz (Jun.-Prof. Arndt Leininger).



SINA CHRISTIN LÖWE

Sina Christin Löwe joined the sixth cohort of the Research Training Group "The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy" (DYNAMICS) as a PhD candidate in September 2025.

She holds a Master's degree in Demography and a Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences, with a focus on Sociology and Demography, both from the University of Rostock. Her academic background included a strong foundation in empirical research, particularly quantitative data analysis. She gained research experience as a student assistant at the University of Rostock and the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, where she contributed to several research projects.

Her research interests include gendered labour market inequalities, family structures, caregiving dynamics, career and earning trajectories, mental well-being, and the role of public policies in shaping these outcomes.

In her PhD research, she examines how family structures, caregiving responsibilities, and public policy support shape parental mental well-being during the transition to parenthood.



ANTONIA PEIßKER

Antonia Peißker is a PhD candidate at the Research Training Group the Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy (DYNAMICS). Her research examines how citizen participation in renewable energy can influence environmental and democratic attitudes, using quasi-experimental approaches to draw causal inferences in this context.

She holds a Master of Science in Politics, Economics and Philosophy from the University of Hamburg and a B.A. in Politics & Law from the European University Frankfurt-Oder, which included a term at Sciences Po Reims. She gained research experience as a student assistant at the Weizenbaum Institute, supporting the annually conducted “Weizenbaum Panel,” as well as during an internship with the research group Transformation of Democracies at the WZB. Furthermore, she served as an education officer for an NGO engaged in whistleblower protection.



ZOE SIGMAN

Zoe Sigman (she/they) is a PhD researcher who works with statistical estimation methods to estimate the hidden population of migrant deaths. She is a PhD candidate in the Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy DYNAMICS program. She is also a consultant with IOM’s Missing Migrants Project, where she collects and analyzes data on the deaths of migrants in transit worldwide.

Zoe holds a Master's in Public Policy from the Hertie School, where she won the Human Rights Master's Thesis Award from the Center for Fundamental Rights for her thesis estimating the "true" number of migrant deaths on the US border using multiple systems estimation. Previously she earned a Bachelor of the Arts, double majoring in U.S. History and Theatre from Cornell College in Mount Vernon, IA USA.

Prior to her work on migrant deaths, Zoe served as Administrative Director for the Haymarket Pole Collective, a group of sex workers advocating for racial and gender equity. Earlier, she worked as a writer and editor specializing in social justice and cannabis science to publications including Vogue, Broccoli Magazine, and Project CBD. She was also an apprentice shoemaker and farmhand. You can learn more about her work on her website: <https://www.zoe-sigman.com/>



SUSANNA WIRTHGEN

Susanna Wirthgen joined the Research Training Group “The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy” (DYNAMICS) as a PhD candidate in September 2025.

Her dissertation examines local electoral dynamics in Germany. She focuses on how voters for populist parties differ in voting behaviour, candidate preferences, and responsiveness to local campaigning. Methodologically, she works with observational, fine-grained local data and specializes in quantitative approaches, such as electoral forecasting and causal-inference techniques, to identify heterogeneous effects and improve sub-local prediction.

Susanna holds a B.Sc. in Politics and Economics and an M.Sc. in Economic Policy and Quantitative Methods from the University of Potsdam and spent a semester abroad at the University of Birmingham. She has worked as a research assistant at the Chair of Empirical Economics and as a teaching assistant for Statistics, Microeconomics I, Introduction to Economics and Introduction to Scientific Writing at the University of Potsdam. Further, Susanna is an avid competitive debater, public speaker and Science Slamer – aiming to make complex matters more accessible to general audiences.



JORGE ZAVALA

Jorge Zavala is a PhD student in the Research Training Group “The Dynamics of Demography, Democratic Processes and Public Policy” (DYNAMICS). He is also a Research Fellow at the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), as part of the "Institutions and Political Inequality" research group.

Jorge holds a B.Sc. in Economics from the Universidad del Pacífico (Perú), a Diploma on Impact Evaluation of Programs and Public Policies from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (Chile), and a Master of Public Policy from the University of Chicago (USA). His academic experience centres on quantitative research and impact evaluation in development economics. He has worked at institutions such as the World Bank’s Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) unit, the University of Chicago’s Center for the Economics of Human Development, the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie), and Universidad del Pacífico, among other research organizations. His academic work integrates advanced econometric techniques, causal inference, and mixed-methods approaches, contributing to publications across development economics, political economy, and social policy.

In his dissertation project, Jorge investigates the intergenerational transmission of conflict and violence and explores how policy interventions can disrupt these cycles to promote sustainable peace and development. Using econometric techniques, causal inference methods, and structural equation modelling, he examines how structural inequalities, governance failures, and behavioural dynamics perpetuate violence across generations. His research also evaluates the effectiveness of transitional justice mechanisms, such as reparations and truth commissions, in fostering reconciliation and improving human development outcomes in conflict-affected societies.



***RESEARCH REPORTS:
INSIGHTS INTO SOME
DISSERTATION PROJECTS***

STEFANIA MOLINA – The influence of family dynamics on the well-being of adults and children

My dissertation investigates how family dynamics—such as union dissolution, cohabitation, and repartnering—shape the well-being of adults and children in two settings: Colombia and Germany. Drawing on cross-sectional, longitudinal, and register data, it examines how family diversity relates to mental health, economic stability, and intimate partner violence (IPV). A core contribution is the focus on partnership quality and IPV as under-examined yet critical dimensions for understanding this relationship.

The first empirical chapter links maternal partnership status, physical IPV during pregnancy, and infant health in Colombia.



Stefania Molina with her dissertation supervisors and fellow DYNAMICS alum, Tabea Naujoks.

The findings show that cohabiting and separated mothers report higher IPV levels than married mothers. While low birth weight differences are largely explained by maternal characteristics and antenatal care, IPV emerges as a crucial, often-overlooked factor in understanding family diversity.

The second chapter focuses on Germany and analyses women's economic independence and the risk of physical IPV during separation. The findings indicate that economic independence serves as a protective factor, while women with minor children, low education, and no employment face elevated IPV risk. The chapter highlights the role of economic dependence in trapping women in abusive relationships and underlines the importance of women's labour market integration.

The third empirical chapter explores the relationship between divorce and mental health in Germany, with a focus on variation by gender, age, and income. An intersectional approach shows that women are at a higher risk of receiving a mental health diagnosis than men, with divorce, older age, and lower income exacerbating this risk. The chapter highlights the crucial role of economic resources in mitigating the mental health consequences of divorce and contributes to the broader discourse on health inequalities in later life.

The fourth chapter centres on parental mental health after separation and the moderating role of partnership quality in Germany. Overall, separation does not raise depression levels, but parents in low-quality partnerships often experience improved mental health after separation, suggesting psychological relief when leaving strained relationships.

The last chapter examines children's socio-emotional well-being in stepfamilies versus nuclear families in Germany. The findings show that children in stepfamilies report greater emotional difficulties, but also lower levels of parental conflict and higher esteem between parents. The analysis further suggests that the negative effects of living with stepparents on children's social and behavioural problems are slightly mitigated by increased parental esteem and reduced conflict in these unions.

Overall, the chapters show that partnership dynamics and structural inequalities play an important role in shaping well-being across different family forms. Using a mix of methods and datasets, the dissertation also highlights the challenges of identifying family types and the limited availability of IPV data, even though IPV is a key part of many people's family experiences. I hope these findings help build a more nuanced understanding of how family dynamics relate to well-being.

PERNILLA SÖDERBERG – BEYOND STORMS AND HEATWAVES: HOW PEOPLE RESPOND TO CLIMATE RISK

In my dissertation, I examine how both objective and perceived climate change risks shape, if at all, political attitudes and preferences for public climate action. Conceptually, the project advances how we study climate risk in two distinct ways. First, I look beyond the commonly studied impact of short-term extreme weather events by focusing on structural, place-based risks—such as the risk of heat stress or flooding—that quietly but profoundly affect societies. Second, I emphasize that the political consequences of climate risks are not only driven by external hazards but also by how people perceive their own risk, thus putting subjective vulnerability at the centre of analysis.



Pernilla Söderberg

To explore these questions, I collaborate closely with Hanna Schwander, combining survey data from the European Social Survey (2016) with geospatial climate risk data from the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (2022) to assess objective risk, and conducting an original survey in Germany (2025) to investigate perceived risks.

Paper 1 (joint work with Hanna Schwander) - Beyond Extreme Weather Events: How Structural Climate Risk and Ideology Shape Climate Attitudes - shows that climate attitudes are shaped not only by external shocks such as extreme weather events but also by more enduring structural climate risks. Specifically, we find that exposure to structural climate risk is positively associated with climate change concern and with support for certain mitigation measures. Political ideology plays a crucial moderating role: far-right voters, in particular, exhibit heightened climate concern in response to local climate risks, suggesting that direct experience of vulnerability can, in some cases, override ideological scepticism. However, this moderation effect does not extend uniformly to specific policy preferences, such as support for fossil fuel taxes, which appear less filtered through partisan lenses. The paper thus highlights that understanding public climate attitudes requires moving beyond short-term extreme events to consider persistent, place-based risks and the ideological lenses through which they are interpreted.

Paper 2 (joint work with Hanna Schwander) - When Risk Meets Capacity: The Moderating Role of Adaptive Capacity - introduces a novel focus on adaptive capacity, conceptualized as the ability of individuals and regions to cope with and adjust to climate risks. Building on the same dataset, we find that both regional-level resilience—for example, macro-economic and welfare state arrangements — and individual socioeconomic resources strongly shape how climate risks translate into support for climate action. High regional adaptive capacity can reduce climate concern and dampen support for costly mitigation measures, while individuals with greater resources are more likely to translate their concern into backing stronger policies. By highlighting the moderating role of both social and structural capacity, Paper 2 extends the literature on climate risk by demonstrating that exposure alone does not determine public responses; the ability to respond and cope with climate change plays a crucial role in shaping climate attitudes.

Paper 3 - Subjective Climate Vulnerability and the Climate-Economy Trade-Off - is based on original survey data collected in Germany in early 2025 and focuses on perceived vulnerability and its influence on public support for climate action that may involve economic or employment trade-offs. The analysis is ongoing, and this chapter represents a key step in integrating the subjective turn in political science into the study of climate risk and policy support.

Together, the three papers provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of climate attitudes in Europe, showing how environmental realities, political identities, and both objective and perceived capacities jointly shape support for climate action. By combining analyses of structural climate risks, adaptive capacity, and subjective vulnerability, the dissertation moves beyond traditional approaches focused primarily on extreme weather events, highlighting how lived experiences, social resources, and perceptions of risk interact to influence climate politics.

DYNAMICS TESTIMONIALS: INSIGHTS AND EXPERIENCES FROM VISITING RESEARCHERS

**ERICK PADILLA-GALVIZ
FROM UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA:**

I spent four months at DYNAMICS during the 2025 Summer semester, and from the very beginning, I felt welcomed by both the research and administration communities. This vibrant, hardworking research community gave me the chance to attend seminar lectures, various methodology workshops, and the weekly PhD seminars where I presented my ongoing work. During my stay, I acquired new skills and was inspired by my peers' projects. Thank you for hosting me during these months in Berlin and for such a great exchange of ideas and research support, especially from the office crowd. I hope to see all of you soon! Best wishes to your projects and careers!

**MARI AMDAHL HEGLUM
FROM OSLO
METROPOLITAN
UNIVERSITY:**

I had the pleasure of spending a short stay at DYNAMICS in February 2025. From the very beginning, I felt warmly welcomed and had the chance to meet with many people I had hoped to connect with. The DYNAMICS crowd was truly inviting, creating an international environment where everyone was open, friendly, and eager to engage with visitors. Everything during my stay went smoothly. The campus and buildings were impressive, and I also enjoyed the opportunity to experience Berlin and get a sense of the city. Overall, I met many kind and interesting people at DYNAMICS, and the visit left me with a strong wish to return for a longer stay in the future.

**VINCENT HEDDESHEIMER
FROM PRINCETON
UNIVERSITY:**

I spent two months at DYNAMICS this summer and thoroughly enjoyed my stay. The atmosphere was both intellectually stimulating and genuinely welcoming. I had the chance to meet and exchange ideas with a fantastic group of graduate students and postdocs, as well as to collaborate with professors and other visitors on ongoing projects. I am very grateful for the experience.

***REPORTS FROM ABROAD:
WHAT OUR DOCTORAL
STUDENTS TELL US ABOUT
THEIR RESEARCH STAYS***

ALEJANDRO PLAZA REVECO: NOTES FROM A RESEARCH STAY AT SOFI

Sociology moves forward by looking backward. That is one of the key lessons I took from my research stay at the Swedish Institute for Social Research (SOFI) at Stockholm University, where I had the privilege of spending two enriching months. SOFI is a centre of excellence composed of three research units: Labour Economics, Social Policy, and Level of Living. During my time there, I took part in research seminars, fikas, thesis defences, and various academic events. I was struck by the institute's vibrant intellectual life, firmly grounded in sociological tradition while remaining open to new ideas.

SOFI has long served as a meeting point for sociological traditions that have profoundly shaped my own thinking and research. On one hand, its legacy in stratification studies—through the work of scholars like Robert Erikson—is widely recognized. On the other, its contributions to the sociology of welfare states, led by figures such as Walter Korpi, are foundational. Rather than relics of the past, these traditions serve as the groundwork for cutting-edge research today.

In that regard, a conversation with Erwan Dujeancourt was particularly eye-opening. He introduced me to Sweden's administrative data system, which offers near-complete coverage of the population through interconnected registers—covering employment, education, taxation, and health—opening the door to powerful research on intergenerational mobility, cumulative disadvantage, spatial and temporal inequalities, and many other pressing topics.

Another key interaction was with Jan Helmdag, managing director of the SPIN (Social Policy Indicators) database. SPIN is a unique longitudinal and comparative tool for analysing social policy and citizenship rights. Unlike other welfare state datasets that focus on what individuals actually receive, SPIN evaluates what the law entitles individuals to under standardized conditions. This allows researchers to compare institutional designs and calculate replacement rates (the ratio between benefits received and pre-event income), offering a distinctive perspective on how legal structures shape access to social rights.

My own research was hosted by the Social Policy unit, under the direction of Tomas Korpi. I was warmly welcomed and even invited to their annual workshop, held at the Hasselbacken Hotel in Djurgården. Over two intense days, we discussed a wide range of ongoing projects—such as how changes in union educational composition affect collective bargaining outcomes, the motherhood penalty in income distribution, and the causal impact of unemployment on poverty.

After the first day of presentations, we visited the ABBA Museum as a group. There I learned how the members of ABBA developed their musical talents within a vibrant network of folk music festivals that flourished across Sweden during the 1960s and 70s. These community spaces not only nurtured local talent but also served as mechanisms of social cohesion in the context of Sweden's egalitarian project. I realized there's a surprising amount of sociology behind "Dancing Queen". (continued on the next page)



Alejandro at the ABBA Museum



The Social Policy Unit at SOFI

Among the most rewarding aspects of my stay was the opportunity to work closely with Arvid Lindh, my host and third PhD supervisor. Arvid exemplifies the best of Swedish political sociology, studying topics like social class, welfare states, climate change mitigation, and social networks. He is also involved in major international projects such as the ISSP and WELRISCC. Alongside Anton Andersson, he is leading cutting-edge research on class, networks, and attitudes. I had the chance to present and refine my own project with their thoughtful feedback, and to think collaboratively about future directions in the field. Beyond academia, I'm especially grateful for Arvid's generosity—our conversations ranged from theory-building to the influence of Mexican cuisine on Swedish tastes.

I also carry cherished memories of conversations: with Younghwan on the Korean welfare state; Krzysztof, on privatization and educational expansion; Pär, on the “green” paradoxes of welfare capitalism; Lea, on NEET youth; and Max, on stratification and wealth.

SOFI brings together some of the most insightful and engaged scholars I've encountered. But as Tomas Korpi reminded me at the end of the workshop: “Together, we are much smarter.” That spirit – of shared knowledge, collaboration, tradition, and forward-thinking – makes SOFI one of the most intellectually stimulating places I've worked in.

PHILIPP HEYNA: EPSA

This year's EPSA at Carlos III University in Madrid was the first major conference experience for many of us first-year PhD students at DYNAMICS. And what a way to end the conference season with three days of exciting presentations, discussions, and academic exchange over Tapas and drinks!

Being part of a broad network of fellow PhD students, visiting researchers, and DYNAMICS alumni made the conference very accessible, rewarding, and truly enjoyable for us first-time goers. The DYNAMICS community was not only supportive for the academic side of the event, where presenting our research improved our projects with peer-feedback and helped us refine our presentations. Beyond the formal sessions, the network also created plenty of opportunities for informal conversations and social events that fostered meaningful exchange and created lasting memories. In this way, our first EPSA experience sparks excitement for next year's conference in Belfast. Looking forward to seeing you there!



From left to right: Đorđe Milosav, Philipp Heyna, Frederik Thieme, Elias Koch, Annina Hermes, Markus Kollberg and Cornelius Erfort.

ANNINA HERMES & ANNA SAWALLISCH: SCIENCES PO SUMMER SCHOOL IN PARIS

In early July, we - Annina and Anna - took part in the summer school Challenges to Electoral Democracy at Sciences Po Paris. Organized by Ruth Dassonville (KU Leuven) and Romain Lachat (Sciences Po) as part of the CERIUM-FMSH Chair on Global Governance, the program brought together PhD students from around the world to discuss some of the key challenges democracies are facing today.

Each day started with a lecture by a leading scholar on topics like the effects of social media on public opinion (Vin Arceneaux), campaign and media effects (Florian Foos), far-right and populist parties (Sarah de Lange), misinformation and hate speech (Simon Chauchard), and illiberalism (Jan Rovny). What made the talks particularly valuable was that the speakers not only presented their research but also reflected on the current state of their field - pointing out gaps, challenges, and ideas for future work. As early-stage PhD students, it was incredibly helpful to hear how experienced researchers think about where the field is heading.

In the afternoons, students presented their own work and received feedback from a peer and a senior scholar. Annina presented her research on the electoral effects of including far-right parties in government, while Anna presented her work on the political consequences of media liberalization in Ghana. The discussions were open, constructive, and critical - in the best way possible.

Beyond the academic content, the week provided valuable opportunities to build relationships with fellow PhD students working on related topics across different institutions and countries. Meeting enthusiastic fellow researchers and connecting with people whose work relates to our own research was incredibly motivating and one of the most rewarding aspects of the experience.

All in all, it was a great week. The lectures were engaging, the student presentations sparked thoughtful conversations, and it was inspiring to connect with other PhD students working on similar questions.

A huge thanks to Ruth and Romain for organizing such a stimulating and supportive environment. We're also grateful to the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme and CERIUM-UdeM for their support of this program. We feel very fortunate to have been part of it!

FRANZISKA VEIT & FREDERIK THIEME: SUMMER SCHOOL USI LUGANO

In August, our doctoral students Frederik Thieme and Franziska Veit attended the Summer School in Social Sciences Methods at the Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) in Lugano. The program offered intensive training in advanced quantitative research methods, including an Introduction to Machine Learning, taught by Marco R. Steenbergen from the University of Zürich, and Causal Analysis with Observational Data, taught by Michael Grätz vom University of Lausanne. Highlights included a plenary lecture on the role of AI in reshaping quantitative research and opportunities to exchange ideas with an international community of PhD students, all in the beautiful setting of Lugano.



Annina and Anna with the Summer School Participants



Franziska and Frederik in front of USI

DEIKE JANSSEN: SUMMER SCHOOL UNIVERSITY POMPEU FABRA

This summer Deike attended the Summer School of the Research and Expertise Centre for Survey Methodology (RECSM) at the University Pompeu Fabra which offered courses on survey methodology and advanced statistical analysis of survey data. The courses took place on the university's beachfront campus, where, after intensive courses on Causal Inference and Longitudinal Survey Analysis with Multilevel Models, participants could enjoy Barcelona's coastal beauty, Catalan culture, historic architecture, and local cuisine. (RECSM managed to bring together doctoral students from diverse research areas and methodological backgrounds, offering a motivating learning environment with close guidance from the course instructors.)

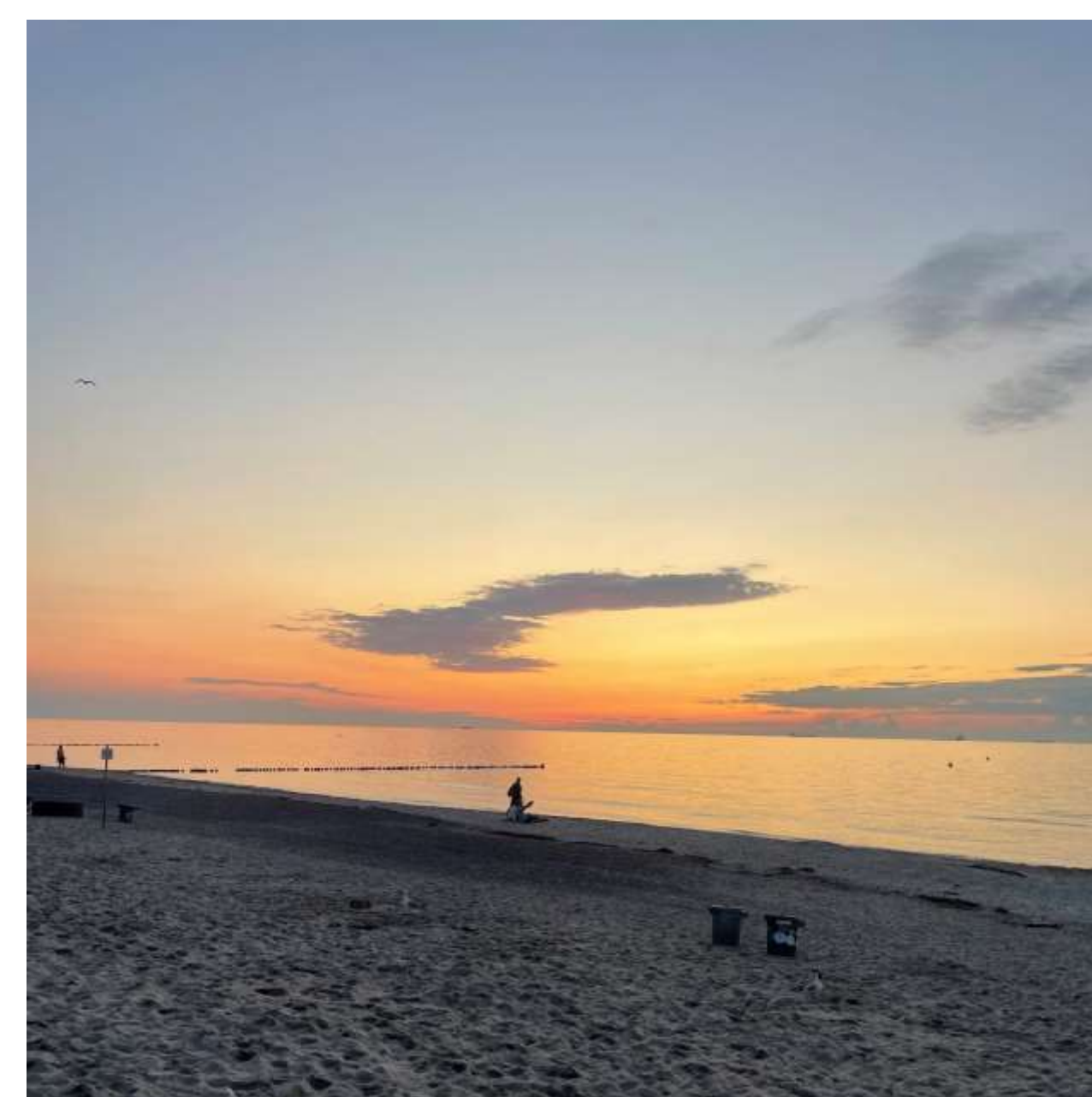


Deike in front of University Pompeu Fabra

LENA WAGNER: MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE ROSTOCK

From mid-June to mid-July, I visited the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR) in Rostock for one month, hosted by Nicole Hiekel and her independent research group on gender inequalities and fertility. The MPIDR is among the most renowned institutions in the field of social demography and provided an excellent environment to advance my work. I presented a very early project idea and received constructive feedback that motivated me to continue developing it. Every colleague I met was friendly and welcoming, and I was able to make several valuable connections for my future research.

The institute offers a broad range of activities, including weekly seminars, courses, and workshops, many of them directly relevant to my interests. The atmosphere was both professional and collegial, with many opportunities for exchange (such as gatherings in the coffee kitchen, because almost every day, someone brings cake to the office). Beyond the academic programme, I joined social activities such as trips to the beach and football matches. With the long days in mid-June, when the sun sets only around 11pm, it often felt like living two lives at once: a full day of work at the institute followed by almost another day outside at the beach. Overall, my stay at the MPIDR was both productive and enjoyable, and I would highly recommend the institute as a place for research visits.



The beautiful beach and harbor of Rostock

***EVENTS
LECTURES
WORKSHOPS
DEFENSES
AWARDS
GUEST RESEARCHERS
SCIENTIFIC OUTPUT***



***Some snapshots from our cozy holiday party on December 8th, 2025.
A big thank you to Charlotte for the festive contribution of toy
antlers, sported by Julius and Susanna, and to everyone who came
and participated in the evening's Secret Santa and Potluck dinner!***

DYNAMICS EVENTS

10.03.2025

DYNAMICS Spring Party

07.07.2025

DYNAMICS Summer Party

08.09.2025 & 09.09.2025

DYNAMICS Welcome Days for the Sixth Cohort

08.12.2025

DYNAMICS Christmas Party

WORKSHOPS

03.03.2025 – 07.03.2025

Prof. Ben Jann (University of Bern) and **Prof. Johannes Giesecke** (HU Berlin):

Decomposition Methods in the Social Sciences

31.03.2025

Oliver Watteler (GESIS):

Data Protection in PhD Projects

16.05.2025 – 17.05.2025

Dr. Cornelius Erfort (Universität Witten/Herdecke, DYNAMICS Alumnus):

Automated Web Data Collection

06.10.2025

Dr. Cornelius Erfort (Universität Witten/Herdecke, DYNAMICS Alumnus), **Dr. Markus Kollberg** (HU Berlin) & **Dr. Tabea Naujoks** (Universität Rostock, DYNAMICS Alumna):

A PhD 101

07.10.2025

Dr. Daniel Friedrich (impuls-plus):

Getting Started: The Path to a successful PhD

27.11.025

Dr. Philippa Cook:

Career Planning Workshop for female and non-binary doctoral researchers

CAREER TALKS

28.01.2025

Dr. Diane Bolet (University of Essex):

Female Career Talk

05.05.2025

Dr. Tom Arend (OECD, DYNAMICS Alumnus):

Life after PhD: Career Insights from the OECD

DYNAMICS LECTURES

28.01.2025

Dr. Diane Bolet (University of Essex):

Green Strings Attached: The Electoral

Consequences of Conditional Agricultural Subsidies

07.04..2025

Dr. Diego Alburez-Gutierrez (Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research):

The social demography of war-related bereavement in Colombia, 1985–2018

10.06.2025

Dr. Mitchell Bosley (National Center for AI Research CENIA Santiago Chile):

Using AI for Measurement, Intervention, and Simulation in Social Science Research

08.07.2025

Prof. Anja Neundorf (University of Glasgow):

Promoting democratic citizenship online

09.09.2025

Prof. Dr. Ursula Daxecker (University of Amsterdam):

Democracy, Violence, and Conflict: Making Political Violence in Democracies Visible

03.11.2025

Prof. Dr. Daniela Grunow (Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main)

The limited effects of social policy on gender ideologies: Causes and potential solutions

APPOINTMENTS

Sofía García Durrer and **Daniel Kuhlen** were elected as Doctoral Student Representatives.

Annina Hermes will continue as Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Officer.

Prof. Dr. Hanna Schwander will continue as Ombudsperson.

MEET OUR NEW OFFICE MEMBER: CLARA WALTZ

Clara is the new Student Assistant at DYNAMICS since December 2025. Clara received their Bachelor's degree in Social Science from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.



This summer, they began their Master studies in Social Science at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Clara's research interests are radicalization and polarization processes within party systems and parties as well as public opinion. Their Bachelor's thesis investigated changes in public opinion after the entry of the AfD into the German parliament in 2017, constituting a German case study on the effects of radical right parliamentary entry.

DEFENSES

03.03.2025

Cornelius Erfort:

Political Parties' Voter Targeting and Campaign Communication Strategies

19.09.2025

Stefania Molina:

Family dynamics and individual wellbeing

01.12.2025

Jan Einhoff:

The social stratification of extending working lives

AWARDS

Sofía García Durrer:

Best Presentation Award at the FReDA/GGS Autumn School in Wiesbaden (10.09.-12.09.2025)

VISITING RESEARCHERS

Micaela Großmann (Doctoral Researcher, University of Bamberg)

Mari Amdahl Heglum (Doctoral Researcher, Oslo Metropolitan University)

Martín Alberdi (Doctoral Researcher, EUI)

Erick Padilla-Galviz (Doctoral Researcher, Universitat de Barcelona)

Kento Ohara (Doctoral Researcher, University of Oxford)

Prof. Brian Libgober, PhD (Northeastern University)

Gina Aniano (Doctoral Researcher, Universitat de Barcelona)

Vincent Heddesheimer (Doctoral Researcher, Princeton University)

Sangwon Choi, PhD (Postdoctoral Researcher Seoul National University)

Lisa Heyer (Doctoral Researcher, Universität Düsseldorf)

Prof. Hanno Hilbig, PhD (University of California, Davis)

Honorata Bogusz, PhD (Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Warsaw)

Irene Rodríguez López (Doctoral Researcher, Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

Ayşegül Güneyli (Doctoral Researcher, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen)

Marie-Lou Sohnius (Doctoral Researcher, Nuffield College, University of Oxford)

Berta Caihuelas Navajas, PhD (Postdoctoral Researcher, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid)

SCIENTIFIC OUTPUT

- Arend, Tom, Fabio Ellger, and António Valentim. 2025. 'Green Party Entry and Conservative Backlash: Evidence from Germany'. *British Journal of Political Science* 55: e128. doi:[10.1017/S0007123425100628](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123425100628).
- Erfort, Cornelius. 2025. 'Gendered Targeting: Do Parties Tailor Their Campaign Ads to Women?' *The Journal of Politics*. doi:[10.1086/736027](https://doi.org/10.1086/736027).
- Erfort, Cornelius, Lukas F. Stoetzer, Thomas Gschwend, Elias Koch, Simon Munzert, and Hannah Rajski. 2025. 'The Zweitstimme Forecast for the German Federal Election 2025: Coalition Majorities and Vacant Districts'. *PS: Political Science & Politics*: 1–12. doi:[10.1017/S1049096525000150](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096525000150).
- Friebs, Maria-Therese, Alejandro Plaza Reveco, Sarina J. Schäfer, Roberto González, and Oliver Christ. 2025. 'Does Intergroup Contact Affect Political Attitudes and Behaviours?—A Longitudinal Test of Tertiary Transfer Effects Using the Chilean Longitudinal Social Survey (ELSOC)'. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 35(3): e70105. doi:[10.1002/casp.70105](https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.70105).
- Koch, Elias. 2025. 'Opposition Parties Seek More Conflict with the Government When Losing Electoral Support'. *West European Politics*: 1–19. doi:[10.1080/01402382.2025.2524944](https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2025.2524944).
- Koch, Elias, and Andreas Küpfer. 2025. 'The Politics of Seeking and Avoiding Discourse in Parliament'. *European Journal of Political Research* 64: 1899–1922. doi:[10.1111/1475-6765.70013](https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.70013).
- Möhring, Katja, Clara Overweg, and Andreas P. Weiland. 2025. 'The Motherhood Penalty in Financial Resources for Retirement: A Life Course Perspective on the Accumulation of Public Pension Wealth and Personal Wealth in East and West Germany'. *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*. doi:[10.1515/jbnst-2024-0064](https://doi.org/10.1515/jbnst-2024-0064).
- Molina, Stefania. 2025. 'Unmarried Motherhood and Infant Health: The Role of Intimate Partner Violence in Colombia'. *Demographic Research* 52: 141–78. doi:[10.4054/DemRes.2025.52.6](https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2025.52.6).
- Molina, Stefania, Lena Wagner, and Michaela Kreyenfeld. 2025. 'Women's Economic Independence and Physical Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) during Separation'. *PLoS ONE* 20(6): e0326529. doi:doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0326529.
- Molina, Stefania, Enrique Alonso-Perez, and Michaela Kreyenfeld. 2025. 'Divorce and Mental Health: Is Late Divorce Particularly Harmful for Women with Low Earnings?' *Social Indicators Research*: 1–19. doi:[10.1007/s11205-025-03721-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-025-03721-8).
- Ramos, Vincent Jerald, Michaela Kreyenfeld, Enrique Alonso-Perez, Paul Gellert, Jan Paul Heisig, and Julie Lorraine O'Sullivan. 2025. 'Future Caregiving Responsibilities, Employment Uncertainties, and Expected Childbearing Behavior: Survey Experimental Evidence from Germany'. *Population Research and Policy Review* 44(5): 48. doi:[10.1007/s11113-025-09969-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-025-09969-9).
- Ramos, Vincent Jerald, and Edgar Antonio Suguitan. 2025. 'The Incomplete Leap: On the Transition From Union Registration to the First Collective Agreement'. *Industrial Relations Journal* 56(3): 189–203. doi:[10.1111/irj.12458](https://doi.org/10.1111/irj.12458).
- Ramos, Vincent Jerald, and Marianne Joy Vital. 2025. 'Research Note: Merry Now, Marry Later? Initial Labor Market Conditions and Marital Intentions in the Philippines'. *Journal of Family Research* 37: 307–17. doi:[10.20377/jfr-1226](https://doi.org/10.20377/jfr-1226).