Sebastian Block

Computational social scientist & social science methodologist

Postdoctoral Researcher, Social Stratification Group

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Institute for Social Sciences, Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Ammerländer Heerstr. 114–118, 26129 Oldenburg, Germany

Research interests: Social and political inequality, from political representation to public attitudes; making fuzzy concepts measurable with computational and classical methods; how digitalisation and AI reshape society

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Academic positions

since 04/2026 **Postdoctoral Researcher**
Booster Research Unit SCEPTIC and Social Stratification Group, Institute for Social Sciences, University of Oldenburg

10/2024–03/2026 **Postdoctoral Researcher, Chair of Computational Social Science**
Institute of Sociology, LMU Munich (Prof. Dr. Carsten Schwemmer)
Covered the teaching duties of the professorship in Winter 2024/25 and Summer 2025; research semester in Winter 2025/26

10/2022–09/2024 **Research Associate, Chair of Quantitative Methods**
Institute of Political Science, Leibniz University Hannover (Prof. Dr. Dominic Nyhuis)

01/2020–09/2022 **Research Associate, DFG project "Representation and Inequality in Local Politics"**
Geschwister Scholl Institute of Political Science, LMU Munich (PD Dr. Martin Gross, Prof. Dr. Dominic Nyhuis)

Education

2021–2024 **Dr. rer. soc. (summa cum laude)** LMU Munich
Thesis: Computational Science Methods in Social Science Research: Exploring Novel Dataset Creation Approaches and Innovative Empirical Measurements for Text-as-Data Research
Supervisors: PD Dr. Martin Gross, Prof. Dr. Carsten Schwemmer

2017–2019 **M.A. Democratic Governance and Civil Society (1.0, with honours)** University of Osnabrück

2013–2017 **B.A. Communication Science and Political Science (1.8)** University of Mainz

Hosted fellowship

2027 **Hannah Arendt Fellowship "Humans and AI"** Host and co-applicant
Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Lower Saxony, funded by zukunft.niedersachsen. Fellow: Raf Reuse (Ghent University), 04/2027–09/2027. Project: Speech, Action, and the Machine: Generative AI Among Belgian Local Political Elites

Awards and scholarships

2019 **Nomination for the thesis award of the Social Sciences Alumni Association** University of Osnabrück
M.A. thesis: Has the Great Recession Changed Welfare Attitudes in Europe?

2017–2019 **Academic scholarship** Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Publications

Articles in peer-reviewed journals (12)

Forthcoming **Automatic Dictionary Generation for Social Science Text Analysis: Introducing a Versatile and Transparent Approach**
Sebastian Block, Morten Harmening and Dominic Nyhuis
Soziale Welt. Special Issue "Computational Social Science"
Code: github.com/mharmening/ADGA

Online first **Modeling Issue Competence over Time: A Bayesian Framework for Estimating Dynamic Issue Ownership**
Dominic Nyhuis, Jona-Frederik Baumert, Jeongho Choi, **Sebastian Block** and Morten Harmening
Political Science Research and Methods, online first
doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2025.10074, Replication files: doi.org/10.7910/DVN/SODTBN

2026 **Campaign Spending in Mixed Member Proportional Systems: How Political and Institutional Context Shapes Party Strategy**
Dominic Nyhuis, **Sebastian Block**, Morten Harmening and Tilko Swalve
Electoral Studies 99, 103027
doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2025.103027

2026 **Incentivised Engagement: How Party Characteristics and Individual Factors Shape Politicians' TikTok Use**
Merle Huber, **Sebastian Block** and Tomas Ruiz
Social Media + Society 12(1), 20563051261432483
doi.org/10.1177/20563051261432483

2026 **Geographic Representation in Parliamentary Questions: The Benefits of Wikipedia for Automated Analyses of Legislative Text**
Dominic Nyhuis, **Sebastian Block**, Morten Harmening and Matthias Henneke
The Journal of Legislative Studies 32(3), 548–560
doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2025.2518633

2025 **Geographic Representation in Local Politics: Evidence from Parliamentary Questions in German City Councils**
Morten Harmening, Jona-Frederik Baumert, **Sebastian Block**, Martin Gross, Dominic Nyhuis and Jan A. Velimsky
European Journal of Political Research 64(4), 1999–2017
doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.70019

2025 **The Impact of Institutional and Financial Constraints on Party Behaviour in Local Politics**
Martin Gross, Dominic Nyhuis, **Sebastian Block** and Jan A. Velimsky
Swiss Political Science Review 31(2), 287–306
doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12628, Replication files: osf.io/4exyg

2025 **Legislative Oversight and Control of Independent Portfolios: Government and Opposition Dynamics**
Sebastian Block
Government and Opposition 60(2), 517–538
doi.org/10.1017/gov.2024.19

2025 **The Impact of Occupational Background on Issue Representation**
Jan A. Velimsky, **Sebastian Block**, Martin Gross and Dominic Nyhuis
West European Politics 48(3), 645–668
doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2023.2294666

2024 **Parliamentary Questions as an Intra-Coalition Control Mechanism in Mixed Regimes**
Sebastian Block
European Political Science Review 16(2), 298–314
doi.org/10.1017/S1755773923000322

2024 **Electoral Campaigns and Parliamentary Practice: Do Parties Pursue the Issues They Campaigned On?**
Martin Gross, Dominic Nyhuis, **Sebastian Block** and Jan A. Velimsky
Swiss Political Science Review 30(2), 89–107
doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12588, Replication files: osf.io/z8cf3

2024 **Probing the Effect of Candidate Localness in Low-Information Elections: Evidence from the German Local Level**
Jan A. Velimsky, **Sebastian Block**, Martin Gross and Dominic Nyhuis
Political Studies 72(3), 1090–1111
doi.org/10.1177/00323217231173505

Other publications

2026 **Simplifying Sociology: When Complex Writing Occurs, Where It Matters, and How It Can Be Improved**
Carsten Schwemmer, **Sebastian Block**, Sandra Jaworeck, Manuel Holz and Philipp Spielbauer
SocArXiv
doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/7gjzf_v2

2024 **Classifying Documents with Human-AI-Collaboration: Introducing the Human-AI Collaboration in Classification Utility Framework**
Sebastian Block, Dominic Nyhuis, Martin Gross, Morten Harmening and Jan A. Velimsky
OSF Preprints
doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/5m8vx

2024 **Computational Science Methods in Social Science Research: Exploring Novel Dataset Creation Approaches and Innovative Empirical Measurements for Text-as-Data Research**
Sebastian Block
Doctoral dissertation, LMU Munich
doi.org/10.5282/edoc.34275

2022 **Die Kommunalwahlen in Nordrhein-Westfalen im September 2020: Starke Grüne und weiterer Absturz der SPD im Zeichen der Covid-19-Pandemie** [The 2020 local elections in North Rhine-Westphalia]
Dominic Nyhuis, Jan A. Velimsky, **Sebastian Block** and Martin Gross
Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen 53(1), 120–134
doi.org/10.5771/0340-1758-2022-1-120

2021 **Ein zunehmend bunter Freistaat: Die Analyse der bayerischen Kommunalwahlen im März 2020 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der kreisfreien Städte** [The 2020 Bavarian local elections]
Jan Pollex, **Sebastian Block**, Martin Gross, Dominic Nyhuis and Jan A. Velimsky
Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen 52(1), 78–94
doi.org/10.5771/0340-1758-2021-1-78

Software

2026 **ADGA: Automatic Dictionary Generation Approach for Text Analysis (R package)**
Sebastian Block, Morten Harmening and Dominic Nyhuis
github.com/mharmening/ADGA

Teaching

Computational social science

Winter 2024/25, Summer 2025 **Introduction to Computational Social Science** Lecture
BA module "Fields of Sociology", LMU Munich

Research methods

Computational methods

Summer 2025 **Quantitative Text Analysis for the Social Sciences** Seminar
MA module "Advanced Methods of Inequality Research", LMU Munich

Winter 2024/25 **Introduction to Data Scraping** Seminar
MA module "Data Collection", LMU Munich

Summer 2024 **Computational Social Science and the Analysis of Political Texts** Seminar
BA and MA modules "Political Science Research Methods", Leibniz University Hannover

Summer 2023 **Automatic Text Analysis** Seminar
BA and MA modules "Political Science Research Methods", Leibniz University Hannover

Empirical social research methods

Summer 2024 **Qualitative Content Analysis** Seminar
BA and MA modules "Political Science Research Methods", Leibniz University Hannover

Winter 2023/24 **Manual Quantitative Text Analysis** Seminar
BA and MA modules "Political Science Research Methods", Leibniz University Hannover

Winter 2022/23 **Quantitative Content Analysis** Seminar
BA and MA modules "Political Science Research Methods", Leibniz University Hannover

Political representation and participation

Summer 2022 **Parliamentary Representation and Political Participation in International Comparison** Seminar
BA module "Introduction to Comparative Politics", LMU Munich

Winter 2021/22 **Participation and Representation** Seminar
BA module "Introduction to the German Political System", LMU Munich

Summer 2021 **Participation and Representation in Empirical Comparison** Seminar
BA module "Introduction to Comparative Politics", LMU Munich

Supervision

2022–2024 **Supervised four BA and three MA theses (first or second supervisor)**
Leibniz University Hannover

Talks and workshops

Invited

2025 **Data Scraping with Python (workshop)**
German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin, Nov. 2025

2025 **Data scraping: what it is and why it matters for the social sciences and policy advice (talk, in German)**
German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin, Nov. 2025

Conference presentations

Congress of the German Sociological Association (DGS) 2026; CS2North, Copenhagen 2026; Venice Seminar in Analytical Sociology 2024; DVPW Congress 2024, 2021; DVPW Section "Methods of Political Science" 2023, 2022; ECPR General Conference 2023, 2022, 2021; ECPR Standing Group on Parliaments 2023; EPSA 2023, 2022, 2021; SVPW 2022; DVPW Section "Welfare State Research" 2021; PSAI 2021

Service

2026 **Member of two selection committees** University of Oldenburg
Doctoral and postdoctoral positions

Ad-hoc reviewer
European Journal of Political Research, Political Analysis, Politische Vierteljahresschrift, Soziale Welt

Skills

Methods **Text as data, machine learning, survey research, experiments, content analysis, panel and multilevel models**

Software **R, Python, Stata**

Languages **German (native), English (C2)**

Last updated 28 November 2026