

# Leon Küstermann

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER · DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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## Employment

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### **University of Zurich, Department of Political Science**

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER

- Research group: Politics and Inequality (Prof. Thomas Kurer)

Zurich, CH

September 2025 -

## Education

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### **European University Institute (EUI), Department of Social and Political Science**

Florence, IT

PHD POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

2021 - August 2025

- Committee: Prof. Anton Hemerijck (EUI, main supervisor), Prof. Thomas Kurer (University of Zurich, co-supervisor), Prof. Pavithra Suryanarayan (LSE), Prof. Simon Hix (EUI)
- Funded by the ERC project Wellbeing Returns on Social Investment Recalibration (PI: Anton Hemerijck)
- Visiting stay (seven months): Department of Political Science at Aarhus University (DK); Host: Prof. Kees van Kersbergen
- Coursework at EUI: Quantitative Methods; Qualitative Methods; Causal Inference; Field Experiments I & II; Social Stratification; Welfare States; Political Economy; Politics of the Environmental Crises; Foundations of Development; Social Policy Analysis in a Life-course

### **University of Oxford, Department of Social Policy and Intervention**

Oxford, UK

MSc COMPARATIVE SOCIAL POLICY (GRADE: DISTINCTION; BEST MSc THESIS IN MY COHORT)

2020 - 2021

- Advisor: Prof. David Weisstanner

### **University of Twente and University of Münster**

Enschede, NL/Münster, DE

2016 - 2018

BSc PUBLIC GOVERNANCE ACROSS BORDERS (GRADE: DISTINCTION)

- Specialization: Public administration
- Exchange semester at Waseda University (Tokyo, JP)

## Research

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### PUBLICATIONS

**Küstermann, Leon** (2025). Upgrading jobs for all: How welfare states shape differences in life satisfaction between the winners and losers of structural change. *Socio-Economic Review*, 23, 1895–1921.

### WORK IN PROGRESS

**Küstermann, Leon** (2025). Managers of change: How firms shape the political outcomes of structural economic transformations. URPP Working Paper Series, 80. [under review]

**Küstermann, Leon; van Kersbergen, Kees & Colombo, Francesco** (work in progress). The institutional foundations of successful adaptations: when are training policies an effective response to structural change?

**Küstermann, Leon** (work in progress). When ambition pays off: the social contract of managing structural change

**Weisstanner, David, Küstermann, Leon & van Kersbergen, Kees** (work in progress). Beyond automation risk: firm-level AI adoption and the new politics of social policy

**Kurer, Thomas, Findeisen, Sebastian, Consiglio, Valentina, Küstermann, Leon & Schlenker, Oliver** (work in progress). The broken ladder: Changing occupational career values and political outcomes in the 21st century

**Wegemann, Mirko & Küstermann, Leon** (work in progress). Reminiscing the good old days. How far-right parties deter the female losers of technological change.

## Awards, Fellowships, & Grants

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2025-2026 **Research grant**, URPP Inequality Research Fund, University of Zurich

2016-2022 **Scholarship**, German Academic Scholarship Foundation (Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes)

2021 **George Smith Award for the best MSc thesis in my degree program**, University of Oxford

## Teaching Experience

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April 2024 **Introduction to Teaching and Learning in Higher Education**, Certificate EUI

Spring 2024 **MA-Seminar: the Politics of Technological Change**, Development of the course; in-person teaching; supervision of student essays and term papers University of Lucerne, CH

## Professional Experience (selected)

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Spring 2020 **Internship**, German Federal Foreign Office, Economy Division Berlin, DE

2019-2020 **Research Assistant**, Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS) at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology; I was part of two projects, one on unions and the gig economy, one on AI and consciousness (analytical philosophy) Karlsruhe, DE

## Presentations

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### CONFERENCES

Conference of the European Political Science Association (EPSA): 2023, 2025

Conference of the Council for European Studies (CES): 2024

Conference of the Network for European Social Policy Analysis (ESPA.net): 2022, 2024

Inequality Conference of the Cluster of Excellence “The Politics of Inequality” at the University of Konstanz: 2024

Danish Political Science Conference (DPSA): 2023, 2024

### WORKSHOPS

Workshop ”Labor Market Inequality and Workplace AI” of the Platform for Inequality Research at Aarhus University: 2025

EuroWEPS IX (European Workshop in Empirical Political Science) at the London School of Economics: 2024

Nordic ESPAnet-ReNEW workshop: Adequate social policy responses for transformational challenges in the Nordic countries and beyond? at Copenhagen Business School: 2023

### POLICY EVENTS

STG talks 2025 at the Florence School of Transnational Governance (EUI); invited to discuss skill policies in Europe

Annual conference (WSI-HERBSTFORUM) of the research foundation of the German labor unions; invited to present my findings on political outcomes of structural change: 2024

Joint Research Center (JRC) of the European Commission: DIGCLASS International Workshop: Social Class Analysis in the Digital Age: 2023

## Skills

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**Technical skills:** R (advanced), STATA (advanced), LATEX (advanced), Python (beginner), SAS (beginner)

**Languages:** German (native), English (fluent), Italian (intermediate), Japanese (beginner), Chinese (beginner)

## Service

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2022-  
present      **Mentor in the mentoring scheme for new PhD students**, European University Institute

2024-2025    **Co-organizer of the Social Investment Working Group**, European University Institute