

## **Current Position**

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### **Postdoctoral Researcher**

September 2023 - Present

*Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin*

EU Horizon Project: Social Media for Democracy (SoMe4Dem), Cognition in Online Environments group at the Center of Adaptive Rationality (ARC). September 2025: early promotion to *Researcher*.

## **Research Interests**

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- Transformations of political order — democratic regression, transformation of party systems, rise of populist and radical-right parties, political polarization, trust
- Public discourse in online environments and political opinion formation
- Political information consumption in complex media ecosystems and individual-level interventions to boost online (news) media literacy
- Selection effects and measurement issues in digital behavioral data
- Data access, systemic risk assessment and platform regulation under the EU Digital Services Act

## **Education**

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### **PhD Political Science**

2020-2023

*Hertie School Berlin*

Title: Public Discourse in Online Environments: Contributions to description, measurement and communication behavior change in political online ecosystems. Supervised by Simon Munzert, Ralph Hertwig and Andrew Guess. Evaluated by Fabrizio Gilardi and Yannis Theocharis. Graded with summa cum laude.

### **MSc. Social Data Science**

2019-2020

*University of Oxford*

Interdisciplinary and international graduate program, hosted by the Oxford Internet Institute, at the intersection of social and computational science, with a practical focus on data analysis and programming with Python, online research and political science. Thesis: Should we talk to climate skeptics? Graduated with distinction.

### **MSc. Psychology**

2016-2019

*University of Kassel*

First major in Social and Environmental Psychology, second major in Clinical Psychology. Master thesis: Social Drivers of Individual Air Travel. Final grade 1.0. Research assistant to Andreas Ernst, Center for Environmental Systems Research, Kassel.

### **BSc. Psychology**

2013-2016

*University of Kassel*

Bachelor thesis in environmental psychology: Outdoor sport and Environmental behavior. Final grade 1.1. Research assistant to Isabel Lindner, Department of Psychology, Kassel.

## Peer-reviewed Publications

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1. Oswald, L., Small Schulz, W. & Lorenz-Spreen, P. (2025). Disentangling Participation in Online Political Discussions with a Collective Field Experiment. *Conditional Accept at Science Advances*. [https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/p2jaq\\_v1](https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/p2jaq_v1)
2. Oswald, L. (2025). Effects of Preemptive Empathy Interventions on Reply Toxicity among Highly Active Social Media Users. *Accepted at Technology, Mind, and Behavior*. <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/evdxy/>
3. Younger-Khan, S., Weidmann, N. B., & Oswald, L. (2024). Consistent effects of science and scientist characteristics on public trust across political regimes. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03909-2>
4. Oswald, L. (2024). More than news! Mapping the deliberative potential of a political online ecosystem with digital trace data. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03115-0>
5. Lorenz-Spreen, P.\*, Oswald, L.\*, Lewandowsky, S., & Hertwig, R. (2023). A systematic review of worldwide causal and correlational evidence on digital media and democracy. *Nature Human Behaviour*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01460-1>
6. Oswald, L., & Bright, J. (2022). How Do Climate Change Skeptics Engage with Opposing Views Online? Evidence from a Major Climate Change Skeptic Forum on Reddit. *Environmental Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2022.2071314>
7. Klaus, G., Oswald, L., Ernst, A., & Merk, C. (2021). Effects of opinion statements on laypeople's acceptance of a climate engineering technology. Comparing the source credibility of researchers, politicians and a citizens' jury. *Journal of Science Communication*, 20(1), A03.
8. Oswald, L., & Ernst, A. (2020). Flying in the Face of Climate Change: Quantitative psychological approach examining the social drivers of individual air travel. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(1), 68-86.
9. Klaus, G., Ernst, A., & Oswald, L. (2020). Psychological factors influencing laypersons' acceptance of climate engineering, climate change mitigation and business as usual scenarios. *Technology in Society*, 60, 101222.

## Other Publications

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1. Hertwig, R. & Oswald, L. (2025). Wer's glaubt. Zu den psychologischen Faktoren von Falsch- und Desinformation. In: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (APuZ) 2025, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, „Propaganda und Desinformation“. <https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/propaganda-und-desinformation-2025/570921/wer-s-glaubt/>
2. Oswald, L. (2023). Public Discourse in Online Environments. Contributions to description, measurement and communication behavior change in political online ecosystems. *Dissertation*, Hertie School. DOI: 10.48462/opus4-5066

## Working Papers

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1. Oswald, L., Kozyreva, A., Nickl, P. L., Herzog, S., & Hertwig, R. (2025). Lateral reading and online search interventions to boost competent news browsing in Germany. EU deliverable draft version.
2. Oswald, L. & Munzert, M. (2025). Then and Now: Increasing Exposure to Untrustworthy News Media. SocArXiv. [https://osf.io/5ndjx\\_v1](https://osf.io/5ndjx_v1).
3. Oswald, L., Schulz, W. & Stier, S. (2025). How the iceberg of online participation shapes our understanding of political attitudes and behavior. *in prep*.
4. Oswald, L., Zöller, N., Zhao, X., Gollwitzer, A., Wulff, D. (2025). Automating the Analysis of Online Political Discussion Quality using Large Language Models. *In prep*.
5. Bak-Coleman, J. B., Lewandowsky, S., Lorenz-Spreen, P., Narayanan, A., Orben, A., & Oswald, L. (2025). Moving towards informative and actionable social media research. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2505.09254>
6. Oswald, L., Munzert, S., Barberá, P., Guess, A., and Yang, J. (2023). Beyond the tip of the iceberg? Exploring Characteristics of the Online Public with Digital Trace Data. <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/yfmzh/>
7. Oswald, L. (2022). Automating the Analysis of Online Deliberation? A comparison of manual and computational measures applied to climate change discussions. SocArXiv. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/qmzwx>

## Teaching

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### Introduction to R Workshop

Spring 2022

*Hertie School, Berlin (MSc Public Policy and MSc International Affairs)*

- Day 1 - Base R Basics: Data types and structures, RStudio interface, operators, data frames, error handling, missing data, and best practices.
- Day 2 - Tidyverse: Tidy data principles, dplyr for data manipulation, tidyr for data cleaning, ggplot2 for visualization, and basics of functions and iteration.

### Introduction to Data Science

Fall 2021

*Hertie School, Berlin (MSc Data Science for Public Policy)*

Teaching Assistant to Prof. Simon Munzert. Development of R tutorials. Topics included:

- Base R, GitHub for version control, Tidyverse, functions and iteration, databases, web scraping, modeling, visualization, Shell basics, debugging, Shiny for interactive applications.

### Statistical Modeling & Causal Inference

Spring 2021, Spring 2022

*Hertie School, Berlin (Master in Public Policy)*

Teaching Assistant to Prof. Simon Munzert. Weekly R tutorials for interdisciplinary and international student groups. Collaborated on creating assignments to assess learning. Topics included:

- Causality, DAGs, potential outcomes framework, regression, matching, instrumental variables, regression discontinuity, difference-in-differences, panel data, fixed effects, moderation, and mediation.

## Quantitative Methods II

Spring 2015, Spring 2016

*University of Kassel, Germany (BSc Psychology)*

Teaching Assistant to Dr. Isabel Lindner. Tutorials in German focused on deriving estimates conceptually and applying them in R. Topics included:

- Analyses of variance, repeated measures, (semi)partial correlation, multiple regression, analyses of covariance, and non-parametric tests.

## Quantitative Methods I

Fall 2015

*University of Kassel, Germany (BSc Psychology)*

Teaching Assistant to Dr. Isabel Lindner. Tutorials in German focused on deriving estimates conceptually and applying them in R. Topics included:

- Scales and variables, measurement theory, descriptive statistics, logic of statistical tests, t-tests, correlation, and regression.

## Guest lectures & Short workshops

*Various institutions*

- **Public discourse in online environments** (Spring 2025): Workshop at the Summer Institute on Bounded Rationality, Berlin.
- **Beyond experiments: Addressing causal questions outside the laboratory.** (Spring 2025): Workshop at the ARC Research Retreat.
- **Boosting Online Decision Making: Lateral Reading and Online Search** (Fall 2024): Guest Lecture at the Hertie School, Berlin.
- **Reference Management with Zotero and Overleaf** (Spring 2024): Workshop at ARC, MPIB Berlin.
- **Decision Making in Online Environments** (Spring 2024): Guest Lecture at HU Berlin, MSc Mind and Brain.
- **Selective Engagement in Online Public Discourse** (Fall 2023): Guest Lecture at University College Dublin, Connected Politics Lab.

## Talks & Communication

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### Recent conference presentations

- MediaPsych, Duisburg - onference presentation: Boosting online news media literacy with lateral reading and online search 2025
- IC2S2, Norrköping, Sweden - conference presentation: Participation in online political discussions: A collective field experiment on Reddit 2025
- IC2S2, Philadelphia, USA - conference presentation: Dynamics of digital discourse: A collective field experiment on Reddit 2024
- EPSA, Köln - conference presentation: Digital literacy in Germany: testing interventions with survey experiments and web tracking data 2024
- Digital Democracy Workshop, Zurich - conference presentation, Exploring the online public (sphere) with digital trace data 2022

- EPSA, Prague - conference presentation, Who Engages Where on the Online Public Square? Evidence from Digital Trace Data 2022
- ICP+ - conference presentation, How do climate change skeptics engage with opposing views? Mechanisms of social identity and cognitive dissonance in an online forum 2021
- MPA - conference presentation, How do climate change skeptics engage with opposing views? Invited talk within the 'internet explorer' symposium 2021

### Selected invited talks

- Embassy of Belgium in Berlin - invited talk: Digital Media, Disinformation and Democracy 2024
- German Foreign Office, Berlin - invited talk, young diplomats program: Digital Media and Democracy 2024
- Abgeordnetenhaus, Berlin - invited talk, Die Zukunft der Parlamentarischen Demokratie im Angesicht digitaler Medien 2024

### Science communication

- School materials:** Geomax 31 - Demokratie und soziale Medien 2025
- Science podcast:** Unraveling Behavior: Digital Media and Democracy 2024
- Press writing:** The Conversation - Is the global decline in democracy linked to social media? We combed through the evidence to find out 2022

## Academic Community Engagement

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**Recruitment and coordination** of research assistants and interns at the Center for Adaptive Rationality, MPIB Berlin 2024-present

**Research methods consulting** at the Data Science Lab, Hertie School 2020-2021

### Representation and committee work

- Elected PhD Representative & IT committee Hertie School 2022-2023
- Elected Student Representative, Graduate Center for Environmental Studies and Teaching (GradZ), University of Kassel 2018-2019
- Elected Student Representative, Directorate, Department of Psychology, University of Kassel 2017-2018

## Seminar organization and event management

- Workshop on detecting and combating disinformation, misinformation and hate speech for media professionals and communication practitioners in Berlin, funded by the EU Horizon Grants SoMe4Dem and PRODEMINFO 2025
- SmP seminar organization: Network Analysis for Sustainable Development. 4-day seminar with international speakers and 85 participants in Berlin, funded by Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes 2020
- SmP seminar organization: Artificial Intelligence and Society. 3-day seminar in Munich, funded by Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes 2019
- SmP seminar organization: Sustainability Scenario Modeling. 3-day seminar in Vienna, funded by Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes 2018

## Reviewing Journal Articles

Journal of Politics, Political Behavior, Electoral Studies, Politics and Governance, Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media, International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction, PNAS Nexus, Royal Society Open Science, Psychological Science in the Public Interest, Journal of Science Communication

## Awards and Scholarships

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### Doctoral Scholarship 2021-2023

*German Academic National Foundation (Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes)*

Supporting doctoral students from different disciplinary and personal backgrounds that are "united in their particular scientific ability, in their curiosity that extends beyond their own discipline and life world, and in their pronounced sense of social responsibility."

### Best poster award 2022

*Political Methodology Europe*

For the poster: "Measuring Deliberative Potential in the Online Public Sphere – A Latent Class Segmentation Analysis." presented at PolMeth Europe 2022, annual award.

### Highly commended thesis 2020

*Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford*

Honoring MSc thesis (Should we talk to climate skeptics?), annual award.

### Carl-Friedrich Graumann Award 2018

*German Psychological Society (DGPs), Section Environmental Psychology*

Honoring BSc thesis (Outdoor Sport and Environmental behavior) as best newcomer scientist work in the field of environmental psychology, biannual award.

### Scholarship 2016-2020

*German Academic National Foundation (Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes)*

Supporting "the university education of young people who, on account of their exceptional academic or artistic talents and their personalities, can be expected to make an outstanding contribution to society as a whole."

## Third Party Funding

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Max Planck Society

Awarded, starting October 2025

*Volume: 450,000€*

Breaking points of trust and populist support - grant proposal submitted as PI with Anastasia Kozyreva, Philipp Lorenz-Spreen and Ralph Hertwig.

## Contact

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