

# CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

## Herbstforum PhD workshop 2026

### **CLASS ISSUES: STRUCTURE, CONSCIOUSNESS, MOBILIZATION**

November 10–11, 2026 in Berlin

The PhD workshop takes place in combination with the Herbstforum 2026 of the Institute of Economic and Social Research (WSI) of the Hans Böckler Foundation. The focus of both events is on the questions of class and class consciousness: are these concepts from the past or more relevant than ever? The starting point is an economic and sociological definition of the contemporary working class: the central question is how our society is socially structured today and who can still be counted as part of the working class.

Following this, we will discuss the thesis of whether a renewed class consciousness has been emerging in recent years or whether the working class is demobilized. On this basis, we are looking for ways to foster a sense of community among employees.

As a preliminary kickoff for the Herbstforum, the PhD workshop offers interested doctoral candidates the chance to present their research projects and then attend the Herbstforum together.

The thematic framework will be discussed in the PhD workshop from a multidisciplinary perspective. We invite submission from social and economic sciences, political science, philosophy, history, and law. The workshop provides space to discuss your own research projects and results with other PhD candidates and researchers from the WSI, or to present conceptual approaches and initial ideas for a doctoral project.

#### Possible questions in this context can include:

- How is society socially structured? Does the 'working class' still exist and if so, who belongs to it?
- Are we currently experiencing a comeback of class consciousness?
- How are class interests expressed in (social) media? How relevant are class interests in media debates?

- How do class position and gender interact? How does social mobility vary along gender lines and caregiving responsibilities? Do changes in the labor market contribute to increased social mobility for women, or do unequal class conditions get worse?
- How does political representation of the working class work? How can the actual voting behavior of workers be explained?
- How can unions in this situation mobilize for collective actions?
- What can we learn from successful political campaigns in other countries?

## Program

The doctoral workshop will take place on November 10–11, 2026, in Berlin. Besides presentations by the doctoral candidates, the program offers the chance to exchange ideas with WSI researchers. Afterwards, we will visit the Herbstforum together on November 11 and 12 at the Spreespeicher.

The WSI of the Hans Böckler Foundation covers the costs for travel to and from Berlin, accommodation, and meals during the conference. There are no participation fees.

Interested doctoral candidates can apply by **September 15, 2026**, with a short abstract (max. one page) outlining the topic and key research question(s) of their project. In the application via email to [herbstforum-workshop@boeckler.de](mailto:herbstforum-workshop@boeckler.de), applicants should indicate whether they want to give a presentation or introduce their work as part of the 'Pitch-Your-PhD-Project'. The projects can be presented and discussed in English, the main language of the workshop will be German.

We explicitly encourage early-stage PhD students to apply! The number of participants is limited. We will inform you about a successful application by September 25, 2026.

You can find more information about the event [here](#).

## Contact

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