

# Final theses at the Chair of Methods of Empirical Social Research

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## Staff available for supervision

- [Prof. Dr. Thomas Leopold](#)
- [Dr. Dina Maskileyson](#)
- [Dr. Alexander Trinidad](#)
- [Dr. Gordey Yastrebov](#)

## Submitting a supervision request

Follow these steps if you are interested in writing your final thesis under our supervision:

1. Read this document.
2. Ensure that you meet the formal admission requirements (see below).
3. Think of one or more potential topics and ensure your interest matches at least one of the topics listed below.
4. Contact a potential supervisor in person or by email.
5. If accepted by a supervisor, submit a supervision request from your email account to Erika Dünkemann at [sek-leopold@wiso.uni-koeln.de](mailto:sek-leopold@wiso.uni-koeln.de). In the request, explain your thematic interest(s) and in which semester you plan to enroll in the colloquium and register your thesis. You should also name your potential supervisor.

## BA and MA thesis: Type and format

- MA thesis
  - Type: Quantitative empirical analysis.
  - Format: Research article. Word limit: max. 9,000 (including main text and references; excluding appendices). No lower word limit.
- BA thesis
  - Type: Students can choose between preparing
    - a quantitative empirical analysis
    - a systematic review of the literature on their topic of interest
  - Format: Review article or research article. Word limit: 7,000 (including main text and references; excluding appendices).
- Please use the consistent format of your choice (APA, Chicago etc.) throughout.
- A useful overview regarding the format of your thesis are the guidelines of the Chair of Sociology II. See [here](#) (note that our word limits are different).

## The supervision process

1. After a supervision request is accepted, you meet your supervisor for an orientation meeting. At this meeting, you will discuss your thematic interest and get directions about preparing the exposé for your topic suggestion.
2. You prepare your exposé and submit it from your email account to your supervisor. Guidelines for the exposé are given below. Your supervisor provides written or oral feedback on your exposé
3. Further individual meetings before the colloquium, on demand (usually 0-2).
4. You present at the colloquium. Your supervisor and other discussants provide oral feedback on your presentation.
5. Based on the feedback received at your presentation, you finish your thesis and submit it before the deadline.

## Thesis colloquium

- The colloquium consists of individual supervision and a presentation day.
- The date of the presentation day will be announced at the start of the lecture period of each semester.
- Presentation day in the Semester 20xx:  
**,xx.xx 20xx,xx:xx-xx:xx , room.:**
  - All presenters submit a Powerpoint presentation to [sek-leopold@wiso.uni-koeln.de](mailto:sek-leopold@wiso.uni-koeln.de) approx. one week before presentation day.
  - All students present at the presentation day and will receive feedback from their supervisor and other discussants.
  - All students act as discussants of one other presentation (to be assigned in the week before presentation day).
  - The presentation consists of max. 20 minutes and a discussion of min. 20 minutes.
  - Most or all staff of the chair will attend.
- For empirical theses, the presentation should include descriptive analyses and preferably also multivariate models.
- The presentation grades are: passed vs. not passed.

## Thesis topics

We do **not** supervise BA or MA theses that are qualitative or exclusively theoretical in focus. We prioritize supervision requests from students who

- are interested in working on topics within the areas listed below,
- have successfully completed the methods modules (BM and SM),
- have successfully completed at least one of our seminars.

*Topics / fields (roughly ordered from general to specific)*

- Systematic reviews
- Analysis of individual change and social change
- Family relationships
- Health inequality
- Wealth inequality

- Immigration and health
- Immigration and labor market inequality
- Spatial variability of any social problem
- Consequences of life events
- Mechanisms between social background inequality and inequality in educational outcomes
- The role of demographic processes in the reproduction of social inequality
- The development of social inequalities over the life course and the role of institutional and structural factors affecting the process of social mobility
- Facilities associated with crime events
- Spatial and temporal clustering of crime
- The role of concentrated disadvantages for crime
- The association between fear of crime and urban design
- Health/socioeconomic inequality during Covid-19 pandemic
- Topics related to Covid-19 vaccination

### **Writing the exposé**

In your exposé, you address three points:

1. **What** question will you address?
2. **Why** should this question be addressed?
3. **How** will you address this question?

Your exposé should be structured accordingly:

1. Research question: Narrow down your topic and state the question(s) that you address. (1 page)
2. Relevance and motivation: Explain why is it important to address your research question(s). Briefly summarize what is known and how you intend to contribute. (1-2 pages)
3. Approach: Depending on your topic and method, this section describes and discusses the intended research design, data sources, and methods of analysis. (1-2 pages)

### **Standards for data work and documentation of empirical analyses**

- Empirical analyses must fully comply with the standards for data work and documentation taught in the BM “Analysis of Cross-sectional Data” and the SM “Analysis of Longitudinal Data”.
- MA theses must be submitted along with the code (e.g., Stata do-file). The code must be fully annotated and produce all empirical material shown in the main text and appendices of the thesis.
- If guidance on our standards for data work and documentation is needed, please contact us at [methods@wiso.uni-koeln.de](mailto:methods@wiso.uni-koeln.de).

## Formal requirements

- For ECTS and course requirements, see:  
<https://wiso.uni-koeln.de/de/fakultaet/dekanat/pruefungsaemter/po-2015-po-2021/abschlussarbeiten>
- Colloquium
  - You have to be enrolled in the thesis colloquium (see KLIPS; second enrolment period).
  - You have to give one presentation in the thesis colloquium
  - You should pass the thesis colloquium.
- Registration
  - You register your thesis via our [secretariat](#) with the examination office.
  - We expect you to register your thesis in the semester in which you take the colloquium.
  - For the registration form, you provide the secretariat with the following information:
    - Your full name and degree program
    - Name of first supervisor (Erstprüfer)
    - Name of second supervisor (Zweitprüfer)
    - Publication year of applicable BA and MA regulations (PO)
    - Registration number at the examination office (Matrikelnummer)
    - Title of the thesis (exact wording), as agreed upon with your supervisor.
  - The countdown to submission starts the day on which the title of your thesis is determined.
  - From then onwards you have 6 months until submission of a MA thesis and 12 weeks until submission of a BA thesis.
- Submit the thesis at the examination office
  - You can view all important information about your thesis in KLIPS under “Meine Leistungen” -> “Abschlussarbeit”.
  - For further information, please contact the examination office  
<https://wiso.uni-koeln.de/de/fakultaet/dekanat/pruefungsaemter/startseite>