

Rasmus Ollroge\*, Tim Sawert

# The Cultural Dimension of the Globalization Divide. Do Lifestyle Signals affect Cosmopolitans' Willingness to interact?

## Die kulturelle Dimension der Globalisierungsspaltung. Beeinflussen Lebensstilsignale die Bereitschaft von Kosmopoliten zur Interaktion?

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**Abstract:** In the context of the rise of right-wing populist parties in the past decades, many researchers have addressed the question of increasing social polarization and threats to social cohesion. In this article, we contribute to this discussion by looking at the cultural side of the globalization divide from the perspective of cleavage theory. More precisely, we ask if respondents interpret lifestyle characteristics as signals for the socio-political position of others and whether these attributions influence the willingness to interact socially. Based on data from a factorial survey experiment, we show that cosmopolitans categorize other persons based on different lifestyle characteristics and are more likely to interact with those who have a similar cosmopolitan lifestyle.

**Keywords:** Globalization; Cleavage; Cosmopolitanism; Lifestyle; Polarization.

**Zusammenfassung:** Im Zusammenhang mit dem Aufstieg rechtspopulistischer Parteien in den letzten Jahrzehnten haben sich viele Forscher:innen mit der Frage der zunehmenden sozialen Polarisierung und der Bedrohung des sozialen Zusammenhalts beschäftigt. In diesem Artikel leisten wir einen Beitrag zu dieser Diskussion, indem wir die kulturelle Seite der Globalisierungsspaltung aus der Perspektive der Cleavage Theorie betrachten. Genauer gesagt fragen wir, ob die Befragten Lebensstilmerkmale

als Signale für die gesellschaftspolitische Position anderer interpretieren und ob diese Zuschreibungen die Bereitschaft zu sozialer Interaktion beeinflussen. Auf der Grundlage von Daten aus einem faktoriellen Umfrageexperiment zeigen wir, dass Kosmopolit:innen andere Personen anhand verschiedener Lebensstilmerkmale kategorisieren und eher bereit sind, mit Personen zu interagieren, die einen ähnlichen kosmopolitischen Lebensstil haben.

**Schlagwörter:** Globalisierung; Cleavage; Kosmopolitismus; Lebensstil; Polarisierung.

### 1 Introduction

Recent elections have brought leaders into office who follow an anti-globalization discourse (e. g., USA, UK) and discussions about a polarization of society have been circulating in scientific discussion not only since the Covid-19-pandemic (Reiljan 2020). In Germany, one of the most prominent examples comes from Andreas Reckwitz (Reckwitz 2019, 2020)<sup>1</sup>, who argues that the middle class has differentiated in recent years. On the one hand, there is the new middle class, consisting of upwardly mobile, academically educated people with cosmopolitan values. On the other hand, there is the old middle class, with more conservative political values and a communitarian orientation. Following negative predictions, the splitting of the middle class has the potential to endanger social cohesion in society, for example, if different social groups interact less with each other than they did before.

The phenomenon of polarization has also been discussed from the perspective of cleavage theory. Here,

\*Corresponding author: Rasmus Ollroge, Freie Universität Berlin, Contestations of the Liberal Script – Cluster of Excellence, Edwin-Redslob-Straße 29, 14195 Berlin, ORCID-ID: 0000-0002-9176-852X, E-Mail: r.ollroge@fu-berlin.de

Dr. Tim Sawert, Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Institut für Soziologie, Jakob-Welder-Weg 12, 55128 Mainz, E-Mail: tim.sawert@uni-mainz.de

<sup>1</sup> See Leviathan (02/2021) for a comprehensive discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the theory.

authors argue that the electoral results indicate the emergence of an ‘integration-demarcation-cleavage’ (Mader et al. 2020: 1526), a new social cleavage between cosmopolitans and communitarians (Azmanova 2011; Bornschieer 2010b; De Wilde et al. 2019; Hooghe & Marks 2018; Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008; Teney et al. 2014).<sup>2</sup> Hence, researchers in both traditions agree that the new socio-political conflicts are associated with globalization. According to cleavage theory, a cleavage exists when socio-structurally differently positioned groups identify themselves as a group with identity-relevant characteristics (e. g., cultural practices) and the interests of the groups are also reflected in the political system (see Mair 2006; Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008). While much is known about the socio-structural differences between cosmopolitans and communitarians and their political attitudes and the parties that represent them, the cultural differences between the two groups, and their relevance for processes of group-formation are less well researched (Bornschieer et al. 2021).

This study builds on the argument that socio-structural differences are associated with cultural differences (e. g. Bourdieu 1984). Cultural differences, in the form of lifestyles, are encoded as signals, which result in stereotyping and affect the willingness to interact socially (Lizardo 2006), thereby potentially reinforcing the social and cultural divide between social groups. First, we focus on the connection between the cultural, social, and political dimensions of conflict and ask whether lifestyle characteristics are interpreted as signals of socio-structural position and political orientation. Secondly, we take up the argument of increasing polarization and investigate whether signals of belonging to an opposing group influence the willingness to interact.

This study will answer the research question along the following structure: The second chapter develops the theoretical framework of the study. After giving an overview of the literature on the social and political dimension of the cleavage between cosmopolitans and communitarians, we will focus on the cultural dimension of the cleavage (Bornschieer 2010a; Bornschieer et al. 2021) by referring to lifestyle research in the tradition of Bourdieu’s theory of cultural distinction (Bourdieu 1984, 1986; Rössel & Otte 2012). The third chapter describes the methodology

of the study. The data used for the analysis came from a web survey of 470 students living in Berlin who served as a proxy group of likely cosmopolitans. The focus on cosmopolitans results from the pragmatic problem that we were not able to sample likely communitarians, the other pole of the conflict, straightforwardly and reliably. The main feature of the survey was a conjoined factorial survey experiment (Auspurg & Hintz 2015; Hainmueller et al. 2014; Mutz 2011). We measured the causal effect of lifestyle characteristics on the ascription of the educational level, political attitudes, and the willingness to interact.

The fourth chapter presents the results. We find that cosmopolitan lifestyle signals increase the willingness of the cosmopolitans to interact with a person. This is mediated by the ascription of cosmopolitan political attitudes and academic education with these cosmopolitan lifestyle signals.

The last chapter discusses the findings of the study. It concludes that the lifestyle characteristics are used by the cosmopolitans to categorize other people as cosmopolitans or communitarians and to distinguish themselves from the communitarians. The contribution of this study is twofold. First, it contributes to the scientific debate on the cleavage between cosmopolitans and communitarians by addressing the research gap regarding the cultural dimension of the cleavage. Second, by focusing on the willingness to interact, it contributes to the scientific debate on social polarization.

## 2 Theory

In the past two decades, researchers have identified a divide between cosmopolitans on the one side, with political preferences for more global societal integration concerning issues such as immigration and international organizations, and communitarians on the opposite side with preferences for more societal demarcation (De Wilde et al. 2019; Kriesi et al. 2008; Teney et al. 2014). In the following, we first explain the constitution of this new line of conflict by referring to literature from the perspective of cleavage theory. We adopt the perspective of cleavage theory because it offers an appropriate structure for examining the extent to which social, political, and cultural differences between the assumed polarized groups are interrelated in the perception of the respondents and to what extent this reduces the willingness to interact. In 2.2, we look more specifically at the cultural dimension of the conflict, which has been little explored in the cleavage literature, and the extent to which lifestyles make the

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this paper, we will mostly use the terms “cosmopolitanism” and “communitarianism”. Some of the literature uses different terms to describe the cleavage, for example “integration” vs. “demarcation” (Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008), “green-alternative-libertarian” vs. “traditional-authoritarian-nationalistic” (Hooghe et al. 2002), “cosmopolitanism” vs. “sovereignism” and “opportunity” vs. “risk” (Azmanova 2011), or “transnational cleavage” (Hooghe & Marks 2018).

social position and political attitudes visible in everyday life. In 2.3, we focus on the lifestyle of cosmopolitans for research pragmatic reasons, before presenting the theoretical model and our hypotheses in 2.4.

## 2.1 The social and political dimension: The Cleavage Between Cosmopolitans and Communitarians

A large selection of literature describes the formation of a new societal cleavage in Western Europe that pits people with cosmopolitan and people with communitarian values against each other (Azmanova 2011; De Wilde et al. 2019; Hooghe & Marks 2018; Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008; Mader et al. 2020; Teney et al. 2014). Both groups are opposing each other in a structural antagonism that lies orthogonal to the traditional left-right dimension of voter and party alignments. The emergence of the new cleavage is the result of two macrosocial transformations in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that reshaped class structures and formed new social groups (Bornschieer 2010a). The first transformation was a combination of processes of post-industrialization (Bell 1973; Powell & Snellman 2004), educational expansion (Breen et al. 2009), and value change (Inglehart 1977, 1997) that started in the 1960s and led to the emergence of a highly educated professional class with liberal values (Florida 2002; Reckwitz 2020). This group found political representation in the parties of the new left (Bornschieer 2010a; Kitschelt 1994). In contrast to this, a more traditional and less educated middle class and a new under- and service class emerged (Reckwitz 2020).

The second transformation was the process of globalization. Globalization further deepened the class polarization of the first transformation (Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008). The new academic middle class tended to develop cosmopolitan identities, values, attitudes, and habits, while parts of the traditional middle class and the underclass became more communitarian (Bornschieer 2010a; Reckwitz 2020; Teney et al. 2014). The topic of globalization has become politicized by the populist right since the 2000s, by putting the issues of immigration and European integration on the political agenda (Bornschieer 2010b; Norris & Inglehart 2019). The two transformations converged into a single cleavage between people with a value combination of green-alternative-libertarian (GAL) and cosmopolitan values on the one side, and people with traditional-authoritarian-nationalistic (TAN) and communitarian values on the other (Bornschieer 2010a).

Despite the well-researched socio-structural and political-organizational dimensions, a cleavage also consists

of a normative, identity-related dimension (Bartolini & Mair 1990; Mair 2006), which manifests itself in cultural practices. Much less is known about this dimension of the new cleavage (Bornschieer et al. 2021; Helbling & Jungkunz 2020). This *cultural dimension* of a cleavage consists of the collective identities of the groups, their perceptions of themselves and each other, as well as their modes of distinction, and the drawing of social and cultural boundaries between them. Stubager (2009) showed that salient group identities have formed around high and low levels of education in Denmark. These groups are conscious of their identities and the cleavage constellation as such and the educational identities are related to the value positions people have on the GAL-TAN value dimension. Teney and colleagues (2014) argued that the perception of globalization as an opportunity or a threat depends on whether one has a supranational or (sub-)national identity. These identities then can lead to cosmopolitan and communitarian political attitudes, for example on immigration and European integration.

Bornschieer and his colleagues (Bornschieer et al. 2021) examined how the two cleavage groups subjectively self-identify and distinguish themselves from each other. First, both groups strongly differentiate themselves from the respective other group in terms of cultural identity categories (e. g., urbanity, interest in culture). Second, these cultural identities predict the vote decisions for new left and populist right parties. Third, some authors argued that the opposition of the communitarians is directed at the perceived cultural hegemony of the cosmopolitans (Norris & Inglehart 2019; Reckwitz 2020). The emergence of the academic middle class was accompanied by its gain in cultural relevance and by the cultural descent of the old middle class and the underclass.

The literature exploring the cultural dimension of the cleavage suggests that collective social identities around cultural characteristics are a powerful component of the new cleavage. Hence, practices of cultural boundary-making appear to be an important dimension of how the groups relate to one another. The following chapter will detail how lifestyle differences between the conflict groups can serve as signals in the cultural dimension of the cleavage.

## 2.2 The cultural dimension: Lifestyles as Markers for Social Categorization

The research on lifestyles has been, to a large extent, influenced by the seminal works of Pierre Bourdieu on social class and cultural distinction (Bourdieu 1984, 1986; Rössel

& Otte 2012). His theory developed a twofold argument about the interdependence of lifestyle habits and social structure. First, individual preferences for cultural products and activities are an expression of a person's social class position, thus forming a relatively coherent set of class-specific lifestyles. Second, lifestyle characteristics function as markers of social boundaries and are used for social and cultural exclusion (Lamont & Lareau 1988; Lamont & Molnár 2002).

If lifestyle research is applied to cleavage theory, the social-psychological underpinnings of lifestyle differences between groups are important. Lifestyle characteristics are visible markers that people use to socially categorize other people (Macrae & Bodenhausen 2000; Tarrant et al. 2001). To categorize the opposite person in an interaction as someone who belongs to a certain class or occupation allows for stereotyping, which simplifies the interaction between persons (Wittenbrink et al. 1998). Encountering a person with a certain lifestyle triggers a reflection on that person's social status and tastes in comparison to one's own tastes and distastes. Distastes are an important way of drawing cultural boundaries between groups (Berli 2014; Bourdieu 1984: 56). Hence, cultural practices, such as specific leisure activities, can serve as observable signals for the social status, tastes and distastes of a person and "are being mobilized for social selection" (Lamont & Lareau 1988: 155). Having similar lifestyle preferences is associated with positive stereotyping and positive discrimination (Tarrant et al. 2001) and fosters the establishment of social networks (Lizardo 2006; McPherson et al. 2001). Bryson (1996), for example, shows that middle and upper-middle classes have a strong distaste for musical genres which are preferred by the least educated groups. Consequently, it can be argued that observable lifestyle differences structure the cleavage at the cultural level as they mediate the social and political position of persons, thus making social and political polarization visible in the lifeworld.

### 2.3 The new Academic Middle-Class: The Lifestyle of the Cosmopolitans and cultural boundaries

Although social polarization only exists when there is boundary-making from both poles of the cleavage, we focus on the side of the cosmopolitan-oriented new academic middle class in the following. This is primarily due to the pragmatic research circumstance that we only have reliable data for this side, but can also be justified by the fact that the new academic middle class is the socio-cul-

turally more dominant side (Reckwitz 2020). With regard to our contribution to the literature, this results in the restriction that we cannot directly focus on polarization, i. e., mutual cultural boundary-making, but rather on the question of the extent to which lifestyle practices are read as signals of social and political position and how this affects cosmopolitans' social selection processes when it comes to interactions.

The lifestyle of the cosmopolitans is centered around the guiding principle of openness to cultural diversity (Olivier 2008; Roose et al. 2012). While cultural tastes were traditionally structured by national or regional borders, cosmopolitans consume foreign cultural products to signal familiarity with other cultures (Katz-Gerro 2017; Rössel & Schroedter 2015). Communitarians are more oriented towards traditional taste boundaries. Cosmopolitans tend to view those who do not engage in the cosmopolitan lifestyle as being stuck, narrow-minded, traditional, and non-reflexive, while they themselves are conceptualized as being mobile, open-minded, creative, and reflexive (Prieur et al. 2008).

Reckwitz (2020) analyzed which lifestyle boundaries mark the distinction between the cosmopolitan-oriented new academic middle class and the communitarian-oriented traditional middle class in Germany. According to him, differences are articulated in five lifestyle dimensions:

First, the principle of openness merges with principles of ethical and sustainable consumption (Grinstein & Riefler 2015). This is especially important for the *consumption of food*. Sustainability and ethical consumer behavior are characteristics used by cosmopolitans to judge food practices. Food is supposed to be healthy, "organic", and locally produced, and should have an authentic and "alternative" component (Johnston & Baumann 2007; Paddock 2015). These principles are best exemplified by the trends of vegetarianism and veganism, as it implies a sustainable, ethical, healthy, and alternative practice of food consumption. An example of a rejected practice is eating fast food (Cappeliez & Johnston 2013).

Second, the *music preference* of cosmopolitans is characterized by an omnivorous consumption of different kinds of genres, thereby rejecting the traditional classification of musical genres into highbrow and lowbrow art (Friedman & Reeves 2020; Peterson 1997; Peterson & Kern 1996; Prieur & Savage 2013). An omnivore music consumption can be seen as a new form of distinction practice of high status social groups like the cosmopolitans, as it elevates the alleged openness of the omnivorous music consumer over supposedly "narrow" preferences for specific genres (Berli 2014; Chan 2019). In this way, omnivore

music consumption is not equal to general tolerance but comes along with a distaste for the preferences of the opposite social group (Bryson 1996; Prieur & Savage 2013), like for German popular folk music, which is an expression of national culture.<sup>3</sup>

Third, regarding *sports practices*, cosmopolitans tend to strive for fitness and health, ideals which have become a form of a status symbol for upper-middle classes (Bourdieu 1984: 211). One of the most popular activities are the Asian cultures of movement like yoga. These activities do not only have a fitness aspect to them, but also a historical-cultural background as well as a spiritual aspect, which adds further dimensions to the activities (Newcombe 2009). In contrast, bodybuilding is usually not practiced by cosmopolitans, as it represents an unaesthetically and overly masculine body ideal for them (Shilling 2004).<sup>4</sup>

Fourth, the *place of residence* is an important characteristic of a cosmopolitan lifestyle. Urbanity is a characteristic that cosmopolitans tend to focus on when choosing their place of residence (Bornschieer et al. 2021; Ford & Jennings 2020). Living in a metropolitan city with an international population is an essential part of the cosmopolitan lifestyle, as this allows for the direct practice of openness towards cultural diversity (Favell 2011; Florida 2002). In contrast, living in a small village can be considered a non-cosmopolitan characteristic.

Fifth, *foreign experiences* are an element of a cosmopolitan lifestyle. Families of the academic middle class are more likely to follow a child-rearing practice that includes school stays abroad (Carlson et al. 2017) and on their way to tertiary education, cosmopolitans have several opportunities to go abroad, e. g. during a gap year (Fuchs 2020). Never having lived outside the country of origin is not a desirable characteristic for the cosmopolitans, having lived in another European country or even a non-European country can be considered characteristics of a cosmopolitan lifestyle.

## 2.4 Theoretical Model and Hypotheses

To test whether social, political, and cultural differences are interrelated in the perception of the respondents and

to what extent this reduces the willingness to interact, we performed a conjoint experiment. As mentioned above, we focused on the cosmopolitan pole of the cleavage in this study.

As outlined in the previous subchapter, the central argument is that lifestyles are interpreted as signals of group membership and that perceiving someone as belonging to the opposite group might reduce the willingness to interact with that person. As people rather interact with those who are similar to them, the lifestyle characteristics of a person can impact on the willingness to interact. Hence, building on Lizardo (2006) and McPherson et al. (2001), we formulate the first hypothesis:

*Cosmopolitans are more willing to interact with persons with a cosmopolitan lifestyle than with persons with communitarian lifestyle signals (H1).*

Although cleavage groups have a socio-structural foundation, they are first and foremost perceived as political conflict groups. Two main political topics in the cleavage between cosmopolitans and communitarians are European integration and immigration. Thus, we formulate the following second hypothesis:

*A cosmopolitan lifestyle is attributed to being in favor of European integration and open borders (H2).*

Additionally, lifestyles are associated with class membership and can also be interpreted as signals of the class position, e. g., the educational level. Hence, we can expect that lifestyle characteristics affect the inferred level of education and formulate the following assumption:

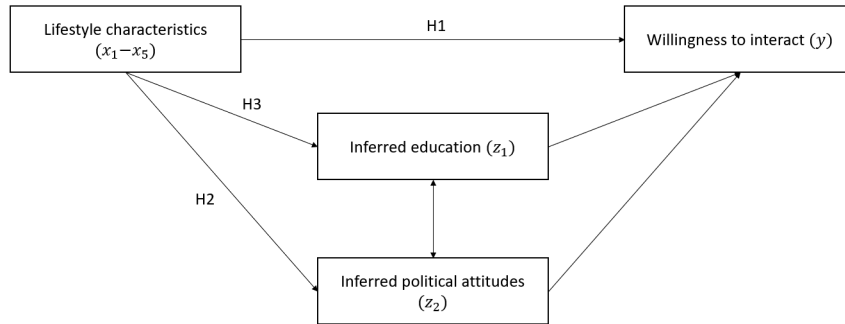
*A cosmopolitan lifestyle is attributed to having an academic education (H3).*

Additionally, if the inferred educational level and the inferred political attitudes are attributed to be associated with cosmopolitanism, then we would expect that the effect of the lifestyle-signals becomes smaller once the inferred educational level and political attitudes are controlled for:

*The effect of the lifestyles of a person on the willingness to interact with that person is mediated by both, the inferred level of education and the inferred political attitudes of the person (H4).*

<sup>3</sup> German popular folk music refers to the contemporary genre of „Volksmusik“, which is not comparable to more traditional forms of German music nor to American folk music.

<sup>4</sup> It should be mentioned here, that there is little empirical research on the sports dimension and that research applying a more stringent theoretical framework, as well as more rigorous empirical methods is needed on this topic.

Fig. 1: Theoretical Model<sup>5</sup>

### 3 Data and Methods

#### 3.1 Data and Sampling<sup>6</sup>

To test the theoretical model, a web survey containing a survey experiment with a multidimensional factorial design was conducted. The survey was based on a non-probability sample, which is problematic for descriptive inference (Cornesse et al. 2020) but produces unbiased estimates of the causal effect if homogeneity of the treatment effects across the target population can be assumed (Kohler et al. 2019). This holds particularly true if (a) the target population is small and homogenous (Kohler 2019) and (b) a multidimensional factorial survey design is applied (Auspurg & Hintz 2015). To create a reliable database, we focused on cosmopolitans as a rather small and homogenous group and applied a multidimensional factorial survey design.<sup>7</sup> In such cases, inferences from survey experiments that are based on non-probability samples have proven to be relatively similar to inferences, which are based on random probability population samples (Coppock 2019; Mullinix et al. 2015).

The sampling strategy aimed at sampling cosmopolitans based on four socio-structural characteristics, which are described in the literature as correlates of being a cosmopolitan (education, age, urbanity, socio-cultural

professional class). To target this population, students aged between 20 and 30 living in Berlin (Germany) were sampled as the proxy population. We sampled students from fields such as education, art, social sciences, and cultural studies, which commonly lead into socio-cultural professions. As these fields of study affect the formation of liberal values, students are likely to already hold some of the assumed values of the socio-cultural professional class (van de Werfhorst & Kraaykamp 2001). For measuring cosmopolitanism, we used the same strategy as in the experiment (see below) and measured respondents' attitudes towards immigration and the EU, as these political attitudes are most central to the conflict around globalization and thus differentiate between people from the opposite poles of the divide. Following this definition, around two-thirds of the respondents are cosmopolitans. The presented results are robust over restricting the sample to only cosmopolitan respondents.<sup>8</sup>

Officials from relevant study programs from universities in Berlin were contacted and asked to forward the questionnaire to the students of their program. In total, we received 553 completed questionnaires. In addition to the survey experiment, the questionnaire included several standard survey items on the lifestyle, the values, and the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. In total, the questionnaire consisted of 38 items, which took the respondents an average of eleven minutes to complete. After deleting all respondents who did not fulfill the sampling criteria of being a student and living in Berlin, the number of valid cases in the sample was 470.

<sup>5</sup> The directionality of the relationship between the two mediators is left unspecified in our model, as people might infer the political attitudes not only directly from the lifestyle signals, but also indirectly from the inferred level of education and vice versa. Since the directionality can not be empirically tested with our study design, causal interpretations about the mechanism of the mediation have to be taken with caution.

<sup>6</sup> The data is publicly available at <https://doi.org/10.7802/2440>.

<sup>7</sup> A robustness check testing for subgroup differences in the treatment effects did not show substantial differences. The effects are therefore relatively homogenous across the sample. See figure 1 in the online appendix.

<sup>8</sup> The indicator of being a cosmopolitan was constructed as the average of two items measuring attitudes towards immigration and the EU. On the average scale of the two items ranging from 1 to 5, a respondent is cosmopolitan if he or she has a value of 4 or higher. See figure 2 in the online appendix for the comparison of the treatment effects on the willingness to interact (y) between the full sample and the restricted sample to only cosmopolitans.

### 3.2 The Experiment, Operationalization, and Analytical Strategy

The central feature of the questionnaire was a factorial survey experiment (Auspurg & Hintz 2015; Wallander 2009). A subset of factorial survey experiments are conjoint experiments, where respondents are presented with a choice between two vignettes (Hainmueller et al. 2014). We used a conjoint experiment in which respondents were presented the profiles of two persons that were described by using five lifestyle treatments. The respondents were presented three of these choice tasks in a row so that each respondent evaluated six profiles in total. The treatments were the lifestyle variables presented in table 1. The variables differed between signaling a cosmopolitan vs. a non-cosmopolitan lifestyle.<sup>9</sup> The levels of the lifestyle variables were allocated to the profiles randomly. The profile also included the name and age of the person. All persons were set to be 35 years old. They were given names that signaled both their male gender and their German ethnicity.<sup>10</sup>

**Tab. 1:** Lifestyle Boundaries between Cosmopolitans and Communitarians ( $x_1$ – $x_5$ ).<sup>11</sup>

	Non-cosmopolitan	Cosmopolitan
<b>Food consumption</b>	Fast food	Vegetarianism
<b>Music preferences</b>	German folk music	Omnivorousness
<b>Sport practices</b>	Bodybuilding	Yoga
<b>Place of residence</b>	Small village	Metropolis
<b>Foreign experience</b>	None	Stayed abroad

<sup>9</sup> The original experiment also included a middle category „somewhat cosmopolitan“, which was excluded from the final analyses. An analysis with all three levels does not produce substantially different results. See figure 3 in the online appendix for the effects of the treatments with all three levels on the willingness to interact ( $y$ ).

<sup>10</sup> The names were Christian, Daniel, Stefan, Jan, Martin, and Alexander and were chosen as they are the most frequently used names for new-borns in the year 1985 in the Federal Republic of Germany.

<sup>11</sup> The specific operationalization of the cosmopolitan level of the place of residence treatment is the city of Cologne, which was chosen as one of the major German cities. Berlin was not chosen in order to counter a potential bias from respondents from Berlin for the city they live in. The specific operationalization of the cosmopolitan level of the foreign experience treatment is Argentina, which was chosen as an example of a non-European and non-Western country.

The respondents were presented a pair of two persons and then asked four choice questions which constitute the four dependent variables.<sup>12</sup> Behavioral consequences of the lifestyle signals were measured by the willingness to interact. The question was: “Which of these two people would you be more willing to meet in person?” ( $y$ ). To measure *inferred education*, respondents were asked the following question “What do you suspect, which educational background does [name] have?” ( $z_1$ ). Out of the answers we generated a dichotomous variable for the final analyses, differentiating between a tertiary degree and no tertiary degree. It should be noted at this point that in Bourdieu’s theory, class is determined by the structure and volume of economic, cultural (institutionalized, objectified, incorporated) and social capital. Operationalization via educational attainment is thus only one dimension of the full endowment with capitals. The operationalization aims at keeping the dropout rate of the survey low. At the same time, educational attainment is used in the literature as a standard proxy for class position, is strongly correlated with economic capital and also represents a central differentiating feature of the old and new middle classes in the works of Reckwitz (2019, 2020). The inferred attitudes regarding the political issues of the cleavage were measured with two questions. The first was about immigration and asked: “If you had to take a guess: Which of these two people is more in favor of Germany accepting more refugees in the future?” ( $z_{2a}$ ). The second question was about European integration: “If you had to take a guess: Which of the two people is more in favor of Germany handing over more competencies to the EU in future?” ( $z_{2b}$ ).

The conjoint experiment produced a hierarchical data structure with evaluated profiles within respondents. The total number of respondents was 470, each of whom evaluated six profiles. Because of the random allocation of the treatment attributes to the profiles, the number of profiles used as cases for the analysis varies across the treatment variables, ranging from 1877 cases for the variable “Music” to 1893 cases for the variable “Foreign experience”.<sup>13</sup> The assumed causal effects (Average Treatment Effect, ATE) of the levels of the lifestyle variables was the change in the probability of a profile being chosen in a respective choice

<sup>12</sup> See table 1 in the online appendix for the wording of the outcome variables of the experiment.

<sup>13</sup> Originally, the treatment variables had three levels, resulting in a total number of 2820 profiles. For the purpose of answering our research question, we deleted one of the original levels of the treatments, thus resulting in the reduced number of valid profiles. Analyses with all three levels have shown similar results (see figure 3 in the online appendix).

task from when that attribute is not present to when the attribute is present in a profile.<sup>14,15</sup>

The effects were estimated using logistic regression analysis with bivariate regressions of the dependent variable(s) on each lifestyle variable. Cluster-robust standard errors were used for all analyses to correct for the correlation of standard errors within respondents. The second part of the analysis was a mediation analysis that disentangled the total effects into direct effects and indirect effects via the mediators.<sup>16</sup> The KHB method was used to conduct the mediation analysis (Karlson & Holm 2011; Kohler et al. 2011).

## 4 Results

The first part of the analysis focusses on the effect of the lifestyle variables on the dependent variable “willingness to interact” ( $y$ ) and on the effects of the lifestyle variables on the potential mediators “inferred level of education” ( $z_1$ ) and “inferred political attitudes” ( $z_2$ ). The second part presents the results of the mediation analysis of the mechanisms on the main effect.

### 4.1 The signaling Value of Lifestyle Characteristics

In the first hypothesis (H1) we expected that cosmopolitans are more willing to interact with persons with cosmopolitan lifestyle characteristics. Figure 2 shows how the lifestyles signals affect the willingness to interact in our sample.<sup>17</sup> In general, the results support the expected relationship meaning that cosmopolitan lifestyle characteristics serve as signals that structure with whom cosmopolitans are willing to interact.

<sup>14</sup> See tables 2 and 3 in the online appendix for descriptive statistics of the treatment and outcome variables.

<sup>15</sup> As the allocation of the treatment variables to both profiles in a choice task is fully randomized, the treatment effects on the evaluation of the first profile is independent of the characteristics of the second profile (Hainmueller et al. 2014). A robustness check supports this assumption (see table 9 in the online appendix).

<sup>16</sup> It should be mentioned here that the mediators were not varied experimentally. The lack of manipulation of the mediators can result in a post-treatment bias (Rosenbaum 1984), which can lead to biased estimators of the Average Controlled Direct effects (ACDE). See Acharya et al. (Acharya et al. 2018) and Dafoe et al. (Dafoe et al. 2018) for a more comprehensive discussion.

<sup>17</sup> See table 4 in the online appendix for the corresponding regression table.

Regarding food consumption, persons who are vegetarian hold a substantially and statistically significant higher chance of being selected for interaction than people eating fast food. The effect of music preferences is even more articulated than the effect of food consumption: persons with an omnivorous music preference have a 64 % probability of being selected for interaction, whereas this probability is only 31 % for persons favoring German folk music. Consequently, we find a treatment effect of 33 percentage points. The same pattern can be observed for the other three lifestyle characteristics, namely sport practices, place of residence, and foreign experience. For all three treatment variables we observe that a cosmopolitan signal results in the respondents being more willing to interact with the person. In sum, the willingness to interact is highest if a person is vegetarian, has an omnivorous music taste, practices yoga, lives in Cologne and has lived in a foreign country. The least likely person with whom the respondents would be willing to interact is someone who eats fast food, listens to German folk music, does bodybuilding, lives in a small village, and has never lived outside of Germany. These results support hypothesis H1 and show that the lifestyle of a person affects the willingness of the cosmopolitans to interact with him or her.

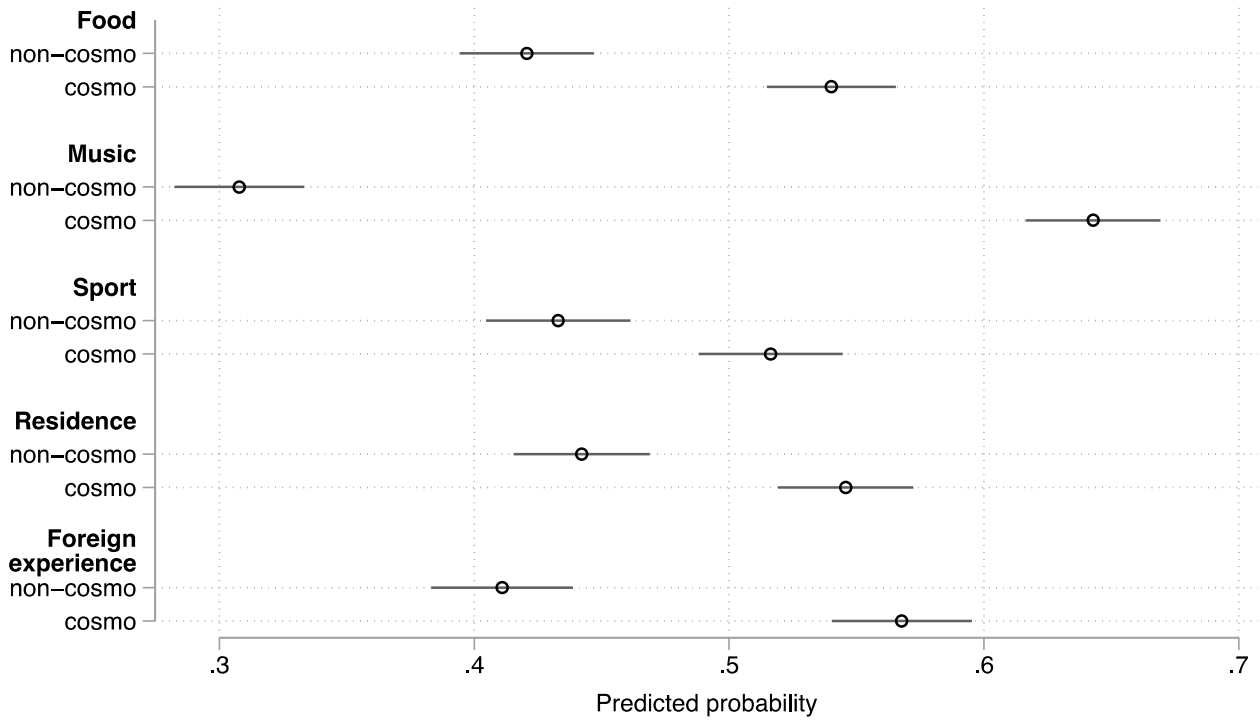
In our second hypothesis (H2) we expected that the lifestyle characteristics signal the position in the political dimension of the cleavage and that respondents thus infer whether a person is in favor of European Integration and open borders or not. Figure 3 shows the bivariate treatment effects of the lifestyle characteristics on the respective inferred political attitudes.<sup>18</sup> Again, the results are presented as predicted probabilities. The results show the same pattern as for the effect on the “willingness to interact”. Signaling a cosmopolitan orientation via the five lifestyle characteristics increases the likelihood of a person of being perceived of as being in favour of the European Union and the admission of more refugees. We find substantial and statistically significant treatment effects for all five lifestyle characteristics and only minor differences between the two differential measures of the political attitudes.

In our third hypothesis (H3) we expected that cosmopolitan lifestyle characteristics are attributed with having an academic education, as lifestyle characteristics are also signals of social structural characteristics such as education. The results shown in figure 4 are similar to the previous findings: persons with cosmopolitan lifestyle charac-

<sup>18</sup> See table 5 in the online appendix for the corresponding regression table.

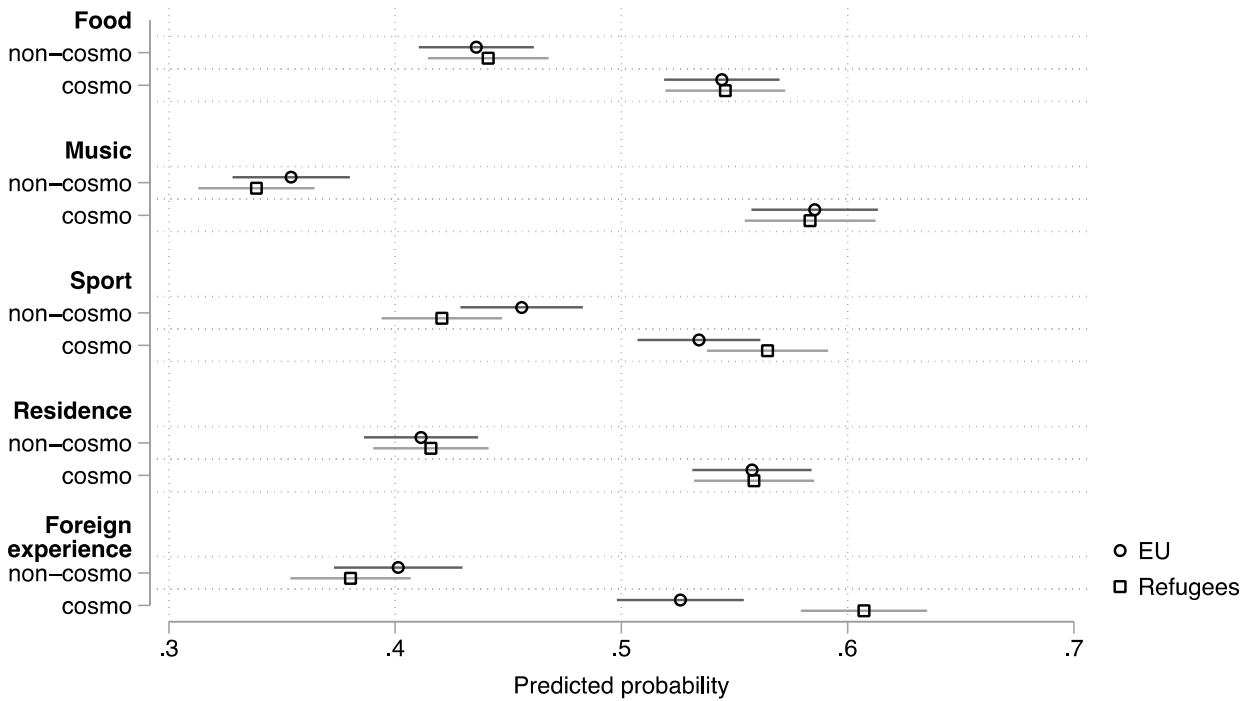


**Figure 2 – Lifestyles and the Willingness to Interact**



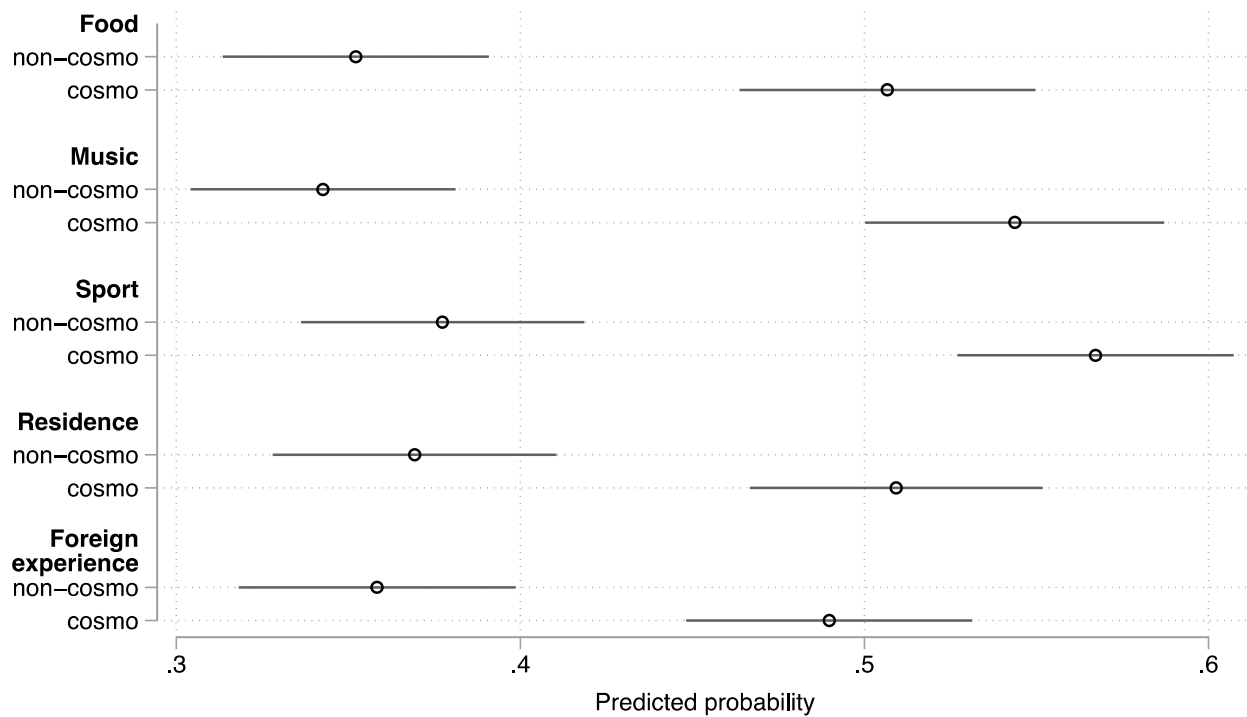
Coefficients with 95% confidence intervals from bivariate logistic regressions of the willingness to interact on the lifestyle characteristics. All coefficients are significant at the 95% level.

**Figure 3 – Lifestyles and Political Attitudes**



Coefficients with 95% confidence intervals from bivariate logistic regressions of the willingness to interact on the lifestyle characteristics. All coefficients are significant at the 95% level.

Figure 4 – Lifestyles and Education



Coefficients with 95% confidence intervals from bivariate logistic regressions of the willingness to interact on the lifestyle characteristics. All coefficients are significant at the 95% level.

teristics are more likely to be perceived as having tertiary education.<sup>19</sup> This supports the expectation that cosmopolitan lifestyle characteristics signal educational attainment in addition to signalling political attitudes and structuring social interaction.

## 4.2 Mediation Analysis

In hypothesis H4 we expected that the main effects of the lifestyle variables on the willingness to interact are mediated by both, the inferred level of education and the inferred political attitudes. In the analysis, the total causal effects of the lifestyle variables were disentangled into the direct effect of the lifestyle variables and the indirect effects via the two mediators, the inferred level of education ( $z_1$ ) and the inferred political attitude towards refugees ( $z_{2a}$ ).<sup>20</sup> Table 2 shows the results from various logistic regression models. The effects were estimated using the

KHB method and are presented as average marginal effects.<sup>21</sup>

The first column (total effect) shows the effects of bivariate logistic regressions of the dependent variable (willingness to interact) on the five lifestyle variables. The second column (direct effect) shows the effects of the respective lifestyle variables from a model controlling for both mediators  $z_1$  and  $z_{2a}$ . The third column (indirect effect) shows the difference in the effects between the total and the direct effect.<sup>22</sup> The fourth column (total mediation percentage) is the ratio of the indirect effect to the total effect. In other words, this is the amount of the total effect of the lifestyle variable that is mediated by the two media-

<sup>19</sup> See table 6 in the online appendix for the corresponding regression table.

<sup>20</sup> The results from the analyses with the inferred attitudes towards the EU ( $z_{2b}$ ) as the mediator instead of the inferred attitudes towards refugees ( $z_{2a}$ ) are comparable. See table 7 in the online appendix.

<sup>21</sup> As mentioned above, because the mediators were not randomized, the mediation analysis might potentially be susceptible to post-treatment bias, if the effect of the mediator variable(s) on the outcome is confounded by a third variable. As a robustness check, we conducted an additional mediation analysis using fixed effects at the respondent level, which controls for all potential respondent-level confounders. The results of the robustness check are substantially identical to the ones presented in table 2, indicating low levels of potential bias. See table 8 in the online appendix for the results of the robustness check.

<sup>22</sup> Since the indirect effect is not estimated but simply the difference between the total and the direct effect, the value does not have standard errors.

**Tab. 2:** shows the results of separate logistic regression models of the willingness to interact ( $y$ ) on the lifestyle variables ( $x_1 - x_2$ ). For each lifestyle variable, using the KHB method, the coefficients from an uncontrolled model (total effect) and one model controlling for the inferred level of education ( $z_1$ ) and the inferred attitude towards the admission of refugees ( $z_{2a}$ ) (direct effect) are compared. The difference between both models is presented as the indirect effect and the total mediation percentage. The latter is disentangled into the mediation percentage of each mediator. The strength of the effects is expressed as average marginal effects. Clustered standard errors are in parentheses.

		Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total Mediation	Mediation	Mediation
		AME	AME	AME	pct.	pct. $z_1$	pct. $z_{2a}$
Food consumption	(Ref: Fast food)						
	Vegetarianism	0.091*** (0.02)	0.046** (0.02)	0.046	50.06	11.51	37.78
Music preference	(Ref: German folk music)						
	Omnivorousness	0.328*** (0.02)	0.213*** (0.02)	0.115	35.03	2.95	27.62
Sport practice	(Ref: Bodybuilding)						
	Yoga	0.069*** (0.02)	-0.009 (0.02)	0.078	112.79 <sup>23</sup>	23.24	88.38
Place of residence	(Ref: Small village)						
	Metropolis	0.101*** (0.02)	.026 (0.02)	0.075	73.99	10.68	61.41
Foreign experience	(Ref: none)						
	Stayed abroad	0.115*** (0.02)	0.017 (0.02)	0.101	85.54	8.11	74.59

Significance: \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \* $p < 0.1$

tors combined. The two last columns show the individual mediation percentage for the two mediators. They show how much of the total effect is mediated through the inferred level of education (column 5) and through the inferred political attitudes (column 6).

Concerning the variable music preference, persons with an omnivorous music taste are 32.8 percentage points more likely to being selected for interaction by the respondents than persons who have a preference for German folk music. After controlling for the inferred level of education and the inferred attitude towards refugees, this effect was reduced to 21.3 percentage points. The indirect effect via the two mediators was thus 11.5 percentage points. In other words, 35 % of the overall treatment effect was mediated, 2.9 through the inferred level of education ( $z_1$ ) and 27.6 through the inferred attitudes towards refugees ( $z_{2a}$ ). For all lifestyle variables, there was a substantial indirect effect and both mediators contributed to the overall confounding. The results thus support hypothesis H4 that the effects of the lifestyle variables on the willingness to interact with a person is mediated by the perception of the person's level of education and political attitudes.

Finally, we break down the extent to which the total mediation effect runs across the two different mediation paths. Across all lifestyle variables, the mediation effect across political attitudes turns out to be larger. The substantive significance of this finding is unclear. On the one

hand, it can be read as an indication that cosmopolitans perceive themselves more as a political group than as a social group. On the other hand, it may be a mere artifact resulting from the fact that political attitudes themselves are read as signals for social position and the effect consequently does not only reflect the effect of political attitudes.

## 5 Discussion

The central finding of our study is that specific cosmopolitan lifestyle characteristics are read as signals of education and political attitudes, and these are associated with increased willingness to interact socially in our survey population of students. Interpreting college students as a proxy population for cosmopolitans, our findings suggest that cosmopolitan lifestyle characteristics are read as signals of group membership. Our empirical findings suggest numerous implications that may be important for theoretical discussions in the cleavage literature. First, lifestyle characteristics are shown to be read as signals associated with the attribution of educational status and political views. This finding is particularly informative for the question of the importance of the cultural dimension of the integration-demarcation cleavage, which has been well studied at the socio-structural and political levels, but not on the cultural level. Our findings suggest that a stronger grounding of the cleavage literature in the literature of cultural sociology may be fruitful.

<sup>23</sup> A total mediation percentage of over 100 % might be the result of two mediators being correlated with each other.

Second, attributions along lifestyle characteristics influence the propensity for social interaction within our survey population. As a result, social interaction is more likely within a group than between different groups, which may lead to polarization between different groups. In addition to the connection to cleavage theory, this empirical finding can also be related to current debates on social polarization, which leads directly to the third, albeit uncertain, finding: The question of what exactly the cleavage is about, or rather which group identities are the primary markers of identification. In our empirical analysis, political attitude turns out to be a stronger mediator than inferred education, suggesting in principle that stereotyping along political attitude structures the willingness to interact in our survey population much more strongly than stereotyping along educational level. This suggests that the nature of the conflict is a political one. At the same time, our analyses do not allow us to draw a strict conclusion in this direction due to various methodological limitations:

First, the mediators have not been varied randomly, hence the results are vulnerable to post-treatment bias, even though a robustness check indicates the absence of a substantial bias. Additionally, there is an open question concerning the directionality of the relation of the two mediators, since the political attitudes could not only be inferred directly from the treatments but also indirectly from the inferred level of education and vice versa. As we are not able to test the relationship with our study design, any conclusions about the mechanism of the mediation have to be taken with caution.

A further limitation concerns the study's focus on the cosmopolitan pole of the cleavage, which only allows one-sided interpretations about the dynamics of polarization and boundary-drawing within the cleavage. This makes it difficult to completely separate the proposed theoretical explanation for the respondents' behavior from other potential explanations. Without directly comparing cosmopolitans to communitarians, or, more generally, to non-cosmopolitans, we cannot completely rule out that other groups would also respond positively to cosmopolitan lifestyle signals, for example because cosmopolitanism is associated with high social status. Additionally, the respondents' preferences for people with cosmopolitan lifestyle characteristics might not necessarily be evidence of cleavage-based distinction practices but a sign of mere homophily. Future research should thus focus on addressing these shortcomings of our study.

Despite these shortcomings, we hope to contribute to research on the cleavage between cosmopolitans and communitarians theoretically and empirically. The theoretical contribution of the study is the incorporation of

elements from lifestyle research into cleavage theory. We argue that cleavage theory can greatly benefit from these elements, as analyzing lifestyle habits of and distinction practices between cleavage groups address several commonly debated issues in cleavage theory: the salience of the cleavage groups, the formation of coherent collective identities and social practices, and the manifestation of the antagonism between cleavage groups outside of the political sphere, for example in the form of social polarization and segmentation. The empirical contribution of this study is an explorative analysis of how lifestyles play a role within the globalization cleavage, showing in-group favoritism based on lifestyle signals by the cosmopolitans.

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## Autor:innenvorstellung

### Rasmus Ollroge

Freie Universität Berlin  
Contestations of the Liberal Script – Cluster of Excellence  
Edwin-Redslob-Straße 29  
14195 Berlin  
r.ollroge@fu-berlin.de

**Rasmus Ollroge**, geb. 1992 in Hamburg, Deutschland. Studium der Politikwissenschaft in Göttingen und der Soziologie in Berlin. Seit 2020 Promotionsstudium an der Berlin Graduate School for Global and Transregional Studies (BGTS). Seit 2020 wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter im Exzellenzcluster “Contestations of the Liberal Script (SCRIPTS)” an der Freien Universität Berlin.  
Forschungsschwerpunkte: Globalisierung, politische Soziologie; insbesondere Cleavage Theorie und Einstellungsforschung, Lebensstile und Distinktionspraktiken, Surveyforschung; insbesondere Online Surveys und Surveyexperimente.

### Dr. Tim Sawert

Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität Mainz  
Institut für Soziologie  
Jakob-Welder-Weg 12  
55128 Mainz  
tim.sawert@uni-mainz.de

**Tim Sawert**, geb. 1986 in Kaiserlautern, Deutschland. Studium der Soziologie in Mannheim und Berlin. Promotion in Potsdam. Von 2013 – 2017 wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter und Lehrbeauftragter am Lehrstuhl für Empirische Sozialforschung an der Universität Potsdam. Von 2017 – 2021 wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter und Lehrbeauftragter am Lehrstuhl für Makrosoziologie an der Freien

Universität Berlin. Seit 2021 wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter am Arbeitsbereich Sozialstrukturanalyse an der Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität Mainz.

Forschungsschwerpunkte: Mechanismen der Reproduktion sozialer Ungleichheit, Lebensstile und soziale Mobilität, Sozialstrukturanalyse: insbesondere Konstruktion sozialer Grenzen, qualitative und interpretative Sozialforschung, quantitative und experimentelle Methoden der Kausalanalyse.

Wichtigste Publikationen:

Sawert, T. & A. Bachsleitner 2022: Within-Track Differentiation and Leisure Activities as Strategies of Distinction. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* [online first].

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