



We invite applications **from early-career researchers (PhD students and postdocs)** to join the workshop *“Processes of Cumulative (Dis)Advantage in the Study of Inequalities: Theories, Conceptual Models, and Analytical Methods”*, to be held in Mannheim, Germany, from **September 30 to October 1, 2025**.

We welcome:

- Early-career researchers (ECRs) currently working on cumulative advantage and disadvantage (CAD) who are seeking to refine their conceptual frameworks, analyses, and interpretations.
- ECRs interested in CAD who are looking to develop related research projects.

We particularly encourage applications from researchers **studying health trajectories, wealth accumulation, or educational and employment careers**, though we remain open to other topics as well.

Workshop theme

Cumulative advantage/disadvantage (CAD) theory describes the processes through which initial advantages or disadvantages amplify over time, reinforcing inequalities. The term was first introduced by Robert K. Merton in the context of scientific careers (the "Matthew effect"), but CAD processes have since been studied across various domains, including sociology, economics, public health, and others. These processes encompass diverse patterns (e.g., they may focus on differences across groups or individuals) and are driven by various mechanisms (e.g., financial mechanisms, reputational effects, homophily in social networks, differential risk exposure, or buffering effects). Therefore, defining, measuring, and analyzing CAD processes remains complex. This complexity is further compounded by the interdisciplinary use of the term and the limited collaboration across academic fields.

Aims and format

The two-day workshop will bring together **senior** and **early-career researchers** (ECRs) to deepen the understanding of how CAD is defined, measured, and modeled. Through keynote lectures and structured group discussions, participants will refine key concepts and methodological approaches, with opportunities to apply insights to their own work.

In addition to scholarly exchange, the workshop aims to foster collaboration among participants. Depending on interest, follow-up activities may include a second workshop at Tilburg University, a session at a conference (e.g., ESRA or SLLS), and a potential special issue (e.g., in *Social Science Research*).

Confirmed speakers:

- **Prof. Kenneth F. Ferraro** (Purdue University): opening lecture on Cumulative Inequality Theory.
- **Prof. Katja Möhring** (University of Bamberg): lecture on structural and contextual factors in CAD processes.
- **Prof. Philipp Lersch** (DIW Berlin and Humboldt University of Berlin): lecture on cross-domain cumulative advantage combining wealth and health trajectories.

Funding

The workshop is hosted by the University of Mannheim and the Chair of Social Stratification, in cooperation with Tilburg University and ENGAGE.EU, and funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Thanks to this funding, participation is **free of charge**. We also cover accommodation costs for **up to two nights** (pre-booked by organizers) and reimburse travel costs up to **€ 400 per participant**, in accordance with the regulations of the University of Mannheim and the State of Baden-Württemberg (2nd class train travel or economy class airfare).

Application

To apply, please submit a **single PDF** including:

1. **Academic CV** (including a list of publications).
2. **A brief statement** (approximately half a page) outlining how you hope to benefit from the workshop.
3. **A research paper or proposal**, depending on your current engagement with CAD:
 - For those **already working on CAD**: a paper **draft or an extended abstract** (up to 3 pages, plus references), including the research aims, data, methods, and any preliminary results.
 - For those **new to CAD**: a 400-word **description** of your research question and intended data/methods.

Submission deadline: May 26, 2025, at 23:59 (CET)

Submit applications to: malgorzata.mikucka@uni-mannheim.de