Tim Leffler

Munich Graduate School of Economics

Primary field: Applied Microeconomics
Secondary fields: Political Economy, Economics of Education
Research topics: Political Behavior, Inequality, Human Capital, Digital Skill, NLP, Multimodal Data

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REFERENCES

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EDUCATION

Expected 2027	**PhD in Economics**	LMU Munich
Sept.–Nov. 2026	**Research Visit**, Elliott Ash's AI & Economics Lab	ETH Zurich
June 2024	**Research Visit**, Nicola Lacetera	University of Toronto
March–May 2024	**Research Visit**, John List's experimental economics group	University of Chicago
2017–2020	**MSc Economics**	University of Bonn
2013–2017	**BSc Economics**	University of Bonn
2015–2016	**Study Abroad** (PROMOS Scholarship)	National Chengchi University, Taiwan

Funding: Jacobs Foundation Scholarship (Sept. 2020–Aug. 2021); CRC TRR 190 research visits (2024).

JOB MARKET PAPER

Facing the Far Right, or Looking Away? Video Evidence from Parliament latest version

Legislators do not only cast votes: they allocate public attention, and how much of it a far-right party receives is decided speech by speech. Confronting its claims may give it publicity; withholding attention may leave them uncontested. I study how legislators from established parties respond to Germany's far-right AfD. To capture these responses, I build a new corpus of more than 23,000 parliamentary speeches combining words, images, and sound from the recordings. I measure engagement through whether a legislator names the party and how much of a speech they spend turned toward its members, a form of attention observable only in the recordings. Committee seats cannot be divided, so the AfD's share of a legislator's committee colleagues differs across committees of different sizes. Across 9,376 speeches by 269 legislators, increasing that share by 3.2 percentage points—from the lowest to the highest exposure observed—reduces engagement by 0.41 standard deviations. Legislators name the AfD less often and spend a smaller share of each speech turned toward its members. The decline in naming is concentrated in negatively worded sentences. These findings show how sustained interaction with far-right legislators changes the public attention individual politicians give that party.

OTHER WORKING PAPERS

Digital Skills: Social Disparities and the Impact of Early Mentoring [PDF]

with Fabian Kosse and Arna Woemmel; *Revise and Resubmit at Research Policy*; CESifo Working Paper No. 11570

We investigate social disparities in digital skills, focusing on both actual proficiency levels and confidence in these skills. Drawing on a representative sample from Germany, we first demonstrate that both dimensions strongly predict labor market success. We then use this sample to identify gender and socioeconomic disparities in levels and confidence. Finally, using a long-run RCT panel framework with young adults, we confirm these disparities and provide causal evidence on the effects of enhancing the social environment in childhood. Assigning elementary school-aged children to a mentoring program persistently reduces socioeconomic gaps in confidence related to digital skills, but it does not affect the level of digital skills.

Accommodation of Right-Wing Populist Rhetoric: Evidence from Parliamentary Speeches in Germany [PDF]

with Emilio Esguerra, Felix Hagemeister, and Julian Heid; CRC TRR 190 Discussion Paper No. 435

We provide novel evidence on how right-wing (populist) rhetoric spreads. Using several thousand speeches from the German parliament, we show that exposure to politicians from the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) leads mainstream politicians to adopt a more distinctively right-wing populist language. We measure similarity to right-wing populist rhetoric via cosine similarity to both parliamentary speeches by the AfD and extremist speeches at far-right rallies, as well as using a populist dictionary method. To induce individual-level variation in exposure to AfD politicians, we exploit a quasi-exogenous allocation rule for committee members in the German parliament. Comparing a politician with the highest to one with the lowest relative AfD exposure increases the cosine similarity to right-wing populist speech by 0.1 of a standard deviation. Our results seem specific to right-wing populism and suggest strategic motives related to local electoral competition behind rhetorical changes among individual politicians.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Who Looks Up to Whom? Role Model Selection Among Teenagers

with Fabian Kosse

We study how adolescents choose public-figure role models and how news exposure and family background shape those choices.

PRESENTATIONS

2026	AI & Economics Lab (ETH Zurich), Verein für Socialpolitik Annual Conference (Innsbruck)
2024	John List's experimental economics group (University of Chicago)
2023	Economics Brownbag Seminar (invited, University of Würzburg), 5th Annual COMPTEXT Conference (Glasgow), Studi-BUCH Interdisciplinary Text-as-Data Workshop (Essen), NextGenerationEconomics Spring Workshop (Hohenheim/Mannheim), 12th CRC Rationality and Competition Retreat (Berlin)
2022	CRC Rationality and Competition Young Economist Workshop (Tutzing), HCEO-briq Summer School on Socioeconomic Inequality (poster, Bonn)

ACADEMIC SERVICE

2026	Ad hoc referee, *Management Science*
2023–2024	Organizer, Interdisciplinary Workshop on Text and Unstructured Data, LMU Munich (three sessions)

TEACHING AND SUPERVISION

Summer 2026	Data Science in Business and Economics (Undergraduate)	Tutorial
2024–present	Empirical and Experimental Behavioral Economics (Undergraduate)	Seminar
2024–present	Policy and Management Evaluation Methods (Graduate)	Tutorial
2023–2024	Research Projects in Empirical Economic Research (Undergraduate)	Seminar
2023–2024	Macroeconomics for non-econ Bachelors (GVWL2)	Tutorial
2020–2026	Supervision of 28 theses	

RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2024–present	**Research Associate**, Chair of Data Science in Business and Economics	University of Würzburg
2024–present	**Junior Researcher**	C-BEAM
2021–2024	**Research Affiliate**	CRC TRR 190 Rationality and Competition
Jan.–May 2024	**Research Assistant**	IZA Institute of Labor Economics
2020–2023	**Research Assistant**	briq Institute on Behavior and Inequality
2017–2020	**Student Research Assistant**	briq Institute on Behavior and Inequality

Languages: German (native), English (fluent), Mandarin Chinese (conversational)

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