

AIKO SCHMEISSER

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RESEARCH FIELDS

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| Primary | Labor Economics |
| Secondary | Political Economy, Behavioral Economics |

REFERENCES

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Marco Caliendo University of Potsdam caliendo@uni-potsdam.de | Sulin Sardoschau Humboldt University Berlin sulin.sardoschau@hu-berlin.de | Simon Jäger Massachusetts Institute of Technology sjaeger@mit.edu |
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EDUCATION

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| Berlin School of Economics & University of Potsdam Ph.D. in Economics | 2020 - 2025 |
| Harvard University Visiting research fellow at the Center for Labor and a Just Economy | Jan - May, 2024 |
| University of Göttingen M.Sc. in International Economics | 2018 - 2020 |
| University of Bayreuth B.Sc. in Economics, B.A. in International Economics and Development | 2014 - 2018 |

JOB MARKET PAPER

Do Unions Shape Political Ideologies at Work? (with Johannes Matzat), CESifo Working Paper No. 10301. [\[latest version\]](#)

Labor unions' greatest potential for political influence likely arises from their direct connection to millions of individuals at the workplace. There, they may change the ideological positions of both unionizing workers and their non-unionizing management. In this paper, we analyze the workplace-level impact of unionization on workers' and managers' political campaign contributions over the 1980-2016 period in the United States. To do so, we link establishment-level union election data with transaction-level campaign contributions to federal and local candidates. In a difference-in-differences design that we validate with regression discontinuity tests and a novel instrumental variables approach, we find that unionization leads to a leftward shift of campaign contributions. Unionization increases the support for Democrats relative to Republicans not only among workers but also among managers, which speaks against an increase in political cleavages between the two groups. We provide evidence that our results are not driven by compositional changes of the workforce and are weaker in states with Right-to-Work laws where unions can invest fewer resources in political activities.

WORKING PAPERS

Racial Peer Effects at Work: Evidence from Worker Deaths in Brazil (with Katharina Fietz). World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 10899. [\[link\]](#)

This paper studies the impact of working with same-race coworkers on individuals' retention at firms. Using administrative employer-employee data from Brazil, the paper exploits unexpected deaths of workers from different racial groups as exogenous shocks to peer group composition. The findings show that a decrease in the non-white share of coworkers reduces the retention of non-white workers but does not affect the retention of white workers. The effects are driven by non-whites quitting and moving to new jobs with more peers of the same race than in their old jobs. The findings highlight how peer dynamics can contribute to racial segregation across workplaces.

The Accuracy of Job Seekers' Wage Expectations (with Marco Caliendo, Robert Mahlstedt, and Sophie Wagner), IZA Discussion Paper No. 17198. [\[link\]](#)

We study the accuracy of job seekers' wage expectations by comparing subjective beliefs to objective benchmarks using linked administrative and survey data. Our findings show that especially job seekers with low objective earnings potential and those predicted to face a penalty compared to their pre-unemployment wage display overly optimistic wage expectations. Moreover, wage optimism is amplified by increased job search incentives and job seekers with overoptimistic wage expectations tend to overestimate their reemployment chances. We discuss the labor market implications of wage optimism, as well as the role of information frictions and motivated beliefs as sources of overoptimism.

Job Loss and Political Entry (with Laura Barros), arXiv:2410.23705. [\[link\]](#)

The supply of politicians affects the quality of democratic institutions. Yet, little is known about how economic trade-offs motivate individuals to enter political life. This paper investigates how experiencing a job loss affects individuals' decision to join politics and studies the consequences of layoffs for the selection of politicians. Using administrative data on the universe of formal employees, party members, and local political candidates in Brazil, and relying on mass layoffs for causal identification, we show that job loss increases the probability of joining a political party and running for local office. Moreover, we document that layoff-induced candidates are positively selected in various competence measures, suggesting that economic shocks may improve the quality of politicians. Heterogeneity analyses reveal a more pronounced increase in candidacies for laid-off individuals with higher financial incentives from office holding and larger predicted income losses. In addition, we find that being eligible for unemployment benefits after job loss also increases party memberships and candidacies. These results are consistent with the reduction in private-sector opportunity costs and the increased time resources explaining the rise in political entry.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Endogenous Racial Identities in the Labor Market (with Pedro C. Sant'Anna and Sulin Sardoschau)

The Value of Peers: Coworker Preferences in a Job Choice Experiment

PUBLICATIONS (PRE-PHD)

A Tale of (Almost) 1001 Coefficients: Deep and Heterogeneous Effects of the EU-Turkey Customs Union (with Mario Larch and Joschka Wanner), 2021, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 59(2), 242-260. [\[link\]](#)

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Conference and Seminar Presentations

Verein für Socialpolitik (Berlin), IZA Summer School (Bonn), Society of Labor Economists (Portland), 2024
European Economic Association (Rotterdam), Economics PhD Conference (Warwick), RIDGE / LACEA
Workshops on Labor & Political Economy (Santiago de Chile), European Society for Population Eco-
nomics (Rotterdam), Midwest Political Science Association (Chicago), Political Economy Workshop (Har-
vard), Rockwool Foundation Graduate Seminar (Berlin), BSoE Applied Micro & Behavioral Economics
Workshop (Berlin), BeNA Winter Workshop (Berlin), Applied Young Economist Webinar (online)

European Association of Labor Economics (Prague), European Economic Association (Barcelona), Society 2023
for Institutional & Organizational Economics (Frankfurt), European Society for Population Economics
(Belgrade), IAAEU Colloquium on Economics (Trier), Research Seminar in Economics (Potsdam)

ifo Workshop on Political Economy (Dresden), Verein für Socialpolitik (Basel), European Association of 2022
Labor Economics (Padua), European Society for Population Economics (Calabria), FU Research Seminar
for Applied Micro (Berlin), BeNA Winter Workshop (Berlin), BSoE Summer Workshop (Berlin)

European Association of Labor Economics (online), European Society for Population Economics (online) 2021

Services to the Profession

Referee for *Empirical Economics*, *Labour Economics*, *Journal of Labor Market Research*

Board member and treasurer of the Berlin Network of Labor Market Research (BeNA) [\[link\]](#) 2024 -

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

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| Joachim Herz Add-on Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Economics and Interdisciplinary Business Administration, 12,500 Euro | 2023 - 2025 |
| DAAD Research Stay Grant for Doctoral Students, 4,600 Euro | 2024 |
| DAAD Conference Travel Grant, 1,000 Euro | 2024 |
| Wicksell Prize of the European Public Choice Society, 2nd place for the research paper "Do Unions Shape Political Ideologies at Work?" | 2023 |
| Student scholarship Konrad Adenauer Foundation | 2015 - 2018 |

TEACHING

University of Potsdam

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| Policy Evaluation (practical session, graduate level) | Summer 2023 |
| Advanced Microeconometrics (practical session, graduate level) | Winter 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 |
| Advanced Methods and Applications in Policy Evaluation (seminar, graduate level) | Winter 2022/23 |
| Research Idea Development Seminar (seminar, graduate level) | Winter 2021/22, 2023/24 |
| Methods in Policy Evaluation (seminar, undergraduate level) | Summer 2022, 2023, 2024 |
| Statistics (practical session, undergraduate level) | Summer 2022 |
| Supervision of final theses (7× undergraduate and 3× graduate level) | Winter 2021/22 - Summer 2024 |

University of Bayreuth

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| Macroeconomics I (practical session, undergraduate level) | Summer 2016, 2017 |
| Microeconomics I (practical session, undergraduate level) | Winter 2015/16 |

WORK EXPERIENCE

University of Potsdam

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| Research Assistant at Chair of Empirical Economics | 2021 - |
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University of Göttingen

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| Student Research Assistant at the Research Training Group Globalization and Development | 2018 - 2020 |
| Fieldwork Assistant for RCT in Cambodia | |

German Council of Economic Experts

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| Internship at Labor Market Team of Scientific Staff | 2018 |
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University of Bayreuth

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| Student Research Assistant at Chair of Development Economics | 2017 - 2018 |
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German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy

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| Internship at Department for Trade Policy with North America | 2017 |
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