

# Dr. Sebastian Stier

GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences  
Department Computational Social Science  
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Google Scholar: [Profile](#)

## Areas of specialization

Computational Social Science • Political Sociology • Political Communication • Digital Society •  
Comparative Research • Social Science Research Methods

## Academic career

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 2/2022-present | <i>Interim Scientific Director</i> (co-lead with Prof. Claudia Wagner)<br>GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Department Computational Social Science, Cologne |
| 1/2016-present | <i>Senior Researcher</i> (permanent position)<br>GESIS  |
| 2/2021-11/2021 | <i>Acting Team Leader</i>   |
| 6/2017-11/2017 | GESIS, Team Social Analytics & Services   |
| 4/2018-3/2019  | <i>Substitute Professor (Professurvertretung)</i><br>University of Duisburg-Essen, Institute of Political Science   |
| 4/2017-9/2017  | <i>Lecturer</i><br>Institute of Political Science, Heidelberg University (IPW HD)   |
| 8/2017         | <i>Visiting Fellow</i><br>Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS) Bochum  |
| 2/2012-12/2015 | <i>Doctoral Student</i><br>Graduate School “Policy performance of autocratic and democratic regimes”, IPW HD  |

## Education

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 2021-present  | HABILITATION in Political Science (Fachmentorat Prof. Dr. Yannis Theocharis, Prof. Dr. Achim Goerres, Prof. Dr. Andreas Jungherr), TUM School of Governance, Technical University of Munich |
| 2/2012-3/2016 | PHD in Political Science, Heidelberg University ( <i>summa cum laude</i> )  |
| 9/2005-7/2011 | M.A. (MAGISTER) in Political Science, History and Law, Heidelberg University ( <i>summa cum laude</i> )   |

## Publications

### JOURNAL ARTICLES

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| in press | Maier, Jürgen, Sebastian Stier, and Corinna Oschatz. “Are candidates rational when it comes to negative campaigning? Empirical evidence from three German candidate surveys”. <i>Party Politics</i> . |
|----------|---|

- in press Schürmann, Lennart, and Sebastian Stier. "Who represents the constituency? Online political communication by members of parliament in the German mixed-member electoral system". *Legislative Studies Quarterly*.
- in press Schoch, David, Franziska B. Keller, Sebastian Stier, and JungHwan Yang. "Coordination patterns reveal online political astroturfing across the world". *Scientific Reports*.
- 2021 Stier, Sebastian, Frank Mangold, Michael Scharkow, and Johannes Breuer. "Post post-broadcast democracy? News exposure in the age of online intermediaries". *American Political Science Review*.
- 2021 Richter, Simon, and Sebastian Stier. "Learning about the unknown Spitzenkandidaten: The role of media exposure during the 2019 European Parliament elections". *European Union Politics*.
- 2021 Haim, Mario, Johannes Breuer, and Sebastian Stier. "Do news actually 'find me'? Using digital behavioral data to study the news-finds-me phenomenon". *Social Media + Society*.
- 2021 Oschatz, Corinna, Sebastian Stier, and Jürgen Maier. "Twitter in the News: An analysis of embedded tweets in political news coverage". *Digital Journalism*.
- 2021 Maier, Michaela, Carlos Jalali, Jürgen Maier, Alessandro Nai, and Sebastian Stier. "When do parties put Europe in the center? Evidence from the 2019 European Parliamentary election campaign". *Politics*.
- 2021 Mangold, Frank, Sebastian Stier, Michael Scharkow, and Johannes Breuer. "The Overstated Generational Gap in Online News Use? A Consolidated Infrastructural Perspective". *New Media & Society*.
- 2021 Stier, Sebastian, Caterina Froio, and Wolf J. Schünemann. "Campaigning in the transnational arena: An analysis of candidates' transnational linkages on Twitter during the 2019 European Parliament elections". *West European Politics* 44 (7), 1455-1481.
- 2021 Yan, Pu, Ralph Schroeder, and Sebastian Stier. "Is there a link between climate change scepticism and populism? An analysis of web tracking and survey data from Europe and the US". *Information, Communication & Society*.
- 2020 Stier, Sebastian, Nora Kirkizh, Caterina Froio, and Ralph Schroeder. "Populist attitudes and selective exposure to online news – A cross-country analysis combining web tracking and surveys". *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 25 (3): 426-446.
- 2020 Stier, Sebastian, Johannes Breuer, Pascal Siegers, and Kjerstin Thorson. "Integrating Survey Data and Digital Trace Data: Key issues in developing an emerging field". *Social Science Computer Review* 38 (5): 503-516.
- 2020 Scharkow, Michael, Frank Mangold, Sebastian Stier, and Johannes Breuer. "How social network sites and other online intermediaries increase exposure to news". *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS)*. 117 (6): 2761-2763.
- 2020 Keller, Franziska B., David Schoch, Sebastian Stier, and JungHwan Yang. "Political Astroturfing on Twitter: How to Coordinate a Disinformation Campaign". *Political Communication* 37 (2): 256-280.
- 2019 Jungherr, Andreas, Ralph Schroeder, and Sebastian Stier. "Digital Media and the Surge of Political Challengers: Explaining the Political Success of Outsiders in the US, Germany and China". *Social Media + Society* 5 (3).
- 2019 Rau, Jan Philipp, and Sebastian Stier. "Die Echokammer-Hypothese: Fragmentierung der Öffentlichkeit und politische Polarisierung durch digitale Medien? (The Echo Chamber hypothesis: Do digital media lead to a fragmentation of the public sphere and to political polarization?)". *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 13 (3): 399-417.

- 2018 Stier, Sebastian, Wolf J. Schünemann, and Stefan Steiger. “Of Activists and Gatekeepers: Temporal and Structural Properties of Policy Networks on Twitter”. *New Media & Society* 20 (5): 1910–1930.
- 2018 Stier, Sebastian, Arnim Bleier, Haiko Lietz, and Markus Strohmaier. “Election Campaigning on Social Media: Politicians, Audiences and the Mediation of Political Communication on Facebook and Twitter”. *Political Communication* 35 (1): 50–74.  
Reprinted in *Studying Politics Across Media*, edited by Leticia Bode, and Emily K. Vraga. London: Routledge (2019).
- 2017 Stier, Sebastian, Lisa Posch, Arnim Bleier, and Markus Strohmaier. “When populists become popular: Comparing Facebook use by the right-wing movement Pegida and German political parties”. *Information, Communication & Society* 20 (9): 1365–1388.
- 2017 Stier, Sebastian. “Internet Diffusion and Regime Type: Temporal Patterns in Technology Adoption”. *Telecommunications Policy* 41 (1): 25–34.
- 2016 Schünemann, Wolf J., Stefan Steiger, and Sebastian Stier. “Transnationalisierung politischer Öffentlichkeit über Soziale Medien – ein Politikfeldvergleich” (Is There a Transnationalization of Public Spheres? A Comparison of Two Global Political Issues). *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* (Suppl) 10: 233–257.
- 2015 Schünemann, Wolf J., Stefan Steiger, and Sebastian Stier. “The Net Neutrality Debate on Twitter”. *Internet Policy Review* 4 (4).
- 2015 Stier, Sebastian. “Political Determinants of E-Government Performance Revisited: Comparing Democracies and Autocracies”. *Government Information Quarterly* 32 (3), 132–148.
- 2015 Stier, Sebastian. “Democracy, Autocracy, and the News: The Impact of Regime Type on Media Freedom”. *Democratization* 22 (7), 1273–1295.

#### BOOKS

- under contract Stier, Sebastian, Caterina Froio, and Ralph Schroeder. “What Do “the People” Want? Digital Media and Populism in Europe and the U.S.” *Oxford: Oxford University Press*.
- 2017 Stier, Sebastian. “Internet und Regimtyp – Netzpolitik und politische Online-Kommunikation in Autokratien und Demokratien” (Internet and Regime Type – Internet Policy and Online Political Communication in Autocracies and Democracies). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.  
Reviewed in *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*.
- 2012 Stier, Sebastian. “Die Bedeutung des Internets als Medium der politischen Kommunikation in Deutschland und den USA – eine vergleichende Fallstudie” (The Impact of the Internet on Political Communication – Germany and the U.S. in Comparison). Münster: Lit Verlag.

#### EDITORSHIP

- 2019 Stier, Sebastian, Johannes Breuer, Pascal Siegers, and Kjerstin Thorson. “Integrating Survey Data and Digital Trace Data”. Special Issue in *Social Science Computer Review*.

#### ARTICLES IN REFEREED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

- 2017 Keller, Franziska B., David Schoch, Sebastian Stier, and Junhwang Yang. “How to Manipulate Social Media: Analyzing Political Astroturfing Using Ground Truth Data from South Korea”. In *Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, 564–567.

- 2016 Stier, Sebastian. “[Partisan Framing of Political Debates on Twitter](#)”. In *Proceedings of the 8th ACM Conference on Web Science*, 365–366.
- 2016 Stier, Sebastian. “[Studying the Role of Elites in U.S. Political Twitter Debates](#)”. In *Proceedings of the 6th Microposts Workshop @WWW 2016*, 43–45.

#### ARTICLES IN EDITED VOLUMES

- 2021 Stier, Sebastian, Jürgen Maier, and Corinna Oschatz. “[Die Nutzung sozialer Medien durch Kandidaten im Bundestagswahlkampf 2017](#)”. In *Wahlen und Wähler – Analysen aus Anlass der Bundestagswahl 2017*, edited by Harald Schoen, and Bernhard Weßels, 415–432.
- 2019 Stier, Sebastian, and Andreas Jungherr. “[Digitale Verhaltensdaten und Computational Social Science in der politischen Kommunikationsforschung](#)”. In *Politik in der digitalen Gesellschaft*, edited by Jeanette Hofmann, Norbert Kersting, Claudia Ritzi and Wolf Schünemann, 309–326. Bielefeld: transcript.
- 2019 Stier, Sebastian. “[Internetfreiheit in Europa](#)” ([Internet Freedom in Europe](#)). In *E-Government und Netzpolitik im europäischen Vergleich*, edited by Wolf J. Schünemann, and Marianne Kneuer, 301–320. Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- 2019 Stegmeier, Jörn, Wolf J. Schünemann, Marcus Müller, Maria Becker, Stefan Steiger, and Sebastian Stier. “[Multi-Method Discourse Analysis of Twitter Communication](#)”. In *Quantifying Approaches to Discourse for Social Scientists*, edited by Ronny Scholz, 285–314. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- 2017 Stier, Sebastian. “[Political Determinants of Media Freedom](#)”. In *Routledge Companion to Media and Human Rights*, edited by Howard Tumber, and Silvio Waisbord, 149–157. London: Routledge.
- 2015 Stier, Sebastian. “[Strukturbedingungen im Online-Wahlkampf: USA und Deutschland im Vergleich](#)” (Structural Conditions in Online Campaigns: Comparing the U.S. and Germany). In *Die US-Präsidentschaftswahl 2012, Analysen der Politik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft*, edited by Christoph Bieber, and Klaus Kamps, 363–382. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

#### DATASETS AND REPORTS

- 2021 Sältzer, Marius, Sebastian Stier, Joscha Bäuerle, Manuela Blumenberg, Valeriya Mechkova, Daniel Pemstein, Brigitte Seim, and Steven Wilson. “[Twitter accounts of candidates in the German federal election 2021](#)”. *GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA7721 Data file version 2.0.0*.
- 2020 Stier, Sebastian, Sebastian A. Popa, and Daniela Braun. “[Political Campaigning on Twitter During the 2019 European Parliament Election Campaign](#)”. *GESIS Datorium*.
- 2019 Mendez, Carlos, Vasiliki Triga, John Bachtler, Costas Djouvas, Fernando Mendez, and Sebastian Stier. “[The Visibility and Communication of Cohesion Policy in Online Media](#)”. *Report for the European Parliament’s Committee on Regional Development*.
- 2019 Keller, Franziska B., David Schoch, Sebastian Stier, and JungHwan Yang. “[It’s not easy to spot disinformation on Twitter. Here’s what we learned from 8 political ‘astroturfing’ campaigns](#)”. *Washington Post Monkey Cage Blog*.
- 2018 Stier, Sebastian, Arnim Bleier, Malte Bonart, Fabian Mörsheim, Mahdi Bohlouli, Margarita Nizhegorodov, Lisa Posch, Jürgen Maier, Tobias Rothmund and Steffen Staab. “[Systematically Monitoring Social Media: The Case of the German Federal Election 2017](#)”. *GESIS Papers 2018/04*.
- 2018 Stier, Sebastian, Arnim Bleier, Malte Bonart, Fabian Mörsheim, Mahdi Bohlouli, Margarita Nizhegorodov, Lisa Posch, Jürgen Maier, Tobias Rothmund and Steffen Staab. “[Social Media Monitoring](#)”.

for the German Federal Election 2017". *GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA6926 Data file.*  
Stier, Sebastian. "Elite Actors in the U.S. Political Twittersphere". *GESIS Datorium.*

## Grants

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 2021      | “Political polarization and individualized online information environments: A longitudinal tracking study”. Funded by the Leibniz Association. With Uwe Hasebrink, Lisa Merten (HBI Hamburg), Juhi Kulshrestha (University of Konstanz), Cornelius Puschmann (U Bremen), Katrin Weller (GESIS). (Total volume <b>988,682€</b> , 264,600€ awarded for GESIS’ project part)  |
| 2021      | “News diets & citizenship: A study combining web tracking data and surveys”. Funded by Facebook Foundational Integrity & Impact. With Juhi Kulshrestha (University of Konstanz), Denis Bonnay (Université Paris Ouest) and Marcos Oliveira (University of Exeter). (Total volume <b>50,000\$</b> )   |
| 2021      | “Tracking the effects of negative political communication during election campaigns in on- and offline communication environments”. Funded by the DFG. With Michaela Maier (University Koblenz-Landau). (Total volume <b>773,367€</b> , 265,520€ awarded for my project part)  |
| 2020      | “Negative Campaigning in deutschen Wahlkämpfen: Messung, Dynamik und Determinanten”. Project funded by the DFG. With Jürgen Maier and Corinna Oschatz (University Koblenz-Landau). (Total volume <b>637,603€</b> , 325,995€ awarded for my project part)   |
| 2020      | Travel grant by DAAD-Hong Kong funding line. Project “Comparing Hidden Propaganda Campaigns”. With Franziska B. Keller (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology). ( <b>10,203€</b> )  |
| 2019      | Social Science One grant on “SHARENEWS: Predicting the shareworthiness of ‘real’ and ‘fake’ news in Europe”. With Damian Trilling, Claes de Vreese, Judith Möller (University of Amsterdam), Cristian Vaccari (Loughborough University), Cornelius Puschman (Bredow Institute), Juhi Kulshrestha (University of Konstanz) and Agnieszka Stępińska (Adam Mickiewicz University). (Total volume <b>50,000\$</b> , 6,000\$ for our project part and access to original <b>Facebook data</b> ) |
| 2018      | “What Do ‘the People’ Want? Analysing Online Populist Challenges to Europe”, Project funded by the VolkswagenStiftung (7 of 138 applications accepted). Main applicant, with Ralph Schroeder (University of Oxford) and Caterina Froio (Sciences Po, Paris). (Total volume <b>705,700€</b> , 349,200€ awarded for my project part)   |
| 2018      | Expert symposium on “Integrating and Analyzing Data From Surveys and Social Media” at CAIS. With Johannes Breuer, Pascal Siegers ( <b>15,000€</b> )  |
| 2017      | Project on “Monitoring Topic Salience in Social Media”. GESIS project funding (competitive). With Fabian Flöck, Arnim Bleier ( <b>54,000€</b> )  |
| 2017      | Project on “Integrating Survey Data and Digital Behavioral Data”. GESIS project funding (competitive). With Johannes Breuer, Tobias Gummer, Pascal Siegers ( <b>45,000€</b> )  |
| 2017      | Project on “Monitoring Social Media and Mass Media during the ALLBUS”. GESIS project funding (competitive). With Michael Blohm, Oshrat Hochmann ( <b>15,500€</b> )   |
| 2012-2015 | PhD Scholarship by Landesgraduiertenförderung Baden-Württemberg ( <b>41,070€</b> )   |

## Awards and list positions

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 2020 | Number 2 on list for Junior Professorship “Political Communication” at University of Konstanz   |
| 2019 | ICA Computational Methods Best Paper Award (with JungHwan Yang, Franziska Keller, David Schoch) |
| 2016 | Number 2 on list for Junior Professorship “Internet and Politics” at University of Hildesheim   |

## Conference organization

- 2018 Expert symposium on “[Integrating and Analyzing Data From Surveys and Social Media](#)” at CAIS (main organizer)
- 2014/  
2015 Lecture series “[Who Governs the Internet?](#)” in winter semester 2014/15 at Heidelberg University (co organizer)

## Conference participation

- 2022 APSA Annual Meeting (P\*), GOR Conference (P\*), ICA (P\*+P\*+P\*), Sektion Methoden DGS (P\*+P\*)
- 2021 DVPW Kongress (P), ECPR (P+P+P\*+P\*), GOR Conference (P), IC2S2 (P\*), ICA (P\*), PolMeth (P\*), Volkswagen Foundation Herrenhäuser Symposium (P)
- 2020 ACES Workshop on EP Elections 2019 Amsterdam (P), ECPR, EPSA (cancelled), IB Tagung (P), ICA (P\*)
- 2019 APSA CSS Preconference (P\*), DVPW and DGpuK PolKomm Conference (P+C), DVPW Section Comparative Politics Conference (P+C), ECPR General Conference (P+P+C+D), EPSA Conference (P\*), ESRA Conference (P\*), GOR Conference (P+P\*+C), Harvard Disinformation Workshop (P\*), ICA Annual Conference (P\*), MPSA Annual Conference (P\*), SSCR Workshop “Digital Threats to Democracy” (P\*)
- 2018 Communication, Populism and Electoral Choice Conference (P), DGPs (P\*), DVPW Kongress (C), ECPR General Conference (P+P+D), ESRA BigSurv Conference (P\*), General Online Research Conference (P+C), ICA Annual Conference (P\*), MPSA Annual Conference (P\*)
- 2017 APSA Annual Meeting (P\*), DVPW Section Comparative Politics Conference (P+D), IC2S2 (P+C), DVPW Working Group Internet and Politics Conference (P), ICWSM (P\*), IPSA Hannover Conference (P+D), MPSA Annual Conference (P\*), SVPW Congress (P\*), Workshop on “ICT in Authoritarian Regimes” at University St. Gallen (P+D) APSA Annual Meeting (P+P\*+C), APSA Political Communication Preconference (P), DVPW Working Group Internet and Politics Conference (P+C), International CSS Workshop Volkswagen Foundation, ECPR General Conference (P), IPSA World Congress (P+C+D), Microposts Workshop @ WWW (P), Web Science Conference (P)
- 2016 ADDA Conference (P\*), BISA Annual Conference (P), DiscourseNet Congress (P\*), ECPR General Conference (P\*)
- 2015 ADDA Conference (P\*), BISA Annual Conference (P), DiscourseNet Congress (P\*), ECPR General Conference (P\*)
- 2014 Workshop Internet Governance at Syracuse University School of Information Studies, ECPR General Conference (P)
- 2013 MPSA Annual Conference (P), 3-Ländertagung (P)
- P: Presentation; C: Panel chair; D: Discussant; \*: Presented by coauthor

## Invited talks

- 2022 Lecture Series on “Empirical Social Science Methods” at the University of Kassel
- 2021 Public Hearing Professorship “Digital Methods of Political Science” at the University of Marburg
- 2020 Guest Talk at the University of Bern
- 2020 Guest Talk at the University of Manchester
- 2019 Public Hearing Tenure Track Professorship “Political Communication” at the University of Konstanz



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| 2018 | Kiel Institute for the World Economy  |
| 2018 | Lecture Series “Digital Total” at Ruhr University Bochum and CAIS   |
| 2018 | Hans-Bredow-Institut, Hamburg   |
| 2017 | Lecture Series “Digitale Lebenswelten” at University of Hildesheim  |
| 2017 | Participation in panel discussion “Web of Justice” at Ilmenau University of Technology                    |
| 2016 | Lecture “Web Science” at University of Koblenz-Landau   |
| 2016 | Public Hearing Junior Professorship “Internet and Politics” at University of Hildesheim                   |
| 2016 | “Praxis-Forum Open Data” at Heidelberg University   |
| 2015 | Workshop “Studying the Use of Twitter in Political Communication” at GESIS CSS Wintersymposium in Cologne |

## Other professional activities

### MEMBERSHIP IN EDITORIAL BOARD

[Political Communication](#) (2020-present)

### MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- DVPW: Section “Comparative Politics”, Section “Political Communication”, Working Group “Politics and Internet”
- German Society for Electoral Studies (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wahlforschung)
- ECPR Standing Groups on “Internet and Politics”, “Comparative Political Institutions”, “Extremism and Democracy”, “Political Communication”
- German Society for Online Research (DGOF)

### REFeree

#### [Publons profile](#)

*American Political Science Review, Analyse & Kritik, Communication Methods and Measures, Contemporary Politics, Democratization, Digital Journalism, Electoral Studies, European Journal of Political Research, European Policy Analysis, European Union Politics, Frontiers in Political Science, German Politics, Government and Opposition, Government Information Quarterly, IC2S2, ICA, ICWSM, Information, Communication & Society, International Journal of Communication, International Journal of Press/Politics, International Political Science Review, Journal of Communication, Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Journal of European Public Policy, Journal of Information Technology & Politics, Journal of Politics, Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A, Legislative Studies Quarterly, New Media & Society, Party Politics, PLOS ONE, Policy & Internet, Political Behavior, Political Communication, Political Psychology, Political Research Exchange, Political Research Quarterly, Public Opinion Quarterly, Schweizerischer Nationalfonds (SNF), Sustainability, Swiss Political Science Review, The International Journal of Press/Politics, Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft, Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft*



## Teaching

I have taught 9 seminars and lectures in comparative politics, political communication, political methodology and introductory courses.

## Media coverage and appearances

Bayern 2 Radio, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Deutschlandfunk, FAZ, Handelsblatt, Heise online, MDR Aktuell Radio, Nordwest Zeitung, RAI Südtirol, Süddeutsche Zeitung, SWR Aktuell, Tagesspiegel, WDR Fernsehen

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