

# THOMAS NEUBER

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## EDUCATION AND AFFILIATIONS

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### **Ph.D. candidate in economics**

*October 2014 – present*

Institute for Applied Microeconomics and Bonn Graduate School of Economics, University of Bonn, Germany. Supervisors: Thomas Dohmen (primary), Felipe Valencia Caicedo, and Armin Falk

### **Research assistant**

*June 2017 – present*

briq – Institute on Behavior & Inequality, Bonn, Germany

### **Research fellow**

*January 2018 – present*

Collaborative Research Center (CRC) TR 224

### **Master in economics (M.Sc.)**

*October 2014 – September 2018*

University of Bonn, Germany

### **Bachelor in economics (B.Sc.)**

*April 2011 – August 2014*

LMU Munich, Germany

### **Abroad semester**

*September 2013 – March 2014*

University of Washington, Seattle, WA

## RESEARCH

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### **Diffusion of Being Pivotal and Immoral Outcomes**

(with Armin Falk and Nora Szech)

*Review of Economic Studies (accepted)*

We study how the diffusion of being pivotal affects immoral outcomes. In our main experiment, subjects decide about agreeing to kill mice and receiving money versus objecting to the killing and foregoing the monetary amount. In a baseline condition, subjects decide individually about the life of one mouse. In the main treatment, subjects are organized into groups of eight and decide simultaneously. Eight mice are killed if at least one subject opts for killing. The fraction of subjects agreeing to kill is significantly higher in the main condition compared with the baseline condition. In a second experiment, we run the same baseline and main conditions but use a charity context and additionally study sequential decision-making. We replicate our finding from the mouse paradigm. We further show that the observed effects increase with experience, i.e., when we repeat the experiment for a second time. For both experiments, we elicit beliefs about being pivotal, which we validate in a treatment with non-involved observers. We show that beliefs are a main driver of our results.

### **Motivated by Others' Preferences? An Experiment on Imperfect Empathy**

(with Jana Hofmeier)

*CRC TR 224 Discussion Paper No. 096*

People care about others. But how do they assess the utility of others when making other-regarding decisions? Do they apply their own preferences or do they adopt the preferences of the other person? We study this question in a laboratory experiment where subjects in the role of senders can pay money to avoid harm arising to receivers. In a first step, we elicit all subjects' willingness to pay (WTP) for not having to eat food items containing dried insects. We then show senders the WTPs of receivers and repeat the elicitation procedure, but now with receivers having to eat the food items and senders stating their WTPs to spare the receivers from having to eat them. We find that not only receivers' preferences matter for decisions but also senders' own preferences, a phenomenon for which we use the term imperfect empathy. In motivating prosocial transfers, senders' and

receivers' WTPs act as complements by reinforcing each other. Conversely, pairs of sender and receiver who are dissimilar generate lower transfers than others. Since transfers usually benefit receivers more than they cost senders, we also find that dissimilarity within pairs reduces welfare. Our results complement the extensive literature on prosocial preferences, which so far abstracts from heterogeneous valuations. The implications might be far-reaching. For example, systematic differences in consumption preferences between net payers and recipients could undermine public support for public welfare systems.

**Improving Survey Evidence: Limited Self-knowledge and Statistical Inference**  
(with Armin Falk and Philipp Strack)

*Paper coming soon.*

**State Institutions and the Evolution of Patience**  
(with Thomas Dohmen)

*Manuscript available upon request.*

## PRESENTATIONS AND SUMMER SCHOOLS

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**Annual Congress of the Verein für Socialpolitik** *September 2019*  
Presented project: 'Motivated by Others' Preferences? An Experiment on Imperfect Empathy'

**Conference of the Society for Economic Measurement** *August 2019*  
Presented project: 'Improving Survey Evidence: Limited Self-knowledge and Statistical Inference'

**Annual Congress of the European Economic Association** *May 2019*  
Presented project: 'Motivated by Others' Preferences? An Experiment on Imperfect Empathy'

**Spring School in Behavioral Economics** *March 2018*  
San Diego, CA

**The Choice Lab PhD Workshop in Behavioral and Experimental Economics** *August 2017*  
Presented project: 'State Institutions and the Evolution of Patience'

**briq Summer School in Behavioral Economics** *July 2017*  
briq – Institute on Behavior & Inequality

## GRANTS AND HONORS

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**Research grant by the CRC TR 224** *May 2018*  
Funding of €4.000 for the project 'Motivated by Others' Preferences? An Experiment on Imperfect Empathy' (within subproject A1)

**Doctoral scholarship** *October 2014 – September 2018*  
Bonn Graduate School of Economics

**Munich Honors Program in Economics** *April 2012 – August 2014*  
LMU Munich

**PROSA<sup>LMU</sup> scholarship** *September 2013 – March 2014*  
German Academic Exchange Service

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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**Seminar on scientific work methods (undergraduate)** *Winter term 2019/20*  
Department of Economics, University of Bonn

**Seminar on scientific work methods (undergraduate)** *Summer term 2019*  
Department of Economics, University of Bonn

**Tutor for statistics (undergraduate)**

Department of Economics, University of Bonn

*Winter term 2016/17***Tutor for macroeconomics (undergraduate)**

Department of Economics, LMU Munich

*Summer term 2012***OTHER**

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**Computer skills**L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, Mathematica, Python, R, Stata**Languages**

German (native), English (fluent; IELTS Academic: 8.0)