

Introducing

Hans Lueders

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Hans Lueders is currently a Postdoctoral Scholar at Stanford's Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law. His research seeks to understand the causes and consequences of political inequality. In addition, he is currently working on a book project linking political inequality in advanced democratic societies to domestic migration. In this piece, Hans tells us about his work that generated several policy debates in the U.S., his current book project's main message, and what he enjoys the most about being a researcher.

Hi Hans! Your work on unauthorized migration in the United States, which seeks to understand how unauthorized immigrants navigate life while being politically disenfranchised, contributed to several policy debates in the US and was cited by numerous national and local newspapers. Why do you think the work received the policy recognition it did?

Immigration is probably one of the most controversial topics in US politics today. One key question is how to respond to the about 11 million immigrants who entered the country illegally or live without a valid visa today. The two main parties in the United States advocate for fundamentally different approaches to these unauthorized immigrants. As a result, local and state governments have implemented very different immigration policies. Some states seek to integrate unauthorized immigrants into economic and social life, while others seek to exclude them. However, while these two divergent approaches exist, little is known about the consequences these policies have on immigrants' livelihoods



My work seeks to generate such evidence. I believe that my work receives attention precisely because we know little about how unauthorized immigrants navigate life and because this issue is so salient in everyday American politics.

You are currently working on a book project called: *When the Voice Exits: The Political Consequences of Domestic Migration*. Could you briefly tell us about its main message?

My book seeks to understand how domestic migration—the movement of people within a country—alters political representation. Focusing on the case of Germany, I argue that domestic migrants tend to be more active and interested in national politics but less invested in local politics. Over time, then, migration creates two separate electorates: voters in in-migration areas are very active in national politics, while voters in out-migration areas are more active in local politics. The book's main message is that this process alters the quality of political representation: national political parties are drawn to in-migration areas, where voters are more active in national politics. This leads to the systematic under-representation of non-migrants and out-migration areas in politics, with important consequences for political equality, service delivery, and the quality of democracy.



West Berliners greeting East Germans who were driving into West Berlin after the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. Photo Credit: Wikipedia, Creative Commons License

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Finally, what is your favourite part working in research/academia?

I think my favourite aspect of working within research is the freedom to work towards answering the questions that I find most intriguing. I really enjoy being able to decide for myself what I want to work on, how I want to answer a question, etc. And on top of that, it's really fun to exchange ideas and think through research problems with other researchers.

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