Christian Pipal

Senior Research and Teaching Associate · Department of Communication and Media Research
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Academic Positions

University of Zurich, Department of Communication and Media Research
Senior Research and Teaching Associate 2024–present
Research and Teaching Associate 2023–2024
Course Instructor 2022–2023

LMU Munich, Dept. of Media and Communication, Research Unit CCS
Visiting Researcher (CSS@LMU Fellowship 2026) Jan. 2026

Fachhochschule Graubünden und Universität Fribourg, Institute for Digital Communication and Media Innovation (IDCMI)
Course Instructor 2023–present

University of Amsterdam, Department of Political Science / Hot Politics Lab
PhD Candidate 2019–2023

University of Vienna, Dept. of Communication / Computational Communication Lab
Visiting Researcher 2020–2021

University of Vienna, Department of Government
Course Instructor 2018–2019

Education

University of Amsterdam, PhD in Political Science 2024
Thesis: "Blueprints and fingerprints: Politicians' use of emotional appeals in European democracies"
Supervisors: Gijs Schumacher, Mariken A. C. G. van der Velden, Bert N. Bakker

University of Tartu, MA in European Union and Russian Studies 2015

University of Vienna, BA in International Development Studies 2013

Research Interests

Substantive: Political communication; digital platforms and algorithmic publics; political influencers and emerging communicators; opinion formation; visual communication.

Methodological: AI/LLMs for social research; computational social science; multimodal analysis (text, image, video); open and reproducible science; quantitative methods.

Refereed Journal Articles

[1] **Pipal, Christian**, Vogel, Eva-Maria, Wack, Morgan, and Frank Esser. "How Much Can You Fit in a Prompt? Item Batching and Multi-Variable Stacking in LLM-Based Automated Content Analysis." conditionally accepted at *Computational Communication Research* [preprint]

[2] Wack, Morgan, **Pipal, Christian**, Vogel, Eva-Maria, and Megan Erickson. "Do Citation Limits Constrain Diversity? Evidence from a Natural Experiment across Political Science Journals." accepted at *PS: Political Science & Politics*

[3] Dolinsky, Alona O., Schoonvelde, Martijn, **Pipal, Christian**, Baden, Christian, Lind, Fabienne, Shababo, Guy, van der Velden, Mariken A. C. G., and Avital Zalik. (2026). "Challenges for multilingual computational text analysis research: evidence from a pre-registered survey of social science researchers." *Acta Politica (online-first)*

[4] **Pipal, Christian**, Wack, Morgan, Profos, Astrid, Vogel, Eva-Maria, Wittstock, Nicolas, and Markos Mpadanes. (2026). "When Does Self-Correction Work for LLMs in Content Analysis? The Role of External Structure and Task Complexity" *Computational Communication Research* 8(2), 1–35.

[5] Lind, Fabienne, Schoonvelde, Martijn, Baden, Christian, Dolinsky, Alona O., **Pipal, Christian**, and Mariken A. C. G. van der Velden. (2025). "Grounding the Comparative Turn in Communication: A Framework for Validating Multilingual Computational Text Analysis" *Computational Communication Research* 7(1), 1–26.

[6] **Pipal, Christian**, Schoonvelde, Martijn, Schumacher, Gijs, and Max Boiten. (2025). "JST and rJST: Joint Estimation of Sentiment and Topics in Textual Data." *Communication Methods and Measures* 19(2), 112–130.

[7] **Pipal, Christian**, Bakker, Bert N., Schumacher, Gijs, and Mariken A. C. G. van der Velden. (2024). "Tone in Politics Is Not Systematically Related to Macro Trends, Ideology, or Experience." *Scientific Reports* 14(3241).

[8] Kobilke, Lara, Kulichkina, Aytalina, Baghumyan, Ani, and **Christian Pipal**. (2023). "Blaming it on NATO? Framing the Russian Invasion of Ukraine on Twitter." *Frontiers in Political Science* 5(1122439).

[9] **Pipal, Christian**, Song, Hyunjin, and Hajo Boomgaarden. (2022). "If You Have Choices, Why Not Choose (and Share) All of Them? A Multiverse Approach to Understanding News Engagement on Social Media" *Digital Journalism* 11(2), 255–275.

[10] Baden, Christian, **Pipal, Christian**, Schoonvelde, Martijn, and Mariken A. C. G. van der Velden. (2022). "Three Gaps in Computational Text Analysis Methods for Social Sciences: A Research Agenda." *Communication Methods and Measures* 16(1), 1–18.

Book Chapters, Conference Proceedings, & Other Publications

[1] Vogel, Eva-Maria, Wack, Morgan, **Pipal, Christian**, and Frank Esser. (2027). "Who Are the News Influencers? Origins of Fame and the Boundary With Journalism in the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election." In Schill, D. and J. Hendricks (eds.), *Media, Influence, and the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election: Campaign Communication in a Fragmented Media System*. Routledge. *forthcoming*

[2] Kobilke, Lara, Primig, Florian, **Pipal, Christian**, and Pilar Lacasa. (2026). "From Memes to Movements: How Affordances Shape Resistance and Collective Action on TikTok." *Frontiers in Computer Science* 8(1869722).

[3] Tarnutzer-Zigerli, Seraina, and **Pipal, Christian**. (2026). "Past Perfect: Patterns of Visual Representation of Tradcontent Influencers on TikTok." In Atteneder, H., Kurinna, O., Schreiber, M., Tarnutzer-Zigerli, S., and C. Voigt (eds.), *Proceedings of the Joint Conference of the DGPuK Divisions "Media, Public Sphere, Gender" and "Visual Communication" 2025 in Tübingen*, pp. 127–132. Tübingen: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft e.V. https://doi.org/10.21241/ssoar.113186

[4] van der Velden, Mariken A. C. G., Umansky, Natalia, and **Christian Pipal**. (2025). "Sentiment Analysis." In Nai, A., Grömping, M., and D. Wirz (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Political Communication*. Edward Elgar.

[5] Schoonvelde, Martijn, **Pipal, Christian**, and Gijs Schumacher. (2022). "Text as Data in Political Psychology." In Dehghani, M. and R. L. Boyd (eds.), *Handbook of Language Analysis in Psychology*. Guilford Press.

Work Under Review

[1] Labarre, Julien and **Christian Pipal**. "Political Social Media Influencers and the Parasocial Bridge to Democratically Corrosive Attitudes "

[2] **Pipal, Christian**, Wack, Morgan, Vogel, Eva-Maria, and Frank Esser. "Learning to Be Political: Audience Reinforcement and the Disproportionate Political Role of Smaller Social Media Influencers." ICA Top Paper Award 2026. [preprint]

[3] Wack, Morgan, Vogel, Eva-Maria, **Pipal, Christian**, and Patrick Warren. "Fact-Checks Can Help Inoculate LLMs Against Disinformation." [preprint]

[4] **Pipal, Christian**, Vogel, Eva-Maria, and Morgan Wack. "What Should the Model See? Input Representation as a Measurement Choice in Multimodal LLM Annotation."

[5] **Pipal, Christian** and Natalia Umansky. "Dances, Duets, and Debates: Analysing Political Communication and Viewer Engagement on TikTok." ICA Top Paper Award 2024. [preprint]

[6] **Pipal, Christian**, Vogel, Eva-Maria, and Morgan Wack. "How Creators Spend Public Visibility to Fill Bounded Social Media."

[7] **Pipal, Christian**, Wack, Morgan, and Eva-Maria Vogel. "Who Gets Counted? Using Large Language Models to Close Coverage Gaps in Name-Based Demographic Classification."

[8] Wack, Morgan, **Pipal, Christian**, and Eva-Maria Vogel. "Nice Try, ChatGPT: AI Accusations Target Opponents and Divert Political Debates." [preprint]

[9] Wack, Morgan, Vogel, Eva-Maria, and **Christian Pipal**. "Biased Provision: Cross-Provider Divergence in How LLMs and Search Engines Supply Evidence on Contested Political Questions." [preprint]

[10] Wack, Morgan, Vogler, Daniel, Arrigo, Manuel, **Pipal, Christian**, and Lucas da Silva. "Who Sees Politics in Sports? Norm Endorsement and Partisan Judgments from the 2026 World Cup." [preprint]

[11] Wack, Morgan, Manda, Constantine, and **Pipal, Christian**. "Pricing Out Dissent: Producer-Targeted Online Regulation and Mass Political Attitudes in Tanzania."

[12] **Pipal, Christian**, Wack, Morgan, Vogel, Eva-Maria, and Frank Esser. "The Structure of Non-Traditional Political Communication: Celebrities, Social Media Influencers, and News Influencers During the 2024 U.S. Election."

[13] **Pipal, Christian** and Seraina Tarnutzer. "The Visual Landscape of Tradculture on TikTok: A Multimodal Computational Analysis Across Five Countries."

[14] **Pipal, Christian**. "Does Personality Shape the Emotional Tone of Political Language? Evidence from Danish Parliamentary Speeches and Tweets."

[15] **Pipal, Christian**. "Features Travel Together: The Shared Architecture of Political Communication Style."

[16] **Pipal, Christian**. "Who Owns the Emotion? How News Organizations Communicate Emotion in Instagram Stories."

[17] Rooduijn, Matthijs, Gerritsen, Debby, Bakker, Bert N., Hooman, Maaike D., Petropoulos Petalas, Diamantis, **Pipal, Christian**, Rebasso, Isabella, Dunkes, Ruby, Ranganatha, Nayantara, and Gijs Schumacher. "Arts-based interventions and prejudice reduction: do narratives of empathy and tolerance affect feelings towards outgroups?"

[18] Vogel, Eva-Maria, **Pipal, Christian**, Wack, Morgan, and Frank Esser. "Signaling Credibility in Partisan Digital Contexts: Source Credibility and Political Authenticity Among U.S. News Influencers."

Data Sets

[1] Stecker, Marc, Baden, Christian, Balluff, Phillip, **Pipal, Christian**, Lind, Fabienne, Schoonvelde, Martijn, Dinhopl, Claudia, van der Velden, Mariken A. C. G., Waldherr, Annie, and Hajo Boomgaarden. (2024). Data on Software Tools in Computational Text Analysis Research. *OSF*, https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/FG6WQ.

[2] Schumacher, Gijs, Berk, Nicolai, **Pipal, Christian**, Kantorowicz, Jaroslaw, Schoonvelde, Martijn, Traber, Denise, and Erik de Vries. EUSpeech v2.0: A dataset of 11,466 speeches by European leaders. *OSF*, https://osf.io/c79ha/.

Awards, Honors, and Grants

IKMZ Community Grant 2026 (PI). *Does Training Fix Bias? Student Coder Bias, Training Interventions, and LLM Validation.* €4,620. 2026

GRC Short Grant (Co-Applicant). *Perception of Politics during the Soccer World Cup in the US and Canada .* €3,220. 2026

Swiss Federal Office of Communication (BAKOM) (PI). *Visual Tradcultures on TikTok.* €39,200. 2025

IKMZ Community Grant 2024 (Co-applicant). *Mental Well-being in Academia.* €5,248. 2024

ICA Best Paper Award, Political Communication 2024, 2026

ICA Best Paper Award, Computational Communication Science 2021

ECPR Travel Grant 2019

DoRa 8 Archimedes Travel Grant (€1,660) 2015

DoRa Plus Scholarship (€3,500) 2014

Invited Talks

"Political social media influencers in the 2024 US and 2025 German elections." LMU Munich. 2026

"Using self-refinement to increase the accuracy of LLMs." LMU Munich. 2026

"The Political Role of Social Media Influencers." Suisse Digital, Bern. 2024

"Parliamentary Debates as Networks of Politicians and Rhetoric Styles." Duitsland Instituut, Amsterdam. 2024

"Political Social Media Influencers as Political Engagers?" Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. 2024

"Do politicians change their rhetoric over time?" Hot Politics Lab, U. of Amsterdam. 2021

"Three gaps in computational text analysis methods." Text as Data Research Group. 2021

"Three gaps in computational text analysis methods." Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. 2021

Conference Presentations (Selection)

International Communication Association (ICA): 2020, 2022, 2024. European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA), Political Communication: 2023, 2025. Midwestern Political Science Association (MPSA): 2022, 2024, 2025. European Political Science Association (EPSA): 2022, 2023. COMPTEXT: 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025. Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties (EPOP): 2022. International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP): 2019.

Teaching

Undergraduate. Introduction to Communication Science and Media Research (Lecture), U. of Zurich, 2024. Bachelor Thesis Seminar, U. of Zurich, 2023, 2024. Digital Political Communication (Research Seminar), U. of Zurich, 2022, 2023. Research Project I, U. of Amsterdam, 2022. Politics, Media, and Communication (Guest Lectures and TA), U. of Amsterdam, 2021. Quantitative Research Methods, U. of Vienna, 2018.

Graduate. Political Communication in the Age of Influencers and AI (Research Seminar), U. of Zurich, 2026. From Likes to Votes: Political Social Media Influencers (Research Seminar), U. of Zurich, 2025. Communication Science Theories and Methods / Introduction to Python, U. of Fribourg / FH Graubünden, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026. Quantitative Text Analysis, U. of Amsterdam, 2020. Guest lectures on Multiverse Analysis, Open Science, QTA, U. of Amsterdam, 2020–2022.

Workshops. GESIS Spring School, Introduction to R, Mannheim, 2024, 2025. GESIS Autumn School, Introduction to R, Mannheim, 2023. COMPTEXT Pre-conference Workshop, Joint Sentiment-Topic Modelling in R, Dublin, 2022.

Advising

Torill Noemi Sigg (exp. 2026), U. of Zurich, MA. Anna Maren Lichtensteiger (exp. 2026), U. of Zurich, MA. Astrid Profos (2025), U. of Zurich, MA. Helen Kleinschmid (2025), U. of Zurich, MA. Josephine Behna (2024), U. of Zurich, MA. Jan Haag (2023), U. of Zurich, MA. 13 BA theses (2023–2025), U. of Zurich.

Professional Service

Member, Berufungskommission (appointment committee), IKMZ, U. of Zurich, 2025–2026.

Special Issue Editor, "From Memes to Movements," *Frontiers in Computer Science / Communication / Political Science / Sociology*, ongoing.

Ad-hoc Editor, *Frontiers in Sociology*, *Frontiers in Psychology*.

Speaker, Computational Methods Working Group, U. of Zurich, 2023–2024.

Co-organizer, ICA Hackathon, Toronto, 2023.

Co-organizer, Hot Politics Lab Speaker Series, U. of Amsterdam, 2020–2023.

Reviewer for: *Political Analysis*, *Communication Methods and Measures*, *Computational Communication Research*, *npj Artificial Intelligence*, *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *Political Psychology*, *Research and Politics*, *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties*, *Party Politics*, *Nature Scientific Reports*, *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, *SCM*, *Swiss Political Science Review*, *Data and Policy*, ICA, ECREA, DGPuK, SAGW.

Media Engagement

Expert commentary and background interviews on digital political communication, social media, and political influencers for Swiss national media: *SRF*, *Watson*, *Blick*, *20 Minuten* (ongoing since 2023).

Media literacy workshops for scout groups in Vienna: critical engagement with social media, fake news, and self-presentation (ongoing since 2024).

Software and Programming

Advanced: R, Python, SQL, LaTeX, Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure.
Intermediate: Bash, Unix, HTML, CSS.

`sentitopics`: R package for joint sentiment-topic models.
`mexca`: Python package for multimodal emotion recognition.