1. **Applicant Name:** Derek Lief

2. **Contact Information:**
    a. **Address:** Derek Lief, University of Michigan Ross School of Business, 701 Tappan Avenue Ross Annex Suite 229, Ann Arbor, MI 48109
    b. **Email:** dlief@umich.edu

3. **Area of Interest:** Entrepreneurship

4. **Expected Year of Completion:** 2025

5. **Name of Faculty Member Supplying a Letter of Recommendation:** Jordan Siegel, sijordan@umich.edu

Derek Lief

Stephen M. Ross School of Business, University of Michigan
dereklief.com ∘ dlief@umich.edu

EDUCATION

· **UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor, MI**
- PhD Candidate, Business Administration (Strategy) and Political Science *2025 (expected)*
  · Committee: Jordan Siegel (chair), Justin Frake, Chris Rider, Jim Westphal
- Master of Arts, Applied Statistics *2025 (expected)*
- Master of Public Policy (MPP) *2019*
- Master of Arts, Middle Eastern and North African Studies *2019*
- Certificate of Graduate Studies in Data Science *2019*

· **MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE, Middlebury, VT**
- Master of Arts, Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language *2023*

· **HAVERFORD COLLEGE, Haverford, PA**
- Bachelor of Arts, History *2008*

RESEARCH INTERESTS

· Corporate purpose, entrepreneurship, strategic human capital

UNDER REVIEW

[1] **Lief, D.** "Exploring the Role of Religion in How Organizations Create Firm-Specific Advantage in their Approach to the Labor Market." (*Revise and Resubmit at Organization Science*)

WORKING PAPERS

[1] **Lief, D.**, Jue-Rajasingh, D., Kwon, M. "Expressions of Corporate Purpose and Their Effect on Job Interest." *Equal Contribution. (Target: *Strategic Management Journal*)

[2] **Lief, D.** "The Components of Individual Religiosity that Affect Entrepreneurial Orientation." (Target: *Administrative Science Quarterly*)

EARLY-STAGE PROJECTS

[1] **Lief, D.**, Sasson, A. "The Effect of Individual Religiosity on Entrepreneurial Entrance and Success." (*Data analysis stage*)

[2] **Lief, D.**, Siegel, J. "Do Elite Students Make Elite Workers? Evidence from a Global Consulting Firm." (*Data analysis stage*)

[3] **Lief, D.**, Siegel, J. "The Effect of Sharia Compliance on Firm Performance: Evidence from Public Firms in Saudi Arabia." (*Data analysis stage*)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

[1] **Lief, D.** (21 January 2024). "In the Midst of the War with Hamas, Why Has East Jerusalem Remained Relatively Quiet?" *INSS Insight No. 1817*. English / Hebrew

[2] **Lief, D.** (2023). "Social, Political and Economic Trends in East Jerusalem, 2010 – 2022: Informing Israel's Approach to Security" ***Strategic Assessment***, 26(2):69-89. English / Hebrew]

[3] **Lief, D.** (2023). Review of the book *A Culture of Ambiguity: An Alternative History of Islam*, by Thomas Bauer. ***Bustan: The Middle East Book Review***, 14(1), 59-62. url

[4] Lavie, E., Elran, M., Wattad, M.S., Klor, E., Fadlor, T., **Lief, D.** (22 August 2023). "Reducing Budget Allocations for the Arab Sector May Harm Internal Security" *INSS Insight No. 1817*. English / Hebrew

[5] **Lief, D.** (6 November 2018). "Jordan's Summer of Discontent and Its Consequences" *Tel Aviv Notes*, 12(17). url

[6] Wattad, M.S., Liu, Z., **Lief, D.** (18 July 2023). "What Deters the Arab Population from the Protests?" *INSS Insight No. 1746*. English / Hebrew

PAPER PRESENTATIONS

· **Lief, D.** "Exploring the Role of Religion in How Organizations Create Firm-Specific Advantage in their Approach to the Labor Market."
  - Conference on Field Experiments in Strategy (Fountainebleau, France), December 2024
  - Academy of Management Annual Meeting (Chicago, IL), August 2024
  - Duke Strategy PhD Conference (Durham, NC), June 2024
  - Non-Market Strategy Research Community (NMSRC) Doctoral Conference (Virtual), May 2024
  - Israel Strategy Doctoral Consortium (Herziliya, Israel), December 2022
  - Non-Market Strategy Research Community (NMSRC) Doctoral Conference (Virtual), May 2022
  - Ross School of Business Strategy Lunch Box (Virtual), March 2021
  - APSA Religion & Politics Early Career Workshop (Virtual), May 2021

· **Lief, D.**, Jue-Rajasingh, D., Kwon, M. "Our Purpose is to Serve You: The Impact of Stakeholder Reinvestment Corporate Purpose on Employee Attraction."
  - People and Organizations Conference (Philadelphia, PA), September, 2024
  - Academy of Management Annual Meeting (Chicago, IL), August 2024
  - SMS Special Conference, Strategies for Sustainable Human Development (Washington, D.C.), June 2024.
  - Young Scholars' Forum (Tel-Aviv, Israel), February 2023

· Priest, R. **Lief, D.** "Christian Certification's Relationship to Organizations' Glassdoor and Indeed Presences."
  - Academy of Management Annual Meeting (Chicago, IL), August 2024

AWARDS, GRANTS, & FELLOWSHIPS

◦ **Honors & Awards**
  - Rackham Language Training Award, University of Michigan ($6,500) *2018*
  - International Policy Center Internship Award, University of Michigan ($7,500) *2018*
  - Shukran Kamal and Julia Segall-Derfler Memorial Award, University of Michigan ($2,000) *2018*

◦ **Grants**

- Rackham Conference Travel Grant, University of Michigan ($900) *2024*
- Rackham Conference Travel Grant, University of Michigan ($1500) *2023*
- Rackham International Research Grant, University of Michigan ($5,000) *2022*
- Doctoral Research Grant, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan ($4,000) *2021, 2024*
- Early Candidacy Grant, Ross School of Business, University of Michigan ($1,000) *2021*
- Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant, University of Michigan ($1,500) *2020*

◦ **Fellowships**

- Spivey Hall Fellowship, University of Michigan *2023-2024*
- Neubauer Research Fellowship, INSS *2022-2024*
- FLAS Fellowship, USED and University of Michigan *2021-2024*
- Ross School of Business Fellowship, University of Michigan *2019-2024*
- Betty A. Jones and David A. Jones Endowment Fund, Middlebury College *2020- 2021*
- Pari S. Ahmadi Language Schools Scholarship, Middlebury College *2020*
- Paul D. Coverdell Fellowship, University of Michigan *2017*
- Kathryn Davis Fellowship for Peace, Middlebury College *2012*

TEACHING & TA EXPERIENCE

◦ **University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, MI)**

· **Instructor**: (BBA Core) STR 290: Business Strategy *Winter, 2022 - 2023*

- 2023 Instructor evaluation: 4.6 / 5.0 (84 students, in-person class)
- 2022 Instructor evaluation: 3.9 / 5.0 (73 students, in-person class)

· **Teaching Assistant**

- EMBA 622 (EMBA Elective): Competing Globally (2021 - 2024)
- DUTCH 351 (BA Elective): Anne Frank in Context (2019)
- EMBA 639 (EMBA Elective): Global Business Environment (2018 - 2019)
- PUBPOL 639 (BA Elective): Quantitative Methods of Program Evaluation (2018)
- PHIL 340 (BA Elective): Minds and Machines (2018)
- GERMAN 386 (BA Elective): Fairy Tales (2017)

◦ **King's Academy (Madaba, Jordan)**

· **Instructor**

- MATH: Algebra II (2016-17)
- MATH: Functions, Statistics and Trigonometry (2016-17)

CONFERENCE & WORKSHOP PARTICIPATION

◦ **Discussant**: Micro, Meso and Macro Level Findings of Religion in the Workplace (AoM 2024)

◦ **Invited Participation**: ISOI-HEC Paris Corporate Purpose and Sustainable Capitalism Conference (2024), Institutions and Entrepreneurship Conference (2022), Israel Strategy Conference (2022), Interdisciplinary Committee on Organizational Studies (ICOS) PhD Poster Session (2022), 11th Annual Conference on New Directions in Analyzing Text as Data (2021)

ACADEMIC SERVICES

· Reviewer, *Academy of Management Annual Meeting (MSR Division)* *2024*
· Reviewer, *Academy of Management Annual Meeting (HR Division)* *2024*
· Advisor, The Business Research Hub, University of Michigan *2023 - 2024*

· Research Mentor, Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program, University of Michigan *2022 - 2023*
· Organizer, Interdisciplinary Workshop in Comparative Politics, University of Michigan *2022 - 2023*
· Finance Chair, IEDP Program, University of Michigan *2018 - 2019*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

· **StoneTurn Group, LLP (San Francisco, CA)** *2018-2019*
Produced discounted cash flow and profitability analyses for two intellectual property damages reports

· **Yahel - Israel Service Learning (Zichron Yaakov, Israel)** *2016-2019*
Monitored the efficacy of participants in their internship placements through site visits and contact with internship supervisors

· **United States Peace Corps (Amman, Jordan)** *2014-2015*
Designed and implemented community-wide English courses in the village of Dirar Bin Al-Azwar for more than 100 Jordanians ages 12 - 30

· **Ir Amim (Jerusalem)** *2013-2014*
Researched, wrote and managed four proposals for a total of $52,500

· **FTI Consulting (San Francisco, CA)** *2008-2012*
Cleaned and reorganized raw data from firms to produce discounted cash flows and profitability analyses for at least 10 IP damages reports each year

CITIZENSHIPS AND LANGUAGES

· **Citizenship** United States of America, Israel
· **Language** English (native), Arabic (ACTFL Superior), Hebrew (ACTFL Advanced-High)

REFERENCES

Jordan Siegel (Co-Chair)
Professor of Strategy
Michael R. and Mary Kay Hallman Fellow
Stephen M. Ross School of Business
University of Michigan
sijordan@umich.edu

Chris Rider
Thomas C. Kinnear Professor
Associate Professor of Entrepreneurial Studies
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riderci@umich.edu

James Westphal
Harvey C. Fruehauf Professor
Professor of Strategy
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Justin Frake
Assistant Professor of Strategy
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There is a large literature focused on explaining the causes of entrepreneurship, and part of that literature is about identifying the nonpecuniary explanations for why some people take the bold step of starting a firm. Among other reasons, this literature has found that nonpecuniary rewards such as decision rights and autonomy are inherently valuable ends for entrepreneurs (e.g. Astebro et al., 2014). One of the potentially most important, yet unexplored nonpecuniary incentives, is that of religion – especially since many entrepreneurs cite religious reasons for their motivations for starting their firms in the popular press.[1] And we know that in the United States economy, firms that have an explicitly stated religious mission have been conservatively estimated to produce approximately $437 billion dollars of GDP annually (Grim and Grim 2016). With this in mind, the question of how and to what extent religion is an important nonpecuniary incentive for different types of entrepreneurial action is the focus of my research agenda.

My **immediate research agenda** deals with how religiosity affects entrepreneurial orientation (EO). Specifically, one chapter of my dissertation, titled "The Components of Individual Religiosity that Affect Entrepreneurial Orientation", which I hope to send for review within the next three months, considers this issue. The paper aims to build on the significant increase in the amount of work at the intersection of religion and entrepreneurship that we have seen since 2007. Despite this increase, scholars bemoan the inability of this work to enter mainstream journals, specifically citing a "limited theoretical foundation and reliance on a phenomenological approach[]" (Smith et al., 2019, p. 2) and a reliance "on small, nonprobability samples" (Dougherty et al., 2013, p. 402).

In my working paper, I build on the meaningful work that has been done at this intersection, which has shown a relationship between religiosity and entrepreneurial outcomes. I argue, however, that it is burdened by one theoretical shortcoming and one measurement issue. The literature tends to consider various outward expressions of religiosity (like church attendance) and connect them directly to a dependent variable that serves as a proxy for entrepreneurship (most often self-employment). I argue that to get better estimates of these relationships, we first need to separate religiosity into its two component parts – *intrapersonal* religiosity and *interpersonal* religiosity. The former represents more personal expressions of religiosity like personal prayer, while the latter is more interactional, like attending services. In my paper, I achieve this separation empirically by building a novel dataset from the Ross Employee Pool at the University of Michigan. I then offer the main result of the paper, which is that it is *interpersonal* religiosity, and not *intrapersonal* religiosity, that most significantly affects entrepreneurial orientation.

As an immediate extension of this work, in my **future research**, I want to consider how religiosity across different sects may affect entrepreneurial outcomes in times of crisis. The results from my working paper suggest that the stronger networks stemming from *interpersonal* religiosity may help promote entrepreneurial action. Further, in times of economic or political crisis, other work has demonstrated that stronger social networks can promote positive outcomes (Lee et al., 2024; Aldrich and Waldinger, 2003). Could it be the case that stronger religious networks demonstrate similar effects? In particular, I am interested in using the 2008 financial crisis as an exogenous shock and examining its differential effect on entrepreneurial entry among Catholic and Protestant counties in the United States. I am interested in these denominations because it is well established that while Catholics tend to have stronger networks, Protestants are characterized by more atomistic religious relationships (Nunziata and Rocco, 2016; 2018).

Finally, **the reason I want to attend the entrepreneurship boot camp** is to achieve my goal of becoming aware of the most advanced and current techniques of identification for studying my research questions. I hope to learn more about difference and differences and propensity score matching, and how I may apply it to the second research question above. I know that the specific faculty panel for this entrepreneurship boot camp is at the frontier of research methods for doing careful identification in the study of the economics of entrepreneurship. By joining the cohort at this boot camp, I plan to learn as much as possible from them about these cutting-edge methods for identification strategies in the study of entrepreneurship. I am confident that these methods, and this experience, will aid in my future contribution to the field by identifying the specific causal effects of individual religiosity on motivation and business outcomes among entrepreneurs, and most immediately, in my second early-stage project described above.

[1] See for example: Solomon, B. (18 September 2012). "Meet David Green: Hobby Lobby's Biblical Billionaire." *Forbes*. See: https://www.forbes.com/sites/briansolomon/2012/09/18/david-green-the-biblical-billionaire-backing-the-evangelical-movement/.

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MICHIGAN
ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

February 15, 2025

Dear Colleagues:

It is a pleasure to write this recommendation letter for Derek Lief, who is applying for the NBER Entrepreneurship Boot Camp.

And let it be known that I intentionally seek to keep my letters concise.

Derek is quite simply one of the two very most talented young scholars I have ever had the honor of working with as my Research Assistant during my 21 years in academia. (The other one is now a very successful assistant professor at UCLA.) In the years that Derek has worked for me, Derek has displayed all the qualities one would want of a young scholar: an enthusiastic sense of curiosity about how the world works, a sharp intellect, a diligence that is admirable, and a fundamentally delightful humanity. Derek has this brilliant combination of historical knowledge, a terrific understanding of the academic literature, a cutting-edge technical toolkit, and amazing writing skills.

Prior to Derek, scholars have talked only very briefly about how religion might matter for why entrepreneur choose to create companies and how companies organized themselves and how they attain competitive advantage. After all, a large percentage of the U.S. population, and even more so in many countries around the world, states that they are highly religious. Religion is often a key source of inspiration and guidance for how people choose to interact with and relate to others in the workplace. Religion, unlike regular CSR, even often comes together with beliefs about “supernatural compensators” (the effect of actions in this life on one’s situation after this life). So, therefore, religious belief and practice might likely have an even larger impact on people’s lives within companies than CSR. But Derek is one of the very first to think about how to actually measure organizational religiosity and then to actually measure it through the careful identification of experiments. Also, prior authors have conducted wonderful experiments about the related phenomenon of CSR with gig workers online, but there has always been this interesting question of how robust a result would be if one measured it with a real job from the real economy and real economic stakes. Derek does exactly that through his field experiment. Derek has found compelling, thought-provoking, and novel evidence about how members of underprivileged groups are particularly attracted to organizationally religious firms. Derek has also thought deeply about the nature of the trade-offs that are involved when a company choose to approach the labor market with a stated purpose that incorporates religion.

Derek path to becoming a scholar is a fascinating one. Derek tried business consulting but found over time that he had a keen sense of intellectual curiosity and wanted to be a scholar and teacher for the rest of his life. Part of what he did to explore that career was to conduct research for an outstanding elder scholar, Professor Tim Bresnahan of Stanford University. Over time, he realized that he wanted to then take what he learned about research and act on an inspiring experience from his undergraduate years about learning as much as he could about the cultures, languages, and business environment of the Middle East. So he spent a number of years learning the languages of the Middle East and working in the Middle East in a variety of capacities. All of this culminated in his getting a Strategy Ph.D. with a focus on studying the interaction between religion and business in the U.S. and internationally. And in doing so, he has continued to further his education not only about econometrics and the Strategy literature but also about the Middle East. And he has accumulated the technical toolkit as well as the cultural toolkit to do pioneering research on the future on the interaction between religion and business in comparative settings, including in the U.S. and in the Middle East.

Derek has also been very well trained in how to be a highly effective teacher in the business school classroom. He is a very clear communicate, and he relates well to his students. He has attained very high performance in the classroom.

Derek is also the kind of scholar who will make major advances in our knowledge of the motivations for entrepreneurship. He will also open up new frontiers of knowledge about entrepreneurial strategy and society. Derek is also a gem of a human being.

For all of the above reasons, I highly recommend Derek Lief to you. He does work that will make all of us proud.

Sincerely,

Jordan Siegel

Jordan Siegel
Professor of Strategy
and Michael R. & Mary Kay Hallman Fellow
University of Michigan, Ross School of Business