

# Felix RUSCHE

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics, University of Mannheim

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## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Labor Economics, Development Economics, Political Economy

## EDUCATION

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present Sep 2019	UNIVERSITY OF MANNHEIM, Mannheim, Germany Economics, Ph.D., Course Phase GPA : 1.4
Jun 2023 Jan 2023	POMPEU FABRA UNIVERSITY, Barcelona, Spain Research Stay
Feb 2019 Sep 2016	UNIVERSITY OF MANNHEIM, Mannheim, Germany Economics, M.Sc., GPA : 1.3
Jul 2018 Feb 2018	BOCCONI UNIVERSITY, Milan, Italy Visiting Student
Mar 2016 Sep 2012	OSNABRÜCK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES, Osnabrück, Germany Applied Economics, B.A., GPA : 1.37
Nov 2014 Jul 2014	NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY, Port Elizabeth, South Africa Visiting Student

## WORKING PAPERS

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### Broadcasting Change : India's Community Radio Policy and Women's Empowerment

*Job Market Paper*

**ESEM Award** for the best applied paper – Econometric Society Europe Meeting (ESEM) 2024

In poor countries, the interaction of early marriage, early motherhood, and low education attainment disempowers women and limits their life opportunities. Even as countries grow richer, gender inequality is often sustained by social norms, thereby limiting welfare gains from women's empowerment. I investigate the use of media as a cheap and scalable policy to empower women. In 2006, India enacted a community radio policy that grants radio licenses to NGOs and educational institutions with the aim to foster local development. I collect original data on the content and coverage areas of all 250+ radios. I uncover women's empowerment as a key theme through topic modeling and GPT-based analyses of radio show recordings. For identification, I exploit topography-driven variation in radio access and develop a novel econometric approach to deal with randomly displaced geolocated household data. The results show that women exposed to radio gain an additional 0.3 years of education and are 4.1pp (10%) more likely to obtain a secondary degree. In line with increased education, exposure reduces child marriages by 1.4pp (37%) and fertility of young women by around 10% while they are 11pp more likely to exhibit autonomy in household decisions. The findings demonstrate that community media can effectively address gender inequality.

### LinkedOut? A Field Experiment on Discrimination in Job Network Formation

*with Yulia Evsyukova and Wladislaw Mill*

Accepted at **The Quarterly Journal of Economics**

We assess the impact of discrimination on Black individuals' job networks across the U.S. using a two-stage field experiment with 400+ fictitious LinkedIn profiles. In the first stage, we vary race via A.I.-generated images only and find that Black profiles' connection requests are 13 percent less likely to be accepted. Based on users' CVs, we find widespread discrimination across social groups. In the second stage, we exogenously endow Black and White profiles with the same networks and ask connected users for career advice. We find no evidence of direct discrimination in information provision. However, when taking into account differences in the composition and size of networks, Black profiles receive substantially fewer replies. Our findings suggest that gatekeeping is a key driver of Black-White disparities.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

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### Dissecting Media Bias : Daily Stock Market Performance in the News

*with Antonio Ciccone*

How large a bias can news selection by the media generate? We address this question using high-frequency data on daily stock market performance and news reports. We start with Germany's most watched and highly trusted nightly news. The program includes a segment from the main stock exchange, which often reports the daily performance of the main stock market index (DAX). Over the 2016-2024 period we examine, the DAX increased by 75 percent. On average, the daily change was around +4 index points. By contrast, the average daily change reported in the news was -7.6 points. Such a daily decline would have led the DAX to drop below zero in the period of interest. The media bias we find is well accounted for by two types of news selection. First, news reports are more likely on days the DAX declines. However, negativity bias only accounts for 25% of total news bias. Second, the news are more likely to report the DAX performance on days with larger absolute changes. This accounts for around three quarters of the media bias, as relatively large DAX changes were more frequently negative than small DAX changes. We find that the latter bias is a more general phenomenon, finding the same pattern for benchmark stock indices in France, Italy, Spain, the UK, and the US.

### Multi100 - Estimating the Analytic Robustness of Social and Behavioural Sciences

*with >450 co-authors; manuscript under preparation*

Crowd-sourced replication study of 100+ studies in the social sciences. Organized by the Open Science Foundation (OSF).

## PUBLICATIONS

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### Few Voices, Strong Echo : Measuring Follower Homogeneity of Politicians' Twitter Accounts

*New Media & Society, 2024 (online first 2022)*

Politicians have discovered Twitter as a tool for political communication. If information provided by politicians is circulated in ideologically segregated user networks, political polarization may be fostered. Using network information on all 1.78 million unique followers of German Members of Parliament by October 2018, follower homogeneity across politicians and parties is measured. While the overall homogeneity is low, politicians of the AfD - a right-wing populist party - stand out with very homogeneous follower networks. These are largely driven by a small group of strongly committed partisans that make up around 7 percent of the party's but around 55-75 percent of the average AfD politician's followers. The findings add to the literature by showing potentially unequal distributions of network segregation on Twitter. Further, they suggest that small groups of active users can multiply their influence online, which has important implications for future research on echo chambers and other online phenomena.

## GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND AWARDS

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| <b>2023 - 2026</b> | Add-on Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Research in Economics, Joachim Herz Foundation (12,500€ research grant)  |
| <b>2024</b>        | Award for best applied paper by a young researcher (up to 10 years after PhD) at the Econometric Society's Europe Meeting (ESEM) 2024                                  |
| <b>2024</b>        | CRC TR 224 Research Grant (4,000€)   |
| <b>2021</b>        | CRC TR 224 Research Grant (>4,000€)  |
| <b>2019 - 2021</b> | PhD Scholarship, Freudenberg Foundation & ZEW  |
| <b>2020</b>        | Second Prize - Goldmedia Award for innovative theses in Media Economics  |
| <b>2014 - 2019</b> | German National Merit Foundation (Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes)- Scholarship for 'academic excellence, interdisciplinary expertise, and social responsibility' |
| <b>2016</b>        | StudyUp-Award for excellent bachelor's theses, Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences  |

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

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| <b>Presentations</b> | <b>2024 :</b> ASSA Annual Meeting (San Antonio), Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Economic Seminars, Asia Meeting of the Econometric Society (Hangzhou), Europe Meeting of the Econometric Society (Rotterdam), Royal Economic Society Annual Conference (Belfast), ifo Digital Transformation & Innovation Seminar (Munich), Joachim Herz Foundation (Hamburg), CRC TR224 YR Workshop (Bonn & Mannheim), FHM+ Workshop in Development Economics (Mannheim); <b>2023 :</b> NBER Summer Institute : Labor Studies, Advances with Field Experiments (Chicago), Discrimination and Diversity Workshop (University of East Anglia), Institute of Labor Economics (IZA), Pompeu Fabra University (PhD & Internal Applied Seminar), London Business School Transatlantic Doctoral Conference, Nordic Conference in Development Economics (Gothenburg), German Development Economics Conference, German Economic Association Annual Conference, Barcelona School of Economics PhD Jamboree, HeiKaMaXY Workshop (Heidelberg), CRC TR224 Retreat (U Bonn & Mannheim); <b>2022 :</b> CRC TR224 YR Workshop (Bonn & Mannheim), Frankfurt-Mannheim PhD Workshop; <b>2020 :</b> Bonn-Mannheim PhD Workshop; <b>2019 :</b> ZEW Conference on the Economics of Information and Communication Technologies |
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<b>Field Research</b>	Independent field research on community radios across northern India (03/2022 - 04/2022)
<b>Event Organization</b>	<b>2023</b> : Co-organizer of the 1st Frankfurt-Mannheim-Bonn Ph.D. Conference (90 presentations, 160 participants) <b>2022</b> : Co-organizer of the 1st Frankfurt-Mannheim Ph.D. Workshop (43 presentations, 100 participants)
<b>Summer Schools</b>	<b>2024</b> : Add-on Meeting on Science Communication (Joachim Herz Foundation); <b>2023</b> : CRC Media Training (EconNewsNetwork), Data Science Summer School 2023 (Hertie School); <b>2022</b> : Network Analysis Workshop (LMU Munich), Natural Language Processing for Economists Workshop (Uni Heidelberg), Data Science Summer School 2022 (Hertie School); <b>2021</b> : Unstructured Data in Empirical Economics (CEMFI), Data Science Summer School 2021 (Hertie School)
<b>Referee</b>	Information, Communication & Society; New Media & Society

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

<b>2021 - present</b>	Research assistant to Antonio Ciccone, University of Mannheim & Fellow at Collaborative Research Center Transregio 224 (Universities of Bonn and Mannheim)
<b>2021</b>	Microeconomics B (B.Sc.), teaching assistant, University of Mannheim
<b>2021</b>	Introduction to Econometrics (B.Sc.), teaching assistant, University of Mannheim
<b>2019</b>	Master's thesis student/ intern, Digital Economy Research Department, Leibniz Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW), Mannheim, Germany

## EXTRACURRICULARS

<b>2019 - present</b>	Ph.D. Cohort Representative
<b>2019 - 2023</b>	Elected member of the Department Council
<b>2021 - 2022</b>	Mentor, Graduate Applications International Network (GAIN) : support of an African student in Economics applying for graduate studies at European and North American universities
<b>2015 - 2019</b>	Seminars of the German National Merit Foundation : [1] Two-year Social Science Research Seminar 2017-19 - Digitization, Ethics, and Society : An Integrative Analysis, [2] Weekend Seminar 2017 - Effective Altruism : Risks of Artificial Intelligence, [3] Weekend Seminar 2016 - Freedom vs. Security : The Internet as a new Space for an Enduring Conflict, [4] Summer School 2015 - Narratives of the Future : Visionary Utopia or Botch?
<b>2018 - 2019</b>	Board Member of 'Nice to Meet You' at Uni Mannheim - a student refugee-integration project.
<b>2015 - 2016</b>	Campus Without Borders in Osnabrück : setup of a student refugee integration project.

## NON-ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

<b>03/2015 - 07/2015</b>	Internship, Political Department, German Embassy Beijing, China
<b>07/2013 - 09/2013</b>	Internship, Strategic Finance, Deutsche Börse AG, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
<b>07/2011 - 09/2011</b>	Internship, Various Business Departments, Frimo Inc, Detroit, USA

## MISCELLANEOUS

<b>Citizenship</b>	German
<b>Languages</b>	German (native), English (fluent - TOEFL 2019 : 114 of 120 points / Top 3% ), Spanish (B1)
<b>Technical Skills</b>	R, Python, Stata, Qualtrics, LaTeX, QGIS

## REFERENCES

**Antonio Ciccone, PhD**  
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