




Felix RUSCHE

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics, University of Mannheim

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EDUCATION

present September 2019	UNIVERSITY OF MANNHEIM, Mannheim, Germany Economics, Ph.D., advisor : Antonio Ciccone, Course Phase GPA : 1.4
June 2023 January 2023	POMPEU FABRA UNIVERSITY, Barcelona, Spain Research Stay
February 2019 September 2016	UNIVERSITY OF MANNHEIM, Mannheim, Germany Economics, M.Sc., GPA : 1.3
July 2018 February 2018	BOCCONI UNIVERSITY, Milan, Italy Visiting Student
March 2016 September 2012	OSNABRÜCK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES, Osnabrück, Germany Applied Economics, B.A., GPA : 1.37
November 2014 July 2014	NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY, Port Elizabeth, South Africa Visiting Student

TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

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

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Presentations	2024 : ASSA Annual Meeting (San Antonio, scheduled); 2023 : NBER Summer Institute : Labor Studies, Advances with Field Experiments (University of Chicago), 3rd Discrimination and Diversity Workshop (University of East Anglia), Institute of Labor Economics (IZA), Pompeu Fabra University (PhD Seminar & 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 (Bonn & Mannheim); 2022 : CRC TR224 10th Young Researchers Workshop (Bonn & Mannheim), 1st Frankfurt-Mannheim PhD Workshop; 2020 : Bonn-Mannheim PhD Workshop; 2019 : ZEW Conference on the Economics of Information and Communication Technologies
Field Experience	Independent field research on Community Radios in New Delhi and across Northern India (03/2022 - 04/2022)
Events	2023 : Co-organizer of the 1st Frankfurt-Mannheim-Bonn Ph.D. Conference (90 presentations, 160 participants) 2022 : Co-organizer of the 1st Frankfurt-Mannheim Ph.D. Workshop (43 presentations, 100 participants)
Summer Schools	2023 : CRC Media Training (EconNewsNetwork), Data Science Summer School 2023 (Hertie School); 2022 : Network Analysis Workshop (LMU Munich), Natural Language Processing for Economists Workshop (Uni Heidelberg), Data Science Summer School 2022 (Hertie School); 2021 : Unstructured Data in Empirical Economics (CEMFI), Data Science Summer School 2021 (Hertie School)
Discussant	2022 : ZEW Political Economy Workshop; 10th CRC TR224 Retreat (Bonn & Mannheim)
Referee	Information, Communication & Society; New Media & Society

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

- 2023 - 2026** Add-on Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Economics, Joachim Hertz Foundation (12,500€ research grant)
- 2019 - 2021** PhD Scholarship, Freudenberg Foundation & ZEW
- 2020** Second Prize - Goldmedia Award for innovative theses in Media Economics
- 2014 - 2019** German National Merit Foundation (Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes) - Scholarship for 'academic excellence, interdisciplinary expertise, and social responsibility'
- 2016** StudyUp-Award for excellent bachelor's theses, Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences

NON-ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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

LANGUAGES AND COMPUTER SKILLS

- Languages** German (native), English (fluent - TOEFL 2019 : 114 of 120 points / Top 3%), Spanish (B1)
- Technical Skills** R, Python, Stata, Qualtrics, LaTeX, QGIS
- Hobbies** Traveling, drawing, reading

EXTRACURRICULARS

- 2019 - present** Ph.D. Cohort Representative
- 2019 - 2023** Elected member of the Department Council
- 2021 - 2022** Mentor, Graduate Applications International Network (GAIN) : support of an African student in Economics applying for graduate studies at European and North American universities
- 2015 - 2019** 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 ?
- 2018 - 2019** Board Member of 'Nice to Meet You' at Uni Mannheim - a student refugee-integration project.
- 2015 - 2016** Campus Without Borders in Osnabrück : Collaboration in the organization and setup of a student refugee integration project. Acquisition of new members, support of refugees, and organization of first events

WORK IN PROGRESS

(1) Linked Out? A Field Experiment on Discrimination in Job Network Formation

with Yulia Evsyukova and Wladislaw Mill ([PDF](#))

Around half of all jobs are found through informal job networks. While minorities have been shown to strongly rely on such networks, these tend to include fewer quality contacts and informational benefits. This paper examines the causal effect of discrimination on the job network formation of Black individuals in the U.S. To investigate this, we create more than 400 fictitious profiles on LinkedIn – the largest online job networking platform. In a subsequent two-stage experiment, the profiles develop corresponding networks by sending requests to around 20,000 users. Each user receives requests from two statistically identical accounts, differing in terms of race. To indicate race, we generate images using an A.I. and develop an algorithm to transform a picture's race, while keeping other facial features stable. In the first stage, we measure the resulting difference in the number of accepted requests and the quality of the network. By the end of the experiment, White users' networks are 13% larger. Our setup further allows us to explore who drives discrimination. While we find that discrimination is widespread, both geographically and across individuals, our results suggest that it is particularly strong among women, young individuals, and people from more Republican areas. In the second stage, we further evaluate the racial gap in informational benefits available through the resulting networks by asking connected users for advice. Before doing so, we remove endogeneities in users' networks originating from the first stage. We find little evidence of discrimination in the probability to receive a response – which goes counter to the expectations of more than two hundred surveyed experts in labor economics. Overall, however, Black profiles receive, in expectation, fewer answers, which is mainly driven by smaller networks. This insight provides a new perspective on the gap in employment and labor market outcomes between Black and White individuals.

(2) Broadcasting Change : India's Community Radio Policy and Women's Empowerment

Field experiments and the investigation of unintended effects of entertainment television suggest that media can change beha-

vivors, attitudes, and provide valuable information. However, research on media use as a policy for development remains very limited. This paper provides a way forward by evaluating a 2006 policy change in India that allowed NGOs and educational institutions to apply for radio licenses. By 2020, a total of 288 Community Radio Stations (CRS) had been launched. I evaluate the effectiveness of the policy regarding one of its main aims : empowering women. For this, I combine detailed information on the radios' coverage areas with high-resolution data from the National Family and Health Survey (NFHS). For identification, topographic features between radio towers and observations are exploited. In addition, I introduce and utilize a novel approach that reduces noise in randomly displaced data, such as DHS data. The results demonstrate that CRS are effective in changing behaviors and attitudes of and toward women. Girls in areas exogenously exposed to CRS receive more years of education and are more likely to obtain a degree. Boys' education is unaffected, suggesting both a shift in parents' attitudes towards girls' schooling and a general increase in their willingness to invest in education. CRS also lower the probability of women getting married below the age of 25 and decrease the fertility of young women. Finally, I provide evidence of CRS increasing young women's autonomy concerning household decisions and mobility. Overall, the findings suggest that CRS can be an effective policy to empower women and improve their education, family planning, and decision-making abilities.

(3) Dissecting Media Bias : Daily Stock Market Performance in the News

with Antonio Ciccone

There is a disconnect between positive trends across many indicators of human and economic development and a largely negative picture drawn by the media. We address this question in a setting in which we observe both the full population of high-frequency events and an objective measure of their strength, namely intraday stock market changes. We start with Germany's most watched and highly trusted nightly news and their decision to report on daily changes in Germany's benchmark index (DAX) from 2017-22. We find that while the DAX increased by 11% over the period of interest, the news reporting portrayed it to fall by almost a third annually. We dissect this bias. In line with previous studies, we find evidence of a negativity bias, suggesting that negative events of the same strength are reported more frequently. We further reveal a new type of bias we term 'big news bias'. It describes the finding that the distribution of negative events tends to have a comparatively fat tail. Given that more extreme events get more reporting, around half of the bias in media reporting is due to the distribution of negative in comparison to positive changes. We also quantify media bias for stock market reports in the most-read online media in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK, and the US. We document evidence for both types of biases across all countries. Finally, we document a comparatively fat tail of negative changes across indicators of human and economic development, including democracy indices or unemployment.

PUBLICATIONS

(1) Few Voices, Strong Echo : Measuring Follower Homogeneity of Politicians' Twitter Accounts

New Media & Society, 2022 ([URL](#))

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.

REFERENCES

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