

# Felix RUSCHE

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics, University of Mannheim

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## EDUCATION

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**present** | **UNIVERSITY OF MANNHEIM**, Mannheim, Germany  
**September 2019** | Economics, Ph.D., advisor : Antonio Ciccone, Course Phase GPA : 1.4

**June 2023** | **POMPEU FABRA UNIVERSITY**, Barcelona, Spain  
**January 2023** | Research Stay

**February 2019** | **UNIVERSITY OF MANNHEIM**, Mannheim, Germany  
**September 2016** | Economics, M.Sc., GPA : 1.3

**July 2018** | **BOCCONI UNIVERSITY**, Milan, Italy  
**February 2018** | Visiting Student

**March 2016** | **OSNABRÜCK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**, Osnabrück, Germany  
**September 2012** | Applied Economics, B.A., GPA : 1.37

**November 2014** | **NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY**, Port Elizabeth, South Africa  
**July 2014** | Visiting Student

## WORKING PAPER

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

*with Yulia Evsyukova and Wladislaw Mill [Paper]*

R&R at Quarterly Journal of Economics

We assess the impact of discrimination on Black individuals' job networks in the U.S. using a two-stage field experiment with 400+ fictitious LinkedIn profiles. Varying race via A.I.-generated images only, we find that Black profiles' connection requests are accepted at significantly lower rates (Stage I) and their networks provide less information (Stage II). We leverage our experimental design to eliminate first-stage endogeneity and identify gatekeeping as the key driver of Black-White disparities. Based on users' CVs we find widespread discrimination across different social groups with heterogeneity unanticipated by experts.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

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

*[Poster ASSA 2024]*

I examine whether grassroots media can serve as a policy for development. Specifically, I investigate India's 2006 community radio policy which permits educational institutions and NGOs to obtain radio licenses with the purpose of promoting local development. I collect unique data on the content and coverage areas of >250 radios. Through topic modelling and GPT-based content analysis, women's empowerment is identified as a key theme in radio programming. To identify the effects of radio on women's empowerment, I leverage topography-driven variation in radio access in combination with a novel approach to reduce attenuation bias in randomly jittered survey coordinates. The results show that exogenous exposure to community radio enhances girls' education, delays marriage, reduces fertility, and increases young women's autonomy.

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

*with Antonio Ciccone*

## PUBLICATIONS

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

*New Media & Society*, 2024 [Paper]

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

<b>2023 - 2026</b>	Add-on Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Research in Economics, Joachim Herz Foundation (12,500€ research grant)
<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; lit : Academic Foundation of the German People) - 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

<b>Presentations</b>	<b>2024</b> : ASSA Annual Meeting (San Antonio), Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Economic Seminars, Asia Meeting of the Econometric Society (Hangzhou, China), Europe Meeting of the Econometric Society (Rotterdam, scheduled), Royal Economic Society Annual Conference (Belfast), ifo Digital Transformation & Innovation Seminar (Munich), Joachim Herz Foundation, CRC TR224 YR Workshop (Bonn & Mannheim); <b>2023</b> : 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, scheduled), 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); <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
<b>Field Experience</b>	Independent field research on Community Radios in New Delhi and across Northern India (03/2022 - 04/2022)
<b>Events</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>Discussant</b>	<b>2024</b> : CRC TR224 Retreat (Bonn & Mannheim); <b>2022</b> : ZEW Political Economy Workshop; CRC TR224 Retreat (Bonn & Mannheim)
<b>Referee</b>	Information, Communication & Society; New Media & Society

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

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- 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

## NON-ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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- 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

## EXTRACURRICULARS

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- 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.

## MISCELLANEOUS

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- Citizenship** German
- 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

## REFERENCES

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**Antonio Ciccone, PhD**  
*Professor of Macroeconomics*  
Department of Economics  
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**Wladislaw Mill, PhD**  
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