

Felix RUSCHE

Senior Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute for Research on Collective Goods

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Labor Economics, Development Economics, Political Economy

CURRENT POSITION

today Sep 2025	MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON COLLECTIVE GOODS, Bonn, Germany Senior Research Fellow (Postdoc)
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EDUCATION

May 2025 Sep 2019	UNIVERSITY OF MANNHEIM, Mannheim, Germany Economics, Ph.D. (Dr. rer. Pol.), summa cum laude
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

PUBLICATIONS

LinkedOut? A Field Experiment on Discrimination in Job Network Formation

with Yulia Evsyukova and Wladislaw Mill

The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 2025

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.

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.

WORKING PAPERS

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

Award : best paper in gender economics – Unicredit Foundation 2025

Award : best paper in public policy evaluation – FBK/IRVAPP 2025

Award : best applied paper – Econometric Society Europe Meeting 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.

Reporting the Big News, Missing the Big Picture? Stock Market Performance in the Media

with Antonio Ciccone

Between 2017 and 2024, the main national stock market indices rose in the US and the five largest European economies. However, the average daily performance of all six indices turns from positive to negative when weighted by daily media coverage. A case in point is the average daily performance of Germany's DAX index on days it was reported on the country's most-watched nightly news. While the DAX increased by more than 4 index points per day over the period, the index dropped by more than 10 points on days it was reported — news was bad news. On days the DAX wasn't covered on the nightly news, the index rose by around 10 points — no news was good news. About half of the worse daily performance when the DAX was covered is accounted for by a greater focus on negative news. The other half stems from a novel big news bias : a greater focus on large index changes, whether positive or negative, combined with a negative skew in the daily performance of the index. We show that the big news bias extends to other national stock market indices.

OTHER WORK

Multi100 - Estimating the Analytic Robustness of Social and Behavioural Sciences

R&R at Nature; with >450 co-authors

Large-scale replication of 100+ studies in the social sciences. Organized by the Open Science Foundation (OSF).

#ManyDaughters

in a collaboration with Wladislaw Mill

Multi-analyst research project on effects of having daughters on attitudes, preferences, and behaviours.

GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND AWARDS

2023 - 2026	Add-on Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Research in Economics, Joachim Herz Foundation (12,500€ grant)
2025	Award for the best paper in gender economics, Unicredit Foundation (2,500€)
2025	Award for the best paper in public policy evaluation, FBK/IRVAPP (1,000€)
2025	First Prize - Goldmedia Award for innovative theses in Media Economics (500€)
2024	Award for best applied paper at the Econometric Society's Europe Meeting 2024
2024	CRC TR 224 Research Grant for an experiment (4,000€)
2021	CRC TR 224 Research Grant for an experiment (4,000€)
2019 - 2021	PhD Scholarship, Freudenberg Foundation & ZEW (30,000€)
2020	Second Prize - Goldmedia Award for innovative theses in Media Economics (400€)
2014 - 2019	German National Academic Foundation (Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes) - Scholarship for 'academic excellence, interdisciplinary expertise, and social responsibility' (ca. 30,000€ + ideational support)
2016	StudyUp-Award for excellent bachelor's theses, Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences (500€)

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Presentations	2025 : Workshop on Networks and Development (Naples), University of Gothenburg, Max Planck Institute for Research on Collective Goods (Bonn), Italian Econometric Association and the IRVAPP Summer School (Bertinoro), LISER Luxembourg, ifo Institute (Munich), Bocconi University (LEAP, Milan); 2024 : 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); 2023 : 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 Jam-boree, HeiKaMaXY Workshop (Heidelberg), CRC TR224 Retreat (U Bonn & Mannheim); 2022 : CRC TR224 YR Workshop (Bonn & Mannheim), Frankfurt-Mannheim PhD Workshop; 2020 : Bonn-Mannheim PhD Workshop; 2019 : ZEW Conference on the Economics of Information and Communication Technologies
Refereeing	Quarterly Journal of Economics; International Economic Review; Information, Communication & Society; New Media & Society; Frontiers in Behavioral Economics
Field Research	Independent field research on community radios across northern India (03/2022 - 04/2022)
Event Organization	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	2025 : Chicago School in Experimental Economics (Bonn edition); 2024 : Add-on Meeting on Science Communication (Joachim Herz Foundation); 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)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

2021 - 2025	Fellow at Collaborative Research Center Transregio 224 (Universities of Bonn and Mannheim)
2021 - 2025	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

EXTRACURRICULARS

2019 - 2025	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 : setup of a student refugee integration project.

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

MISCELLANEOUS

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

REFERENCES

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