Cover Letter - Nathalie Römer

Dear Admission Comitee,

I am writing to apply for the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp. I am a doctoral student at the Leibniz University of Hannover at the chair of innovation economics of Marina Schröder, who is kindly providing the required recommendation letter.

I began my PhD in the fall of 2019 and am set to graduate this year. I have completed my coursework, including courses in (advanced) micro- and macroeconomics, game theory, and (advanced) econometrics. I have attended further courses at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) during my research stay there. In addition, I participated in the Spring School in Behavioral Economics at UCSD and a summer school in advanced methods in behavioral economics, focussing on new methods in the field such as the application of machine learning and text mining. Moreover, I participated in the online PhD short course on Economics of Ideas, Science, and Innovation organized by the Institute for Progress.

My research focus lies in the intersection of innovation, behavioral- and organizational economics. Therefore, attending the NBER Innovation Boot Camp would perfectly complement the courses I took so far.

Considering the announced lecturers, I cannot think of a more enriching way to deepen my knowledge in the field of innovation economics. Therefore, I would be honored to get the opportunity to learn from and with this outstanding experts and other students and researchers who are interested in the same topics.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Kind regards,



Nathalie Römer

Contact information

Address Königsworther Platz 1, 30167 Hanover, Germany

Phone +49 511 762 4592

Email roemer@inec.uni-hannover.de

Supervisor and recommendation letter writer

Prof. Dr. Marina Schröder (Leibniz University Hannover)

Additional references

Prof. Joshua Graff-Zivin (UCSD)

Prof. Alex Chan (Harvard University)

Research Statement - Nathalie Römer

I empirically study distortions in the generation and evaluation of innovative ideas, focusing on diversity and gender bias. My insights can guide organizations and policy makers on the design of incentives and decision-making to foster innovation.

My four dissertation projects investigate the impact of gender biases on the selection of innovative ideas. In Römer & Schröder (2024a) I experimentally examine how written self-promotion - as prevalent through pitches in many innovation-related settings - affect womens' sucess and selecting the best ideas. Two other projects analyse interventions aimed at supporting women such as advice and affirmative action in this context (Römer & Schröder, in progress). Lastly, in Römer & Bläse (2024) I analyze gender in-group bias on judge panels evaluating start-up ideas with self-collected data from pitching contests. I show that such bias varies with the alignment between the panel's majority gender and the entrepreneur's gender, showing that negative in-group bias arises when a judge's gender differs from the panel majority.

Beyond my dissertation projects, I work on three additional projects. First, in Graff-Zivin & Römer (in progress) I show that social connections affect preferences for team formation and performance through a large-scale experiment. Using a speed-dating mechanism I induce social connections. I show that workers prefer lower-skilled partners they have met over higher-skilled ones they have not met, affecting skill compositions and social closeness of self-formed teams and their performance. Second, in Chan, Kurtis & Römer (in progress), I experimentally study effects of deliberations in group decision-making, finding that it improves performance with highly complementary information but hinders it otherwise. Third, in Römer & Schröder (2024b) I introduce a novel task (see here to show that unweighted piece-rate incentives most effectively boost innovative idea generation.

Motivated by the role of innovation in economic growth and global challenges, my research focuses on two key areas: (1) addressing racial and gender disparities as a means to foster innovation, and (2) examining how emerging technologies, such as AI, affect behavior in innovation-related contexts.

Attending the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp presents a unique opportunity to learn from leading experts and engage with researchers working on related topics. The contributions of the announced lecturers are significantly shaping this field, and many of their areas of expertise closely align with my own research interest. Therefore, I am particularly excited about the opportunity to learn from these leading experts in a more interactive setting. Beyond the knowledge gained from lectures, I look forward to engaging with fellow young scholars, exchanging ideas, and potentially developing collaborative research projects.

References

Chan, A., Kurtis, M., Römer, N. (in progress). *Group decisions.*

Graff-Zivin, J., Römer, N. (in progress). *It's a match! Team composition and performance in innovation-related tasks.*

Römer, N. Bläse, R. (2024). *A single voice is not enough: Evidence on female representation on expert panels in startup pitching contests.*

Laske, K., Römer, N. Schröder, M. (2024). *Piece-rate incentives and idea generation - An experimental analysis.* (CESifo Working Paper No. 11594). CESifo.

Römer, N. Schröder, M. (2024). *Effects of written self-promotions on gender bias and decision quality.*

Römer, N. Schröder, M. (in progress). *The effect of advice on self-evaluation.*

Römer, N. Schröder, M. (in progress). *The effect of affirmative action on self-promotion.*

Nathalie Römer

Königsworther Platz 1 | D-30167 Hanover
roemer@inec.uni-hannover.de
Citizenship: German
Date of birth: 10.07.1995
nathalie-romer.com

Education

10/2019 - present	PhD Candidate, Leibniz University of Hanover Supervisor: Marina Schröder
10/2017 - 09/2019	Master in Quantitative Economics (research master), LMU Munich
04/2014 - 05/2017	B.Sc. Economics, LMU Munich
10/2013 - 06/2016	B.A. Sociology, LMU Munich

Research interests

Behavioral and Experimental economics, Innovation economics

Research

Working papers

"Effects of written self-promotions on gender bias and decision quality" with Marina Schröder

Abstract: Written self-promotion is crucial in numerous decision-making scenarios, including job applications, securing funds for start-ups, or academic grant proposals. In two experiments, we study the effects of written self-promotions agents provide to decision-makers on decision quality and gender bias. We show that providing such self-promotions slightly improves decision quality. Concerning gender bias, we find that self-promotions do not induce a gender bias that harms women. Moreover, the provision of self-promotions can even eliminate pre-existing gender bias when no other performance signals are available.

"Piece-rate incentives and idea generation - An experimental analysis" with Kathrina Laske and Marina Schröder ([link to code])([link to paper])

Abstract: Understanding how organizational design affects idea generation is key to fostering innovation. In the context of idea generation, incentives may impact how hard ideators work (effort) and the types of ideas generated. We introduce two versions of a novel experimental task to quantify both of these effects. We show that piece-rate (PR) incentives increase the number of innovative ideas generated. Incentives lead to an increase in effort provision and a shift toward generating ideas that require less time in the realization. If anything, aligning incentives more closely to the desirable outcomes mitigates the effect of PR incentives on idea generation.

"A single voice is not enough: Evidence on female representation on expert panels in startup pitching contests" with Richard Bläse (draft available upon request)

Abstract: Judging panels significantly impact economic outcomes through resource allocation and hiring decisions. Using a novel dataset from Swiss startup pitch competitions, we examine gender in-group bias in judge panel evaluations of start-up ideas. Our findings reveal that such bias depends on the alignment between the panel's majority gender and the entrepreneur's gender. Judges exhibit negative gender in-group bias when their gender conflicts with the majority on the panel, whereas a slight positive gender in-group bias appears when aligned. Low confidence amplifies these effects. Our findings suggest that judges' identification with the panel outweighs their connection to the entrepreneur. Thus, increasing female representation on judge panels—often suggested to support women's success—may not be beneficial if they remain a minority.

Work in progress

"The effect of advice on self-evaluation" with Marina Schröder (draft in preparation)

Abstract: We experimentally examine how different advice formats affect self-evaluations. We find that advice given based on noisy performance signals increases self-evaluations and success of high-performers while reducing success for low-performers. Both genders respond similarly to proactive advice, given before self-evaluation. However, reactive advice—given after a preliminary self-evaluation—has stronger effects on women. Consequently, high-performing women benefit from advice more than men, whereas low-performing women are disadvantaged. Effects differ due to asymmetric reactions to advice by men. Thus, while reactive advice promotes high-performing women when performance signals are accurate, it disproportionately harms them when misclassified.

"It's a match! Team composition and performance in innovation-related tasks" with Joshua Graff-Zivin (draft in preparation)

Abstract: We provide causal evidence of the effect of social connections on team formation preferences and team performance in an innovation-related task. Using a novel experimental design, we induce social connection in a large-scale online study via a short 2 minute video conversation. We can show that workers prefer to form a team with a lower-skilled worker they have communicated with prior to the team task than with higher-skilled workers they have not spoken to. This affects skill composition and social closeness within teams formed based on workers' preferences. By examining team performance, we show that while social interaction can improve performance, preference-based matching offsets better outcomes. Our findings imply that self-formed teams may be configured sub-optimally as they can be biased by social connections.

"Group decisions" with Alex Chan and Melisa Kurtis (draft in preparation)

Abstract: Group decision-making is crucial in economic decisions, such as in corporate boards, research consortia, and hiring committees. We experimentally investigate the effects of diversity in priors and input aggregation mechanism on team performance in an estimation task. Groups in our experiment share the common objective to accurately estimate the "type" of an imperfectly observed candidate. First, we exogenously vary group member priors and group (prior) diversity. We find that fully diverse groups make more accurate estimations than partially diverse or homogenous groups. Second, we vary the format of decision-making. The findings reveal that performance and benefits of diversity both depend on the group decision-making format. Group deliberation via online chat reduces accuracy. Initial speakers bias the group's estimation towards their own priors, but first speakers with minority views (of priors) lead to more accurate group estimations.

"The effect of affirmative action on self-promotion" (currently collecting data) with Marina Schröder

Abstract: Prior literature has shown that affirmative action can affect effort choices, investments tournament entries or unethical behavior towards peers. In an experimental study, we seek to investigate effects of affirmative action on self-promotion. We systematically vary the disadvantage potentially affirmed individuals are facing, and whether affirmative action is in place or not. Aiming to understand whether affirmative action may lead to underinvestment in support, I assess impacts on willingness to pay for AI assistance in revising self-promotions. With these results, I aim to shed light on potential side effects of affirmative action for affirmed individuals and to current debates on the effectiveness of such policies.

References

Prof. Marina Schröder	Leibniz University Hannover, schroeder@inec.uni-hannover.de
Prof. Alex Chan	Harvard University, achan@hbs.edu
Prof. Joshua Graff-Zivin	UC San Diego, jgraffzivin@ucsd.edu

Research Visits

01/2022 - 04/2022	UC San Diego (Host: Uri Gneezy)
09/2025	(planned) Harvard University (Host: Alex Chan)

Conferences, Workshops and Invited Talks

2021	ESA Global Online Around-the-Clock Meeting, GfeW (Magdeburg)
2022	LESSAC Seminar (Dijon), ASFEE (Lyon), Brown Bag Seminar of the Organizational Economics Chair at LMU (Munich), ESA Europe (Bologna), Conference on Field Experiments in Strategy (London), 2nd Berlin Workshop on Empirical Public Economics: Gender Economics (Berlin)
2023	COPE (Amsterdam), Maastricht University Center of Neuroeconomics, EEA (Barcelona), Verein für Socialpolitik (Regensburg), RISE Workshop (Munich)
2024	GfeW (Cologne)

Summer Schools and other courses

2020	Behavioral Experiments Online: An oTree Programming Workshop (Hannover)
2021	JGU Summer School „Advanced Methods in Behavioral Economics" (Mainz)
2022	Spring School in Behavioural Economics (San Diego), LEOH - Lectures on the Economics of Organizations and Human Resources (Frankfurt), Economics of Ideas, Science, and Innovation Online PhD Course (Institute of Progress)

Teaching

Winter term 2019/20	Tutorial Introduction to Innovation Economics (Bachelor), Seminar Innovation Economics (Bachelor), Seminar Applied Economics (Master), supervision of bachelor theses
Summer term 2020	Tutorial Incentives to Innovate (Master), Seminar Innovation Economics (Bachelor), Seminar Applied Economics (Master), supervision of bachelor theses
Winter term 2020/21	Tutorial Introduction to Innovation Economics (Bachelor), Seminar Innovation Economics (Bachelor), Seminar Applied Economics (Master), supervision of bachelor theses
Summer term 2021	Tutorial Incentives to Innovate (Master), Seminar Innovation Economics (Bachelor), Seminar Accounting, Taxation and Innovation (Master), Seminar Ethics and Economics (Master), supervision of bachelor theses
Summer term 2022	Tutorial Incentives to Innovate (Master), Seminar Ethics and Economics (Master), supervision of bachelor- and master theses
Winter term 2022/23	Tutorial Introduction to Innovation Economics (Bachelor), Seminar Innovation Research (Master), supervision of bachelor- and master theses
Summer term 2023	Seminar Ethics and Economics (Master), Bachelorseminar Innovation Economics, supervision of bachelor- and master theses
Winter term 2023/24	Lecture Introduction to Innovation Economics (Bachelor), supervision of bachelor- and master theses

Professional activities

Member of the Management Science Reproducibility Collaboration:
Fišar, M., Greiner, B., Huber, C., Katok, E., Ozkes, A. I., and Management Science Reproducibility Collaboration. (2023). Reproducibility in management science. Management Science.

Other Employment

10/2016 - 09/2019	Research Assistant, Max-Planck-Institute for Innovation and Competition (Dietmar Harhoff), Munich
09/2016 - 10/2019	Research Assistant, Chair of Organizational Economics (chair of Florian Englmaier), LMU Munich
10/2013 - 06/2016	Working Student (Executive Research), Signium GmbH, Munich
08/2014 - 10/2014	Student Assistant, Institute for Human Capital Management (chair of Ingo Weller), LMU Munich

Other

Programming	Python, Otree, STATA, R, Javascript, HTML, Latex
Languages	German (native), English (fluent), Romanian (fluent), Spanish (B2), French (B1)

Graduate course list - Nathalie Römer

- Graduate courses in Microeconomics
  - Microeconomics - Consumer and Decision Theory
  - Microeconomics - Game Theory and Information Economics
  - Advanced Topics in Microeconomics
- Graduate courses in Econometrics
  - Econometrics - Regression Analysis
  - Econometrics - Advanced Methods
  - Advancced Topics in Econometrics
  - Machine Learning with Applications in Economics
- Graduate courses in Macroeconmics
  - Macroeconomics - Growth Theory
  - Macroeconomics - Business Cycles and Policy
- Courses at UCSD
  - Becoming an economist (Paul Niehaus)
  - Experimental methods (Ayelet Gneezy)
- Summer School in Advanced Methods in Behavioral Economics
  - Experimental Methods
  - Process Data
  - Machine Learning and Behavioral Data
- Spring School in Behavioural Economics, included lectures on
  - Morals and Lying
  - Game Theory
  - Teams and the Gig Economy
  - Freedom, Paternalism and Fairness
  - The Economics of Meta-Cognition
  - Mental Health
  - Belief formation
- Online course on the Economics of Ideas, Science and Innovation by the Institute of Progress, including lectures on
  - Origins of Economic Growth
  - Science and Science Institutions
  - Innovation Incentives
  - Diffusion of Innovation

Institute of Innovation Economics

Leibniz Universität Hannover

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover,
Institute of Innovation Economics, Königsworther Platz 1, 30167 Hannover

Institute of Innovation Economics

Prof. Dr. Marina Schröder

Phone +49 511 762 5874

E-Mail: schroeder@inec.uni-hannover.de

12.02.2025

Reference Letter for Nathalie Römer

Dear Ben,

I am writing to enthusiastically recommend Nathalie Römer for the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp 2025. Nathalie conducts research on the behavioral foundations of innovation with a specific focus on the early stages of the innovation process. She is particularly interested in understanding the occurrence and relevance of biases arising due to discrimination and in-group favoritism and in analyzing interventions to counteract such biases.

In her dissertation project, Nathalie analyzes the relevance of self-promotions and diversity on success. Self-promotions are especially relevant in the early stages of an innovation process, as support provided is typically crucial to the realization of innovative ideas. In the first project of her dissertation project, which is coauthored with me, we analyze the effect of self-promotions on the support provided for innovative ideas. Analyzing the written self-promotions provided by study participants, we can show that gender differences in writing style and informativeness of texts can compensate for gender differences in confidence. Thus, overall, we find that written self-promotions do not induce gender bias but may have a positive impact on the decision quality. A central element of this research is the quantitative analysis of written self-promotions. This is a research field that was new to me and I have benefited strongly from Nathalie's knowledge in this field and from her interest in learning and applying new research methods. In a second joint project, we analyze the effect of advice (a central element of mentoring) on self-promotion. We show that individuals are selective in processing advice, and that the timing of advice - before or after individuals provide an initial self-evaluation - is crucial to the effect of advice on final self-promotions. In a third joint project, we analyze the effect of quotas on self-promotions.

The fourth project of Nathalie's dissertation is coauthored with Richard Bläse (ZHAW). In this project, Nathalie analyzes interdependencies in subjective performance evaluations. Analyzing evaluations that expert panelists provide for entrepreneurial pitches, Nathalie reveals that both male and female panelists update their evaluations when provided with information about other jury members' evaluations. Interestingly, this effect is stronger for female panelists. This study has important practical implications, especially as a possible

Visitor's address:
Königsworther Platz 1
Building 1501, Room 264
30167 Hannover
www.wipol.uni-hannover.de

Head office:
Tel. +49 511 762 0
Fax +49 511 762 3456
www.uni-hannover.de

mechanism driving the under provision of innovation targeting minority groups. This project is again proof for Nathalie's variability in research methods. While the other three projects are based on an experimental approach, this fourth paper of her dissertation projects uses up-to date methods to infer causal insights from observational non-experimental data.

Nathalie works on three research projects that are not part of her dissertation project. In a joint project with Joshua Graff Zivin (UCSD), she analyzes biases in team formation. The idea behind this research project is to test whether individuals place too much emphasis on social connectedness (experimentally induced through prior interactions in video conferences) and too little on complementarities in abilities when selecting team members. I am sure that this research will provide an important contribution to the currently surprisingly scarce research on team formation. In a joint project with Alex Chan (Harvard) and Melisa Kurtis (University of Cologne), Nathalie analyzes the effect of experimentally induced stereotypes on group decision-making. Finally, we introduce the word illustration task, an experimental design to study idea generation.

I consider Nathalie as a very resourceful empirical economist. She excels in finding creative and feasible solutions to provide causal evidence in the most challenging contexts. While most of her work is experimental, Nathalie is eager to learn and apply new methods as she has proven in multiple projects.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly endorse Nathalie for participation at the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp 2025. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Marina Schröder