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Biographical Note

Dr. Fabian Stephany is a Social Data Scientist. In his research, he applies data science, machine learning techniques, and internet data in various social science disciplines. Dr. Stephany holds degrees in Economics, Sociology, and Social Science Statistics from the University of Mannheim, Bocconi University Milan, the University of Cambridge and Vienna University of Economics and Business. He is an affiliate at the Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital and is currently working for the Vienna-based think tank Agenda Austria on the disruptive effects of the digitalisation.

Lecture Abstract

“Digital Revolution: The Manifold Crises in the Age of Intelligent Machines”

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Often, in the history of humankind, we have witnessed societal change as a result of novel technological opportunity. The data revolution of the digital era is no different in that regard. However, the exponential acceleration and spontaneous expansion to various spheres of our life are unique to the nascent digital technologies. Already today, we can see how phenomena like ‘datafication’ and ‘intelligent’ algorithms reshape our societies. They force us to change our perspectives on human labor, national governments, and liberal humanism. As these concepts change irreversibly in the next decades, the conceptual vacuum will be filled by alternative entities. In this lecture, some of the central forces of change in data technology are outlined. Potential pathways of post-disrupted societies are sketched according to the ideas of contemporary scholars. Ambiguity is the communality of all these trajectories. The technological transformation can be a source of unprecedented opportunity or of manifold crisis.