

Fabian Waldinger (LMU Munich)

Published on October 14, 2021 – Updated on January 18, 2022

Date

Le 20 October 2021 De 17:30 à 18:30

Webinar: The Economics of Migration. Academics at
Risk: Professional Networks and High-Skilled Emigration
from Nazi Germany

Academics at Risk: Professional Networks and High-Skilled Emigration from Nazi Germany

Co-authors: Sascha Becker, Volker Lindenthal and Sharun Mukand.

ABSTRACT

We study the role of professional networks in facilitating emigration of Jewish academics who were dismissed from their jobs by the Nazi government. We use individual-level exogenous variation in the timing of dismissals to estimate the causal effect of networks. Academics with more ties to early émigrés (emigrated 1933-1934) were more likely to emigrate. Early émigrés functioned as “bridging nodes” that facilitated the emigration to their own destination. Furthermore, we find that emigration was only affected by professional networks, but not by community networks. Lastly, we provide some of the first empirical

evidence of decay in social ties over time.

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