

Jahrestagung
Bildungsökonomischer Ausschuss
im Verein für Socialpolitik
27./28. Februar 2020

Tagungsort:
Universität Wien
Fakultät für Wirtschaftswissenschaften
Sky-Lounge
Oskar-Morgenstern-Platz 1
1090 Wien

Generalthema: „Soft and Hard Skills: Their Impact on Educational and Labour Market Success“

Mittwoch, 26. Februar 2020

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| 15.00 Uhr | Get together und Universitätsführung:
<i>Ein Gang durch das historische Hauptgebäude der Universität Wien</i>
<i>Treffpunkt: Vor dem Haupteingang der Universität Wien, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Wien</i> |
| 19.30 Uhr | Abendessen (auf eigene Rechnung)
<i>Universitätsbräuhaus, Alser Straße 4, Hof 1, 1090 Wien</i> |

Donnerstag, 27. Februar 2020

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| 09.00 – 09.10 Uhr | Begrüßung und Einführung
(Prof. Fabel & Stefan C. Wolter) |
| 09.10 – 10.00 Uhr | Mathias Hübener (Deutsches Institut für
Wirtschaftsforschung e.V. DIW Berlin): <i>“The Effects of
Education on Health: An Intergenerational Perspective”</i> |
| 10.00 – 10.30 Uhr | Kaffeepause |
| 10.30 – 11.20 Uhr | Frauke Peter (Deutsches Zentrum für Hochschul- und
Wissenschaftsforschung DZHW und Deutsches Institut
für Wirtschaftsforschung DIW): <i>“The Effects of Information and
Assistance for Parents on Childcare Applications and Take-Up –
Evidence From a Randomized Controlled Trial“</i> |

11.20 – 12.10 Uhr	Harald Pfeifer (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung BIBB und Universität Maastricht): <i>“Supply Shocks in the Market for Apprenticeships in Germany”</i>
12.10 – 13.10 Uhr	Mittagessen
13.10 – 14.00 Uhr	Gregor Pfeifer (University College London): <i>“Should Teachers or Parents Decide on Children’s Secondary School Track? Regional Tracking Reforms, Response Dynamics, and Effect Heterogeneity”</i>
14.00 – 14.50 Uhr	Malte Sandner (Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung Nürnberg): <i>“The Effects of Home Visiting During Pregnancy and Infancy on Child and Maternal Outcomes at Age 8”</i>
14.50 – 15.40 Uhr	Oliver Himmler (Universität Erfurt): <i>“The Long-Run Effects of Soft Commitment Devices and Reminders on Academic Performance”</i>
15:40 – 16:10 Uhr	Kaffepause
16.10 – 17.10 Uhr	Mitgliederversammlung
19.30 Uhr	Abendessen (auf eigene Rechnung) <i>Zwölf Apostelkeller, Sonnenfelsgasse 3, 1010 Wien</i>

Freitag, 28. Februar 2020

09.00 – 09.50 Uhr	Katja Kaufmann (Universität Mannheim): <i>„The Fall of the Aspirations Wall: Educational Aspirations, Achievement and Societal Change“</i>
09.50 – 10.40 Uhr	Postersession
10.40 – 11.10 Uhr	Kaffeepause
11.10 – 12.00 Uhr	Hendrik Jürges (Universität Wuppertal): <i>“Children’s Time Allocation and Skill Production“</i>
12:00 – 12:50 Uhr	Uschi Backes-Gellner (Universität Zürich): <i>„Tertiary Education Expansion and Task Demand: Does a Rising Tide Lift All Boats?“</i>
13.00 Uhr	Kleiner Imbiss

Uschi Backes-Gellner (Universität Zürich) / Tobias Schultheiss (Universität Zürich) / Curdin Pfister (Universität Zürich) / Ann-Sophie Gnehm (Universität Zürich): *“Tertiary Education Expansion and Task Demand: Does a Rising Tide Lift All Boats?”*

We examine how the establishment of Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in Switzerland affected the jobs of not only UAS graduates but also of middle-skilled workers with vocational degrees, for whom such tertiary education expansion may crowd out skilled tasks or elevate the task content. Applying machine-learning methods to job advertisement data, we analyze task content before and after the educational expansion, finding that in affected regions the tasks of both groups contain more R&D and become more like those of university graduates. UAS graduates likely constitute and build a bridge between university graduates middle-skilled workers, facilitating the integration of middle-skilled workers into R&D tasks.

Oliver Himmler (Universität Erfurt): *“The Long-Run Effects of Soft Commitment Devices and Reminders on Academic Performance”*

In a randomized field experiment, we study the long-run effects of soft commitments and reminders on academic performance. Our first treatment consisted of sending students in a 7-semester bachelor's degree program reminders about the recommended study structure each semester. The second treatment group received the same reminders but in the first semester were on top offered the opportunity to commit to the recommended study structure with a non-binding agreement. After 5 years, we find that the reminders did not generate any effects on academic performance. The soft commitment device treatment on the other hand is highly effective: after 5 years, students in the commitment treatment are 14 percentage points more likely to have graduated, 9 percentage points less likely to have dropped out, and their time to graduation is 0.35 semesters shorter than that of the controls -- while maintaining the same GPA as the controls.

Mathias Hübener (DIW Berlin): *“The Effects of Education on Health: An Intergenerational Perspective”*

This paper presents novel evidence of causal effects of parental education on children's health behaviours and long-term health. We study intergenerational effects of a compulsory schooling increase in Germany, exploiting the staggered reform introduction with difference-in-differences models and event studies. We find that maternal schooling reduces children's smoking and overweight in adolescence. The effects persist into children's adulthood, reducing chronic conditions that often result from unhealthy lifestyles. We find no effects of paternal education. Increased maternal investments in children's education and improvements in children's peer environment at a critical age for the initiation of unhealthy behaviours are possible effect channels.

Hendrik Jürges (Universität Wuppertal) / Rasheda Khanam (University of Southern Queensland): *“Children’s Time Allocation and Skill Production”*

Cognitive and non-cognitive skills acquired in childhood have been identified as important predictors of educational attainment, labor market outcomes and other long-term consequences in life. One important input into skill production is time, which is spent on a large array of activities that enhance or reduce cognitive and non-cognitive skills. We use comprehensive data on time use, educational attainment measured by standardized test scores, and measured internalizing and externalizing problems (SDQ) of Australian children aged 10 to 15 to study the link between time use and skills. We address potential endogeneity of time use by adjusting for a comprehensive set of covariates, including initial skills and past inputs and outputs. A recently developed omitted variables test that exploits bunching of time use at zero is used to support our identifying assumption. We report results from a large variety of different plausible specifications in specification curves. Our evidence supports the idea that educational activities at home improve cognitive skills. Screentime, i.e., various activities such as computer gaming and social network use, does not affect cognitive skills, but increases the prevalence of internalizing problems.

Katja Kaufmann (Universität Mannheim, CESifo, IZA) / Ghazala Azmat (Science Po, CEP(LSE), CEPR, CESifo, IZA): *“The Fall of the Aspirations Wall: Educational Aspirations, Achievement and Societal Change”*

This paper studies the role of ones’ politico-economic environment in shaping educational aspirations, and how these aspirations feedback onto longer-run educational investments made by individuals. We use the natural experiment of the German Reunification in October 1990 to study a change in regime on youth aspirations. Through Reunification, East Germany transitioned from a totalitarian socialist system with a planned economy to the capitalistic and democratic system of West Germany. Using differences across cohorts induced by the timing of Reunification, we show that, shortly after the change in regime, college aspirations among high-school aged students’ in East Germany increase dramatically and, eventually, translate into a sizeable increase in the likelihood to complete their university entrance certificate four years later. We explore several mechanisms to explain changes in aspirations and find that expected returns to education, perceived uncertainty, and students’ economic preferences (“consumerism”) and socio-political attitudes (“individualism”) adapt relatively fast and are linked to the changes in aspirations.

Frauke Peter (DZHW, DIW Berlin) / Henning Hermes (NHH Bergen) / Philipp Lergepöporer (ifo Institut München) / Simon Wiederhold (KU Eichstätt-Ingolstadt): *“The Effects of Information and Assistance for Parents on Childcare Applications and Take-Up – Evidence From a Randomized Controlled Trial”*

Early childcare is an essential tool to support child development. Although research suggests that children from families with low socioeconomic status (SES) benefit most from childcare, their take-up rates tend to be relatively low. This paper investigates whether alleviating informational and behavioral barriers can foster childcare usage among low-SES families. In our randomized controlled trial, we provide parents of young children in two medium-sized German cities with information and application assistance. Our baseline data show substantial SES gaps in parents’ preferences and beliefs: Low-SES parents prefer later childcare entry than their high-SES counterparts. Low-SES parents are also less informed about central facts of the childcare system, such as their legal claim for a childcare slot. In our post-treatment survey, we investigate the causal effects of information and assistance on these SES gaps.

Gregor Pfeifer (University College London) / Aderonke Osikominu (Universität Hohenheim) / Kristina Strohmaier (Universität Tübingen): *“Should Teachers or Parents Decide on Children’s Secondary School Track? Regional Tracking Reforms, Response Dynamics, and Effect Heterogeneity”*

Depending on the federal state in Germany, either teachers or parents have the right to decide on the highest secondary school track a child may attend from grade five on. We exploit recent state-level reforms that abolished mandatory teacher recommendations and evaluate the effects on transition rates to secondary school tracks and repetition rates in early grades of secondary school. We develop a disaggregated version of the synthetic control method, which forms synthetic controls at the district rather than at the state level. This allows us to examine effect heterogeneity in more detail. The abolishment of mandatory teacher recommendations led to a substantial increase (decrease) in the transition to the intermediate and high (low) secondary school tracks, with stronger responses among children living in richer districts. At the same time, grade repetition at the onset of secondary school almost doubled. This evidence suggests that parents, unlike teachers, choose school tracks not just to match the child’s ability but also according to their own aspirations.

Harald Pfeifer (BIBB, ROA Maastricht) / Samuel Muehlemann (LMU München, IZA Bonn) / Gerard Pfann (Universität Maastricht, IZA Bonn) / Hans Dietrich (IAB Nuremberg): *“Supply Shocks in the Market for Apprenticeships in Germany”*

The G8 high school reform in Germany reduced minimum duration to obtain a high-school diploma (Abitur) from 9 to 8 years, leading to the graduation of two cohorts in one year. Because the implementation of the policy occurred in different regions (Länder) in different years, we can use this reform to study how the additional inflow of high-educated graduates changed the apprenticeship market. First, to conjecture possible effects of a supply shock in one input, we present a theoretical model that is based on a CES technology with heterogeneous inputs. We then estimate the size effects of the one-time supply shock in market for high-educated apprentices using difference-in-difference, fixed-effects and IV regressions. Finally, we estimate wage effects of the supply-shock using the same regression techniques. We find that training firms almost fully and immediately absorbed the additional supply of high-school graduates in the apprenticeship market. In contrast to immigration studies, we do not find evidence for substitution effects between low- and high-educated individuals. We further do not find significant wage effects for any of the apprentice groups. We explain these outcomes by collectively bargained wages that are sticky and too low for high-educated apprentices.

Malte Sandner (IAB Nürnberg): *“The Effects of Home Visiting During Pregnancy and Infancy on Child and Maternal Outcomes at Age 8”*

This study exploits a randomized controlled trial to investigate the effects of a German home visiting program (Pro Kind) for disadvantaged families on child and maternal outcomes at child’s age 8. The intervention started during pregnancy and continued until the second birthday. We present results six years after the end of the home visits. We use data from telephone interviews, on-site interviews, and developmental tests to assess children’s and mothers’ mental health, life satisfaction, cognitive and social development, parenting behavior, signs of child abuse or neglect, and the family’s socio-economic status. Furthermore, we access administrative data to obtain information regarding the mother’s and child’s usage of

health care services, and mother's welfare usage and employment history. For children, we find that Pro Kind has several positive effects on behavior. For mothers, Pro Kind reduces violent parenting and increases life satisfaction. Additionally, mothers in the treatment group have more second births and are less months employed than in the control group indicating that mother in the treatment group focus more on their family life. Overall, the results suggest that the Pro Kind intervention has long lasting effects and changed the life of the participating families sustainable in many domains.