

## Jahrestagung

### Bildungsökonomischer Ausschuss des Vereins für Socialpolitik

12./13. März 2015

Tagungsort: DIW, Mohrenstraße 58, 10117 Berlin

Generalthema:

### „40 Jahre Bildungsökonomischer Ausschuss: Entwicklungen und Perspektiven“

#### Mittwoch, 11. März 2015

18.30 – 20.00 Uhr Reichstagsführung

20.30 Uhr **Get-together**, Ständige Vertretung (Schiffbauerdamm 8)

#### Donnerstag, 12. März 2015

09.00 – 09.20 Uhr Begrüßung und Einführung (Ludger Wößmann, C. Katharina Spieß)

09.20 – 10.10 Uhr **Aderonke Osikominu** (Universität Hohenheim), Benjamin Fuchs  
*Quality Leisure Time and Youth Development*

10.10 – 11.00 Uhr **Marc Piopiunik** (ifo München)  
*The Value of Smarter Teachers: International Evidence on Teacher  
Cognitive Skills and Student Performance*

11.00 – 11.30 Uhr *Kaffeepause*

11.30 – 12.20 Uhr **Pia Pinger** (Universität Bonn)  
*Student Major Choice and the Probability of Dropout – What Can We  
Learn from Elicited Measures of Life-cycle Expectations?*

12.20 – 13.10 Uhr **Alexander Kemnitz** (TU Dresden)  
*Hochschulfinanzierung, Bildungsföderalismus und die Qualität der Lehre*

13.10 – 14.10 Uhr *Mittagessen*

14.10 – 15.00 Uhr **Silke Anger** (Universität Bamberg und IAB Nürnberg)  
*Unintended Consequences of Education Policies in Germany*

15.00 – 16.00 Uhr **Poster Session** (siehe nächste Seite)

16.00 – 16.30 Uhr *Kaffeepause*

16.30 – 17.30 Uhr *Keynote Lecture:*  
**Stephen Machin** (University College London)  
*Economics of Education Research: Past Developments and Future  
Perspectives*

17.30 – 19.00 Uhr **Mitgliederversammlung**

19.30 Uhr **Abendessen**, Cafe Wilhelm (Am Kupfergraben 4)

### **Freitag, 13. März 2015**

09.00 – 09.50 Uhr **Dieter Sadowski** (Universität Trier)  
*Der Bildungsökonomische Ausschuss des Vereins für Socialpolitik:  
Entstehung, Strömungen und Entwicklungen 1975-2015*

09.50 – 10.40 Uhr **Oliver Himmler** (MPI Bonn) und Robert Jäckle  
*Soft Commitments, Reminders, and Academic Performance --  
A Field Experiment in Higher Education*

10.40 – 11.00 Uhr *Kaffeepause*

11.00 – 12.00 Uhr *Festvortrag:*  
**Stefan Müller** (Parlamentarischer Staatssekretär, Bundesministerium  
für Bildung und Forschung)  
*Bildungsökonomik zwischen Politikberatung und -wirklichkeit*

12.00 – 12.45 Uhr *Verleihung des Wissenschaftlichen Förderpreises des BÖA:*  
**Preis für die beste bildungsökonomische Dissertation 2013/14**

12.45 – 13.30 Uhr *Kleiner Imbiss*

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### **Poster Session** (Donnerstag 15:00 Uhr):

Peter Hoeschler, **Uschi Backes-Gellner** (University of Zurich): *College Dropout and Self-Esteem*

**Katja Görlitz** (FU Berlin), Marcus Tamm (RWI Essen): *Do Training Vouchers Increase Adult Learning? Evidence from a Randomized Information Treatment*

**Hendrik Jürges** (University of Wuppertal): *Political Conflict, Child Mental Health, and Cognitive Development*

Hans Dietrich, **Samuel Mühlemann** (University of Munich), Gerard Pfann, Harald Pfeifer: *The Effect of the G8 Reform on the German Apprenticeship Market*

Daniel Alexandrov, Valeria Invaniushina, Ksenia Tenishewa (Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg), Anna Makles, **Kerstin Schneider** (WIB, University of Wuppertal): *School Choice in St. Petersburg: The Hidden Role of Socioeconomic Status*

Matthew M. Chingos (Brookings Institution), **Guido Schwerdt** (University of Konstanz): *Virtual Schooling and Student Learning: Evidence from the Florida Virtual School*

Frauke Peter, Vaishali Zambre, **C. Katharina Spieß** (DIW and FU Berlin): *Educational Inequality and Preference for College: Do Students Lack Information? Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment*

**Ludger Wößmann** (LMU and ifo Munich), Philipp Lergetporer, Franziska Kugler, Katharina Werner: *Was die Deutschen über die Bildungspolitik denken – Ergebnisse des ersten ifo Bildungsbarometers*

**Stefan C. Wolter** (University of Bern): *Locus of Control and Educational Choices*

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## **Abstracts**

### **Donnerstag**

#### **Quality Leisure Time and Youth Development**

Aderonke Osikominu (Universität Hohenheim), Benjamin Fuchs

Parents and policymakers alike worry about what activities may provide valuable learning experiences to youths beyond the domain of schooling. Research on extracurricular and leisure activities documents sizeable positive associations between the engagement in structured activities and measures of skills, educational attainment and labor market outcomes. What are the underlying mechanisms? This paper first develops a simple model to clarify the potential links between leisure time use and human capital formation. Then we explore empirically what youths do in their leisure. We further focus on sports as a popular activity and estimate its effect on a set of behavioral and economic outcomes. The empirical analysis exploits data from the German Socio-Economic Panel that offers the unique advantage of both a large, representative sample and high quality behavioral measures. We employ a flexible strategy combining propensity score matching and regression techniques to account for self selection into athletic involvement. We assess the plausibility of non-measured confounding using human capital measures that are predetermined with respect to athletic involvement. Our results are consistent with the hypothesis that structured leisure activities like sports contribute to the development of nonacademic skills.

#### **The Value of Smarter Teachers: International Evidence on Teacher Cognitive Skills and Student Performance**

Marc Piopiunik (ifo München)

Student performance differs greatly across countries, but little is known about the role of teacher quality in explaining these differences. New international data from the PIAAC survey of adult skills allow quantifying country-specific teacher skills in numeracy and literacy for the first time. Our main identification strategy exploits exogenous variation in teacher skills attributable to international differences in relative wages of non-teacher public-sector employees. Using student-level performance data, we find that teacher skills are an important determinant of international differences in student performance. Results are supported by fixed-effects estimations that exploit within-country between-subject variation in teacher skills.

#### **Student Major Choice and the Probability of Dropout – What Can We Learn from Elicited Measures of Life-cycle Expectations?**

Pia Pinger (Universität Bonn)

In this project, we investigate the role played by life-cycle expectations about wages, job satisfaction, job security and wage uncertainty for student major choice and university dropout. We survey students about their expected earnings, unemployment probabilities, working hours and job satisfaction in the major they have chosen, their second preferred choice and in the case of dropout. The aim is to understand (i) how well relative expected job characteristics predict student decisions, (ii) how much study choices are driven by expectations about job characteristics at different points over the life-cycle, (iii) the relative importance of uncertainty and information acquisition for major choice and student dropout.

## **Hochschulfinanzierung, Bildungsföderalismus und die Qualität der Lehre**

Alexander Kemnitz (TU Dresden)

Dieser Aufsatz untersucht, inwieweit Studiengebühren ein Instrument zur Verbesserung der Qualität der Lehre darstellen können. Es wird gezeigt, dass dies vom Grad des Bildungsföderalismus abhängt. Bei zentralisierten Entscheidungen können Studiengebühren zu einer entsprechenden Verdrängung öffentlicher Hochschulausgaben führen. Im dezentralen Fall verbessern Studiengebühren zwar die Qualität der Lehre. Daher kann sich eine dezentrale Lösung als vorteilhafter erweisen als im Fall rein öffentlicher Hochschulfinanzierung. Allerdings kann der föderale Wettbewerb auch zu einem freiwilligen Verzicht auf das Finanzierungsinstrument Studiengebühren führen.

## **Unintended Consequences of Education Policies in Germany**

Silke Anger (Universität Bamberg und IAB Nürnberg)

Education policies aim at designing educational systems to maximize school outcomes. However, they may overlook unintended side effects, which may or may not be to the benefit of affected individuals. The first study (joint with Guido Heineck) considers the education policy of enforcing right-handedness, which was practiced in German schools up to the 1960s. Handedness conversion was a common educational practice in most Western countries to spare left-handed children disadvantages in later life, as the use of the left hand for writing and other manual activities was considered as a “natural defect”. The study investigates whether this “childhood intervention policy” was successful in improving economic outcomes of natural left-handers, or whether unexpected effects led to the reverse. Using German micro-data on natural right-handers, natural left-handers, and “converted” left-handers the study finds that unintended effects caused natural left-handers to suffer from that policy. The second education policy under investigation is the reduction in the length of high school from nine to eight years in Germany. The reform took place between 2001 and 2007 in most of Germany’s federal states, leaving the overall curriculum unchanged. The study (joint with Sarah Dahmann) investigates the short-term effects of the reform on students’ personality, their attitudes and behavior. Using rich data on adolescents and young adults, the estimates show that shortening high school caused a change in students’ personality and their attitudes. However, the estimates point to important heterogeneous effects, leading to hidden costs and benefits for different groups of students. The overall conclusion is that education policies may have unintended side effects, which policy makers should take into consideration.

## **Poster Session**

### **College Dropout and Self-Esteem**

Peter Hoeschler, Uschi Backes-Gellner (University of Zurich)

This study investigates the impact of finishing versus dropping out of college on self-esteem. Using data spanning three decades from the U.S. National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, we find that dropping out of a four-year college significantly decreases self-esteem compared to graduating. In addition, two- and four-year college graduates have significant higher self-esteem than high school graduates never enrolled in college. However, individuals dropping out of a two- or a four-year college miss out on this positive effect. These findings are long-term effects still visible when dropouts are in their late 40s.

### **Do Training Vouchers Increase Adult Learning? Evidence from a Randomized Information Treatment**

Katja Görlitz (FU Berlin), Marcus Tamm (RWI Essen)

This paper analyzes the impact of a large scale voucher program on training participation and on wages and other non-monetary outcomes. Two methods are used for the analyses. First, we compare the treatment group with a proper control group that consists of “no-shows”, i.e. employees that have registered for the voucher, but had to cancel their participation due to a random event. Second, we analyze a field experiment that provides an information treatment about the program to a random sample of employees.

### **Political Conflict, Child Mental Health, and Cognitive Development**

Hendrik Jürges (University of Wuppertal)

Children living in the occupied Palestinian territories are exposed to poverty as well as continued physical and psychological violence and human rights violations, leading to low levels of mental health compared to children in Western countries. We use test score and survey data on approximately 6,000 students in grades 5 to 9 in the West Bank to study the effect of bad mental health on cognitive development. We show that low cognitive test scores are significantly linked with measures of mental health such as the Birlson depression self-rating scale or the parent-rated Strengths and Difficulties (SDQ scores) also after controlling for a wide range of potential confounders. Using self-reported exposure to potentially traumatizing events related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as instruments for the prevalence of mental health problems, we find evidence for a causal link between mental health and cognitive development. Moreover, since our estimators measure the effect only for those whose exposure to potentially traumatizing events has impaired their mental health, we find IV estimates that are substantially larger than OLS estimates.

### **The Effect of the G8 Reform on the German Apprenticeship Market**

Hans Dietrich, Samuel Mühlemann (University of Munich), Gerard Pfann, Harald Pfeifer

In Germany, 30 percent of all high-school graduates (Abiturienten) enter the labor market as apprentices. The reduction of the high school track from nine to eight years (G8 reform) lead to a positive supply shock in the corresponding states. When the first cohort affected by the reform graduated, there were about twice as many individuals with an Abitur looking for an apprenticeship position compared to earlier years. Such a supply shock may have a number of consequences for the market of apprentices. The main question is whether an excess supply results in lower wages and thus more apprenticeship contracts, as would be expected in a “regular” labor market for adult workers. However, as the G8 reform only affects the supply of high-qualified apprentices (the number of other school-leavers is unchanged), firms may also adjust their demand for trainees, i.e., hire more high-qualified applicants with an

Abitur as substitutes for applicants without an Abitur. We exploit the fact that the reform took place in different states at different times, and thus apply a difference-in-differences approach to identify the effects of the reform on the German apprenticeship market.

### **School Choice in St. Petersburg: The Hidden Role of Socioeconomic Status**

Daniel Alexandrov, Valeria Invaniushina, Ksenia Tenishewa (Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg), Anna Makles, Kerstin Schneider (WIB, University of Wuppertal)

Russia's school system is a comprehensive school system, with equality of opportunities being an important legacy of the Soviet Union. The present paper looks at the structure and the development of the education system and effective tracking as well as social and ethnic segregation in Russia. We use rich data from a representative student survey of 9th graders in St. Petersburg and combine it with information on the geographical structure of the city of St. Petersburg. We demonstrate the existence of effective school catchment areas in the absence of formal catchment areas and the extent of tracking based on socio-economic background in Russia's comprehensive school system.

### **Virtual Schooling and Student Learning: Evidence from the Florida Virtual School**

Matthew M. Chingos (Brookings Institution), Guido Schwerdt (University of Konstanz)

Online education options have proliferated in recent years, with significant growth occurring at state-sponsored virtual schools. However, there is no prior credible evidence on the quality of virtual courses compared to in-person courses in U.S. secondary education. We compare the performance of students who took core courses in algebra and English at their traditional public high school to the performance of students who took the same courses through the Florida Virtual School, the largest state virtual school in the U.S. We find that FLVS students are positively selected in terms of prior achievement and demographics, but perform about the same or somewhat better on state tests once their pre-high-school characteristics are taken into account. We find little evidence of treatment effect heterogeneity across a variety of student subgroups, and no consistent evidence of negative impacts for any subgroups. Differences in spending between the sectors suggest the possibility of a productivity advantage for FLVS.

### **Educational Inequality and Preference for College: Do Students Lack Information? Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment**

Frauke Peter, Vaishali Zambre, C. Katharina Spieß (DIW and FU Berlin)

What prevents high school students from a non-academic family background to decide in favor of university education? Despite the fact that these high school students obtain a university-entrance degree, they often choose another track of post-secondary education. Findings in the economic literature suggest various channels, among them information asymmetry. This paper aims at shedding light on this mechanism by evaluating the short-term effect of providing information as a potential policy intervention. In May 2013 we treated eight schools in a randomized sample of 27 upper secondary schools in Berlin by giving an in-class presentation on the costs and benefits of university education as well as on potential financing strategies. In August 2013 we surveyed the sample again, and thus, are able to compare short-term differences in students' preferences. Using a difference-in-differences approach we find an increase in students' preference for university education if they come from a non-academic family background.

## **Was die Deutschen über die Bildungspolitik denken – Ergebnisse des ersten ifo Bildungsbarometers**

Ludger Wößmann (LMU and ifo Munich), Philipp Lergetporer, Franziska Kugler, Katharina Werner

Die überwiegende Mehrheit der deutschen Bevölkerung ist für einen verpflichtenden Kindergartenbesuch, für eine Abschaffung der Kindergartengebühren, für ein Ganztagschulsystem für alle Kinder bis 15 Uhr, für deutschlandweit einheitliche Abschlussprüfungen im Abitur – und findet es wichtig, dass Deutschland beim PISA-Test gut abschneidet. Gleichzeitig ist eine deutliche Mehrheit gegen die Abschaffung von Schulnoten, gegen höhere Lehrergehälter und gegen die Verbeamtung von Lehrern. Die Deutschen sprechen sich auch mehrheitlich dafür aus, die staatlichen Ausgaben für Schulen zu erhöhen – aber es ist nur noch eine Minderheit, wenn auf die Notwendigkeit der Steuererhöhung für die staatliche Finanzierung hingewiesen wird. Eine relative Mehrheit gegen Studiengebühren verwandelt sich ebenfalls in eine relative Minderheit, sobald sie über den Einkommensunterschied von Personen mit und ohne Studium informiert wird. Wenn die Studiengebühren erst nach dem Studium und erst ab einem gewissen Jahreseinkommen zurückgezahlt werden müssen, ist sogar eine deutliche Mehrheit dafür. Mehrheiten finden sich auch gegen das Betreuungsgeld und gegen das G8, aber für Leistungszulagen für in Problemschulen unterrichtende Lehrkräfte und für die Einführung von zweijährigen Ausbildungsberufen. Nach Ansicht der meisten Deutschen sollten Arbeitgeber und Staat mehr für Fort- und Weiterbildung ausgeben – nicht aber die Personen selbst. Und nahezu alle sind der Meinung, dass gute Schülerleistungen für den zukünftigen Wohlstand unseres Landes wichtig sind. Dies und mehr geht aus dem ersten ifo Bildungsbarometer hervor, einer repräsentativen Meinungsumfrage der erwachsenen Bevölkerung in Deutschland.

## **Freitag**

### **Der Bildungsökonomische Ausschuss des Vereins für Socialpolitik: Entstehung, Strömungen und Entwicklungen 1975-2015**

Dieter Sadowski (Universität Trier)

Auf der Grundlage der Dokumente und des Schriftverkehrs seit Gründung des Bildungsökonomischen Ausschusses 1975 und aus teilnehmender Beobachtung wird nachgezeichnet, wer anfangs die Initiative übernommen hat, wer zum Mitmachen eingeladen wurde – und wer nicht –, wie sich im Laufe der Jahre Themen und Methoden sowie die Arbeitsweise des Ausschusses geändert haben. Der Schwerpunkt liegt auf den unbekannteren ersten 20 Jahren. Die Institutionalisierung der Bildungsökonomie durch den Verein für Socialpolitik war in den deutschsprachigen Ländern kein geradliniger, sondern bisweilen recht idiosynkratischer, beinahe zufälliger Prozess.

### **Soft Commitments, Reminders, and Academic Performance -- A Field Experiment in Higher Education**

Oliver Himmler (MPI Bonn) und Robert Jäckle

A large share of German students in higher education leave university without a degree, and those who do graduate often take much longer than scheduled. These problems may in part stem from prevalent procrastination issues, and against this backdrop we conducted a field experiment with the incoming cohort of business administration majors at a German University. All students were offered an introductory lesson on how to best organize their studies in order to stay on track for a timely graduation. In addition, our first treatment group received two letters in the mail. The first reminded students to sign up for all scheduled exams. The second reminder came six weeks before the actual exam week, saying that now would be a good time to start studying if they hadn't already done so. The second treatment group were in addition given the opportunity to sign a non-enforceable contract, stating that they would adhere to the recommended exam schedule. This group also received a copy of their signed contract in the mail with the second reminder. After the first semester, we find no effect of the reminders on dropout rates, grades, and exams passed. However, those who were on top offered the soft commitment device earned on average 10% more credit points while at the same time maintaining the same average grades as the control group. The effect is entirely driven by much improved performance in the mathematically challenging exams, where the treatment group was 17% more likely to show up, and subsequently earned 25% more credit points than the controls, without a drop in GPA.