



NEWSLETTER 2016-1

CALENDAR:

Departmental Seminar

Lydia Mechtenberg (University of Hamburg):
Voter Motivation and the Quality of Democratic Choice

Monday, January 11
16:30–18:00
VG H26

IOS Seminar

Olga Popova (IOS Regensburg):
Do happy people bribe less?

Tuesday, January 12
13:30–15:00
AlFi 1.09 (Landshuter Str. 4)

Economic and Social History Seminar

Anna Pauli (University of Regensburg):
Was kostet Reklame? Historische Statistik des Werbeetats im Einzelhandel

Wednesday, January 13
18:00–20:15
VG 1.30

ABSTRACTS:

Departmental Seminar

Lydia Mechtenberg: *Voter Motivation and the Quality of Democratic Choice*

Abstract: The quality of democratic decision making critically depends on voter motivation, i.e. the voters' willingness to incur costs to be well informed and to turn out. If voters are motivated, voting may result in smart choices because of information aggregation but if voters are unmotivated, delegating the choice to an expert may yield better outcomes. Those willing to incur a cost to cast an informed vote improve the quality of democratic choice for the entire committee and thus provide a public good. We experimentally show that voting is more informationally efficient when subjects demand (by signing a petition) to make choices by voting than when decision making by voting is imposed on subjects. Our results suggest that the quality of direct democratic decision making can be improved by letting voters know that others are (also) motivated to be informed and to turn out.

IOS Seminar

Olga Popova: *Do happy people bribe less?*

Abstract: This paper contributes to the understanding of the individual factors that explain bribing behavior in European countries. In particular, we examine the causal impact of an individual life satisfaction on making unofficial payments and gifts in exchange of free of charge public services. Using historical instruments, we control for the endogeneity of life satisfaction. The theoretical explanation to the individual incentives behind bribing behavior goes back to Becker (1968) who suggests comparing the expected monetary and non-monetary benefits of committing crime and the opportunity costs of being caught, convicted, and fined. Data are taken from the Life in Transition Survey 2010 (LiTS), a cross-sectional survey of individuals in developed and transition economies. The effect of life satisfaction on bribing behavior is compared between individuals from three country groups, including Western Europe, new EU member states, and the former Soviet Union (FSU). The results suggest a negative effect of life satisfaction on bribing behavior in all three country groups, although in Western Europe, the effect is economically stronger. Uncovering that life satisfaction is a predictor of individual bribing behavior allows to underscore the external validity of the life satisfaction.

Economic and Social History Seminar

Anna Pauli: *Was kostet Reklame? Historische Statistik des Werbeetats im Einzelhandel*

Abstract: Ziel des Vortrags ist es, die Werbeausgaben des Einzelhandels in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts zu analysieren. Wie wirkten sich Faktoren wie Betriebsgröße, Konjunktur und Umsatzzahlen bei der Festlegung des Werbebudgets aus? In welchem Verhältnis standen die Werbeausgaben zu den übrigen Betriebskosten? Wie sah die Verteilung der einzelnen Werbemittel aus? Diese Fragen sollen anhand einzelner Betriebs- und Branchenstatistiken überprüft werden. Im Mittelpunkt wird das Problem der Belastbarkeit des statistischen Materials stehen. Ein unterschiedliches Verständnis dessen, was unter Werbekosten zu subsumieren ist, und Angaben, die von groben Schätzungen bis zu exakten Zahlen aus der Praxis reichen, erschweren die Vergleichbarkeit der Daten. Daher sollen Entwicklungstendenzen aufgezeigt werden, die Aufschlüsse über die Strukturen der unternehmerischen Nutzung der Werbung bieten sollen.

MISCELLANEOUS:

RegensburgEconNews 2016-2 will be available on January 13, 2016.

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**RegensburgEconNews**

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