



NEWSLETTER 2017-27

CALENDAR:

Departmental Seminar

Alexander Sebald (University of Copenhagen)
*Self-confidence and reactions to ego-relevant subjective
performance evaluations*

Monday, December 04
16:30–18:00
VG H26

Lunch Seminar

Benjamin Elsner (IZA Bonn)
*Radiation and Human Capital: Long-Run Evidence from
Exposure outside the Womb*

Wednesday, December 06
12:00–13:30
VG 2.35

Economic and Social History Seminar

Kathrin Pindl (Regensburg)
*Wahrscheinlichkeitsintervalle und Handlungsspielräume.
Ernährungslogistik im Regensburger Hospital (17.-19. Jh.)*

Wednesday, December 06
18:00–20:15
VG 1.30

ABSTRACTS:**Departmental Seminar**

Alexander Sebald

Self-confidence and reactions to ego-relevant subjective performance evaluations

Abstract: We conduct an experiment to separate the driving forces underlying responses of agents to subjective performance evaluations provided by principals. The experiment exogenously varies the financial consequences of the evaluations for agents and whether agents can reward or punish principals for the evaluations received. Our design exploits a computerized task whose productivity is difficult to evaluate objectively by both agents and principals. True productivity and agent's evaluations of their own productivity are however observable in the data, allowing for the identification of over/underconfident agents. We use these data to estimate a model where reward and punishment behavior may depend on the desire to protect self-confidence. We find significant interaction between own over/underconfidence and behavior - over-confident agents engage in costly punishment when they receive evaluations below their own, but provide limited rewards when evaluations exceed their own. In contrast, under-confident agents weakly punish evaluations below their own, but reward significantly evaluations exceeding their own. Reciprocal responses are also found to be weakly related to the financial consequences of the evaluations. These results point towards a behavioral model of reciprocity that intertwines the desire to protect self-esteem with over/underconfidence.

Lunch Seminar

Benjamin Elsner

Radiation and Human Capital: Long-Run Evidence from Exposure outside the Womb

(joint work with Florian Wozny)

Abstract: This paper studies the impact of long-run exposure to radiation on cognitive skills. We focus on Germany, which received a large amount of fallout after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986, resulting in a permanent increase in radiation levels in the soil. For identification, we exploit the unequal distribution of the fallout due to idiosyncratic rainfall, and the fact that the population had no knowledge of the local level of contamination. Our results show that people who lived in a more contaminated area in 1986 perform significantly worse in standardized cognitive tests 25 years later. This effect is driven by older cohorts (aged 10-35 in 1986), while we find no effect for people who were first exposed during early childhood. These findings suggest that radiation accelerates the decline in cognitive skills at older ages.

Economic and Social History Seminar

Kathrin Pindl

Wahrscheinlichkeitsintervalle und Handlungsspielräume. Ernährungslogistik im Regensburger Hospital (17.-19. Jh.)

Abstract: Getreidekasten-, Küchen- und Hauptrechnungen erlauben in Zusammenschau mit narrativen Quellen wie Korrespondenz und Protokollen eine empirisch fundierte Analyse der Vorratshaltungspolitik und damit der ökonomischen Ausrichtung der Spitalverwaltung in der Sattelzeit. Die Betrachtung von darin messbaren Planungs(miss-)erfolgen ermöglicht eine kritische Einschätzung der schriftlich fixierten Erwartungshorizonte im Hinblick auf die Wahrscheinlichkeitsintervalle sowie Handlungsspielräume von verantwortlichen Akteuren im Spannungsfeld (regional-)politischer und sozio-naturaler Verflechtungen. Vor- und Nachteile einer ökonophysikalischen Herangehensweise zum „Test“ der Vorratspolitik diskutiert.

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