



Upcoming Seminars

Monday, 21.6.2021

Departmental Seminar

13.30-14.30
Virtual seminar room

Michael Weber, Chicago Booth
"Diverse Policy Committees Can Reach Underrepresented Groups"

Wednesday, 23.6.2021

Internal Seminar

12.15-13.15
Virtual seminar room

Melanie Arntz
"Computers as Stepping Stones. Technological Change and Labor Market Opportunities"

Abstracts

Departmental Seminar

Michael Weber

"Diverse Policy Committees Can Reach Underrepresented Groups"*

Increasing the diversity of policy committees has taken centre stage worldwide. Whereas the equitable and ethical motivations are clear, the economic channels through which more diverse policy committees might be more or less effective are still elusive. We design a randomized control trial to test whether the diversity of policy committees increases their ability to influence consumers' economic beliefs, which in turn affect choices. We vary consumers' awareness of minority representation in the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), the main US monetary policy body. Female and African American subjects update their unemployment expectations more in line with FOMC forecasts and trust the Fed more after being made aware of the presence of underrepresented demographics. White male subjects, the group traditionally overrepresented on the FOMC, do not react to the identities of policymakers.

Underrepresented groups are also more likely to acquire Fed-related information when it is associated with an underrepresented committee member. Our findings suggest more diverse policy committees may be better able to reach the broader population and manage household expectations more effectively.

*with Francesco D'Actuno (Boston College) and Andreas Fuster (Swiss National Bank)

Internal Seminar

Melanie Arntz

"Computers as Stepping Stones. Technological Change and Labor Market Opportunities"*

The role of skill-biased technological change for increasing wage inequality is well documented. However, technological change may improve equality of opportunity if it increases the returns to skills relative to the returns to parental background. In line with this, we find that the wage penalty associated with a disadvantaged family background declined. Our analysis shows that this development is consistently linked to technological progress. The introduction and use of new technologies in certain occupations explains the rising share of workers with disadvantaged parental backgrounds in these occupations, as well as their rising relative wages. Moreover, we provide evidence that the depreciation of parents' occupation-specific knowledge and networks during rapid technological transformations is a major force behind these shifts. Hence, technological change turns out to be an equalizing force that creates labor market opportunities for workers from a disadvantaged family background.

*with Cäcilia Lipowski, Guido Neidhöfer and Ulrich Zierahn

Virtual Talks

Rajesh Ramachandran gave a talk on "Vernacularization and Linguistic Democratization" at Humboldt University, Berliner Forschungskolloquium Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte, June 16. [[Paper](#)]

Andis Sofianos presented the paper titled *Does mining fuel bubbles? An experimental study on cryptocurrency markets* (with Marco Lambrecht and Yilong Xu) at the International Association for Research in Economic Psychology (IAREP) and the Society for the Advancement of Behavioral Economics (SABE) Conference, June 11.

Miscellaneous

Rajesh Ramachandran's work on language policy was covered in the Financial Times [[Link](#)].

Editorial deadline for issue 14/2021 of the newsletter:
Wednesday, 23.6. 2021, 12 p.m.
newsletter@awi.uni-heidelberg.de