BONN ECON NEWS

February 5–9, 2024

Overview

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Workshops and seminars

Monday, February 5, 2024

Job Talk W1 Professorship Applied Microeconomics

Anaïs Fabre (Toulouse School of Economics)	"The Geography of Higher Education and Spatial Inequalities"

Time
10:00–11:30 CET (sharp)

Location
ECONtribute, Niebuhrstraße 5, conference room

Hybrid
https://uni-bonn.zoom-x.de/j/64662046066
Password TBA via Applied Micro mailing list

Abstract
This paper shows that the within-country spatial distribution of colleges largely contributes to spatial inequalities. Using data on the universe of college applicants and programs in France, I document that higher education options are unevenly distributed across space while students' demand is highly sensitive to geographic proximity. This creates inequalities in access to higher education across space, feeding gaps in educational attainment and spatial skill sorting. To quantify these effects, I build a dynamic model linking equilibrium sorting on the higher education market and location choices of entry-level workers. I show that students' and programs' preferences can be identified and estimated from data on choices and equilibrium outcomes. One-third of regional gaps in educational attainment are explained by the interaction of the uneven distribution of colleges and mobility frictions. Eliminating the latter, however, generates a trade-off, as it benefits students from low-opportunity areas but accelerates their migration to higher education hubs, magnifying regional inequalities. Low-opportunity areas could halt this brain drain and outsource the education of their local labor force by tying mobility scholarships and incentives to return.

MPI EEG Seminar

Philipp Lergetporer (TUM Munich)	" Early Child Care, Maternal Labor Supply, and Gender Equality: A Randomized Controlled Trial "

Coauthors
Henning Hermes, Marina Krauß, Frauke Peter, Simon Wiederhold

Time
16:00 - 17:00 CET

Location
MPI Bonn, EG Seminar Room

Abstract
We provide experimental evidence that enabling access to universal early child care increases maternal
labor supply and promotes gender equality among families with lower socioeconomic status (SES). Our
intervention offers information and customized help with child care applications, leading to a boost in
child care enrollment among lower-SES families. 18 months after the intervention, we find substantial
increases in maternal full-time employment (+160%), maternal earnings (+22%), and household income
(+10%). Intriguingly, the positive employment effects are not only driven by extended hours at child care
centers, but also by an increase in care hours by fathers. Gender equality also benefits more broadly from
better access to child care: The treatment improves a gender equality index that combines information
on intra-household division of working hours, care hours, and earnings by 40% of a standard deviation,
with significant increases in each dimension. For higher-SES families, we consistently observe negligible,
insignificant treatment effects.

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

MPI EEG Seminar

Ralph Hertwig (Max Planck Institute for Human Development)	"Unpacking risk preference: From primates, babies, teenagers to old age and around the globe"

Time
16:00–17:00 CET

Location
MPI Bonn, EG Seminar Room

Abstract
In this talk, I will review the the results and implications of a number of studies in which we examined, in one way or another, the existence, nature and determinants of risk preference, one of the conceptual building blocks of economic theories of human choice. Our journey will touch upon questions of how to reliably measure risk preferences, how stable they are, how they change across the lifespan, how they compare across humans and primates, and what shapes them. Looking forward to a fun post-holidays discussion about why some may be more likely to set the tree on fire than others.

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

BGSE Micro Workshop

Sulagna Dasgupta (University of Chicago)	"Screening Knowledge"

Time
12:00–13:15 CET

Location
Juridicum, Reinhard Selten Room (0.017)

Abstract
A principal (she) tests an agent's (he) knowledge of a subject matter. She has preferences over his unobserved quality, which is correlated with his knowledge. Modeling the subject matter as an unknown state and knowledge as beliefs over it, I show that optimal tests are simple: They take the form of True–False, weighted True–False or True–False–Unsure, regardless of the principal's preferences, the distribution of the agent's beliefs, its correlation with his quality or his knowledge thereof. The need to elicit knowledge forces the principal to trade off the efficacy of the test in terms of whom it rewards, against how much it rewards them. If there is an ex-ante "obvious" answer, the optimal resolution of this trade-off leads to a partial penalty for that answer, even if it is correct, or a partial reward for a "counterintuitive" answer, even if it is incorrect. When the principal can pick the subject matter, she picks one that admits no such ex-ante obvious answer. In this case, the highly prevalent True–False test is always optimal, regardless of the principal's preferences, agent's learning, or the specific optimal choice of the subject matter.

Micro Theory Seminar

Pietro Dall'Ara (Boston College)	"Coordination in Complex Environments"

Time
16:30–17:45 CET

Location
Juridicum, Faculty Meeting Room (U1.040)

Abstract
I introduce a framework to study coordination in highly uncertain environments. Coordination is an important aspect of innovative contexts, where: the more innovative a course of action, the more uncertain its outcome. To explore the interplay of coordination and informational complexity, this paper embeds a beauty-contest game into a complex environment. I uncover a new conformity phenomenon. The new effect may push towards exploration of unknown alternatives, or constitute a status quo bias, depending on the network structure of the connections among players. In an application to oligopoly pricing, an increase in complexity results in a higher level of conformity in pricing policies. I study the new coordination problems introduced by complexity and propose an equilibrium selection rule. In an application to multi-division organizations, sufficiently high complexity "implements" the same profits as centralized decision-making. I also study heterogeneity across players in the mapping from decisions to outcomes, and private information about a status quo.